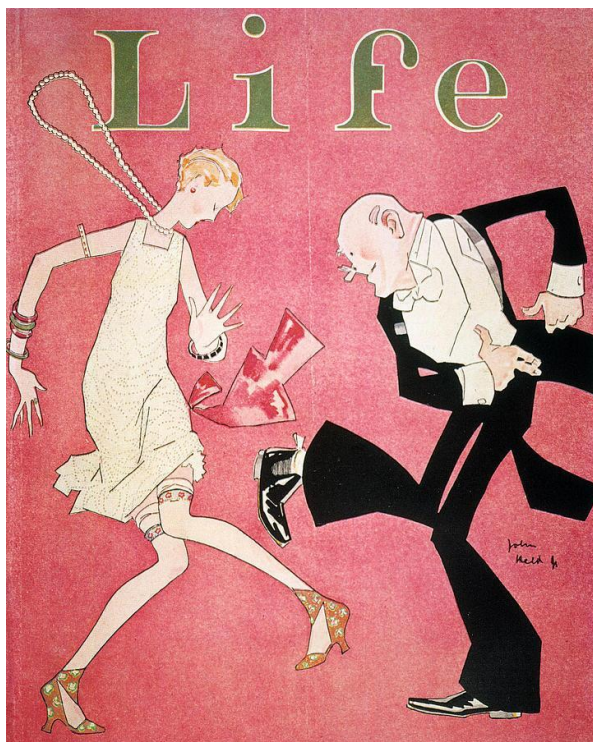




HSTRY 494B THE ROARING TWENTIES

Department of History
University of Washington
Autumn 2025

Class time: W 10:30-12:20
Class location: Smith 306

Professor Margaret O'Mara
momara@uw.edu
Office hours: W 2:30-3:30, Smith 312A

This undergraduate seminar explores the fast-moving and consequential decade of the 1920s in the United States. We will explore many dimensions of the national experience, moving beyond pop-culture representations to understand the critical role this period played in the formation of modern politics, social relations, economics, and culture. Work in the course will culminate in a research project exploring one aspect of the 1920s (both history and historiography) in greater depth.

Readings:

Books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore. Articles and chapters are available as PDFs on Canvas. Expect to read 125+ pages per week.

1. Linda Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition*
2. Lisa McGirr, *The War on Alcohol: Prohibition and the Rise of the American State*
3. Joshua Zeitz, *Flapper: A Madcap Story of Sex, Style, Celebrity, and the Women Who Made America Modern*

Class technology and AI policy:

Small seminars work best with laptops closed and phones put away. Thus, this is a screen-free class. I ask that you bring a notebook and pen to take notes, your physical copies of the book(s) assigned that week, and a printed-out copy of your reading response post (see below) and any associated notes you have made on the readings. You are also welcome and encouraged to print out, read, and bring Canvas PDFs to class, if feasible. The only week we will use our personal devices (and fully online readings) is the AI discussion on Week Six.

This is a class that teaches you how to read and write history. It also is a class that will discuss and engage with the pros and cons of using AI tools (including large language models like ChatGPT, Claude, et al.) in historical scholarship. We will experiment with the constructive use of LLMs in data gathering and analysis (see assignment 3 below) and practice how to use these tools with discernment in research and writing. However, you should not use LLMs to “read” and summarize class materials nor to write papers et al., that you representing as your own original work. Use of AI tools in this manner is prohibited.

Assignments:

1. Participation in seminar (25% of course grade): active, sustained, and collegial engagement in live class discussion, reflecting preparation for class and careful engagement with assigned readings. Unbroken and on-time attendance in class is key to a strong participation grade, and conflicts with other courses or extracurricular commitments are not considered to be excused absences.
2. Reading response posts (3% each x 8, 24% total): 150-200-word posts to Canvas discussion board. Your post should 1) note one thing you found interesting in the week's reading(s), and why; and 2) pose a question about the readings that you'd like the class to consider in discussion. This is an informal, conversational space to get the in-person class discussion going. We post each week there is reading, and you can skip one week of your choice. Post by 10PM on the Tuesday prior to class, beginning the second week of term.
3. AI research presentation (10%): a 10-minute recorded presentation, shared with your class peers on Canvas, that introduces, contextualizes, and analyzes a primary source with the assistance of an LLM. The presentation should also critically evaluate how well the tool performed its analysis. Due the end of the sixth week of class.
4. Film/TV review (6%): watch and write a 300-400-word review of a film, television series, or web series that depicts America in the 1920s, evaluating its historical accuracy, narrative choices, and how effectively it portrays the decade's events and people. This should be a scripted and acted production, either fiction or based on actual events, and it should have been produced after the decade (1930s to 2020s). You will choose a film or series by the third week of class, and submit your review by the end of the eighth week. (Watch a full film or at least two episodes of your chosen TV series.)
5. Research project (35% total): a two-part assignment, consisting of a 10-minute in-class oral presentation with slides (10%), and final research project (25%) exploring one aspect of American life and history in the 1920s in depth. Your final project may take the form of a 12-to-15-page research report (paper), a scripted and edited 15-minute podcast, or digital history project that presents your research findings graphically and textually online. Choose from a list of suggested topics to be distributed in the fourth week of class, or (in consultation with the professor) develop one of your own.

Course schedule:

Come to class having read/responded to the reading/watching listed for the week.

9/24 – Week One: Introduction

- No advance reading this week
- Discussion of key events, historiography, historical research methods

10/1 – Week Two: Prelude to the Decade

- Nancy Rockafellar, "[In Gauze We Trust](#)"
- Jennifer Keene, "[A 'Brutalizing' War? The USA After the First World War](#)"
- Brittany Farr, "[Concealing Martial Violence](#)"
- "[Johanna Enlists](#)" (1918)

10/8 – Week Three: Prohibition

- McGirr, *The War on Alcohol*, xiii-120
- Victoria Wolcott, "[Defending the Home](#)"

10/15 – Week Four: The Big Money

- Alan Dawley, "[The Abortive Rule of Big Money](#)"

- Jackson Lears, "[The Managerial Revitalization of the Rich](#)"
- F. Scott Fitzgerald, "[The Rich Boy](#)"
- "[The Kid](#)" (1921)
- Choose a primary source to analyze in your AI research presentation by Fri 10/17

10/22 – Week Five: The New Woman

- Zeitz, *Flapper*, 1-70, 79-123
- Roland Marchand, "[A 'Corporation Consciousness': General Motors, General Electric, and the Bruce Barton Formula](#)"
- "[It](#)" (1927)

10/29 – Week Six: Historians and AI

- Benjamin Breen, "[The Leading AI Models Are Now Very Good Historians](#)"
- Benjamin Breen, "[OpenAI's 'Study Mode' and the Risks of Flattery](#)"
- Ethan Mollick, "[Mass Intelligence](#)"
- Charlie Warzel, "[AI Is a Mass-Delusion Event](#)"
- "[What if Artificial Intelligence is Just a 'Normal' Technology?](#)"
- Record and upload AI research presentation to Canvas by Fri 10/31

11/5 – Week Seven: The Second Ku Klux Klan

- Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK*, 1-91, 139-161

11/12 – Week Eight: Culture Wars

- Zeitz, *Flapper*, 211-265
- Matthew Avery Sutton, "[Clutching to a 'Christian' America](#)"
- "[Sister Aimee and the Birth of the Megachurch](#)," *99% Invisible*
- Submit your TV/film review to Canvas by Fri 11/14

11/19 – Week Nine: Changing Politics

- McGirr, *The War on Alcohol*, 157-255
- Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK*, 163-180

11/26 – Week Ten: Research week and Thanksgiving week, no class

12/3 – Week Eleven: Research presentations (class run time from 10:30am to 1:20pm, lunch provided)

Exam Week: Final project due on Canvas Monday 12/8

Additional class and departmental policies, accommodations, and grade scale can be found on the course Canvas page.



Covid-19 Recommendations and Resources for Covid:

<https://www.ehs.washington.edu/covid-19-prevention-and-response/covid-19-illness-and-exposure-guidance>

Student Resources in Times of Need

We understand that with student life and possible health issues, there are emotional stresses and strains. We have compiled a list of helpful resources, and we encourage you to reach out to [our advisers](#), to your instructors, and to your peers for additional support. <https://history.washington.edu/student-resources-times-need>

Plagiarism & Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct, such as unauthorized collaboration, cheating on exams, and plagiarism, is prohibited at UW and may result in disciplinary action. [Here is more information.](#)

Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct at UW. It is defined as the use of creations, ideas, or words of publicly available work without formally acknowledging the author or source through appropriate use of quotation marks, references, and the like. Along with the University of Washington, the Department of History takes plagiarism very seriously. Plagiarism may lead to disciplinary action by the University against the student who submitted the work. Any student who is uncertain whether their use of the work of others constitutes plagiarism should consult the course instructor for guidance before submitting coursework. Disciplinary action on your school record can affect admission to graduate or professional schools.

The unauthorized use of artificial intelligence (AI), such as ChatGPT, can be academic misconduct at UW. We mean here tools that use AI and large language models to generate text or images, such as ChatGPT, GPT4, Bing Chat, and "Write with AI" in Google Docs. These are often prohibited by instructors in Department of History courses. The history department has a commitment to critical thinking and analysis. Different faculty have different positions about whether AI tools can be used in their classes, and about how they can be used. Attend to explicit instructions in your class syllabus or meetings. If you do not see any instructions regarding AI use, consult your instructor before using any AI. The unauthorized use of such tools can constitute academic misconduct and could result in disciplinary action.

Standards of Conduct and Academic Integrity: (see [WAC 478-121](#))

The following abilities and behavioral expectations complement the UW Student Conduct Code. All students need to demonstrate the following behaviors and abilities:

Communication: All students must communicate effectively with other students, faculty, staff, and other professionals within the Department of History. Students must attempt to express ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrate a willingness and ability to give and receive feedback. All students must be able to reason, analyze, integrate, synthesize, and evaluate in the context of the class. Students must be able to evaluate and apply information and engage in critical thinking in the classroom and professional setting.

Behavioral/Emotional: Students must demonstrate the emotional maturity required for the adequate utilization of intellectual abilities, the exercise of sound judgment, and the timely completion of responsibilities in the class. Further, students must be able to maintain mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with students, faculty, staff, and other professionals while engaging in the class and within the Department of History. Students must have the emotional stability to function effectively in the classroom.

Students must be able and willing to examine and change behaviors when they interfere with productive individual or team relationships.

Problematic behavior documented: Problematic behavior will be documented by the Department and if deemed appropriate forwarded on to Community Standards and Student Conduct. If a pattern of behavior or a single, serious lapse in the behavioral expectations becomes evident, the steps below will be followed so that the student is apprised of a warning indicating that the student's continuation in the class and/or major is in jeopardy. The student's instructor and/or appropriate program advisor or teaching assistant will document, either verbally or in writing, the concerning behavior and notify the student that they are receiving a warning. Notification of the warning will be forwarded to the Chair of the Department and Student Conduct and Community Standards via email or in hard copy. The warning identifies what the concerning behavior was and that any further disruptions or concerning incidents will result in the student being asked to leave the class. When incidents occur that represent a significant impact to the program or its participants, students may be asked to leave immediately without prior warning.

Incompletes

Instructors may grant an incomplete grade if the student has done satisfactory work to within three weeks of the last day of the quarter and if circumstances prevent the student from completing the remaining work for the course by the end of the quarter. Instructors are never obligated to grant a student's request for an Incomplete. History faculty expect good communication and good work on class requirements to seriously consider allowing an Incomplete for the last 3 weeks. Please see the UW Seattle's policies and form to request an incomplete here: <https://registrar.washington.edu/grades/incomplete-grade-policy/>

Grading Procedures

Except in case of error, no instructor may change a grade that they have turned in to the Registrar. Grades cannot be changed after a degree has been granted.

Grade Appeal Procedure

A student who believes they have been improperly graded must first discuss the matter with the instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the instructor's explanation, the student, no later than ten days after their discussion with the instructor, may submit a written appeal to the Chair of the Department of History with a copy of the appeal also sent to the instructor. Within 10 calendar days, the Chair consults with the instructor to ensure that the evaluation of the student's performance has not been arbitrary or capricious. Should the Chair believe the instructor's conduct to be arbitrary or capricious and the instructor declines to revise the grade, the Chair, with the approval of the voting members of their faculty, shall appoint an appropriate member, or members, of the faculty of the Department of History to evaluate the performance of the student and assign a grade. The Dean and Provost should be informed of this action. Once a student submits a written appeal, this document and all subsequent actions on this appeal are recorded in written form for deposit in a Department of History file.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as the use of one's authority or power, either explicitly or implicitly, to coerce another into unwanted sexual relations or to punish another for their refusal to engage in sexual acts. It is also defined as the creation by a member of the University community of an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment through verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

If you are being harassed, **seek help**—the earlier the better. You may speak with your instructor, your teaching assistant, History Undergraduate Advising, the Department's Director of Academic Services (Smith 315A) or the Chair of the Department (Smith 308). In addition, the Office of the Ombud (206 543-6028) is a University resource for all students, faculty and staff. Community Standards and Student Conduct Office (cssc@uw.edu) is a resource for students.

Equal Opportunity

The University of Washington reaffirms its policy of equal opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, citizenship, sexual orientation, age, marital status, gender identity or expression, genetic information, disability, or status as a protected veteran. This policy applies to all programs and facilities, including, but not limited to, admissions, educational programs, employment, and patient and hospital services. A discriminatory action can be a cause for disciplinary action.

Religious Accommodations

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy](https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/) (<https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/>). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form](https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/) (<https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/>).

Access and Accommodations

Your experience in this class is important to me. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please activate your accommodations via myDRS so we can discuss how they will be implemented in this course.

If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), contact DRS directly to set up an Access Plan. DRS facilitates the interactive process that establishes reasonable accommodations. Contact DRS at disability.uw.edu.

Department of History Diversity Committee

The Department of History Diversity Committee initiates and facilitates an ongoing conversation about diversity, proposes measures to address institutional disparities, and also serves as a confidential resource for students, staff, and faculty who have concerns related to climate and diversity. Any member of the department's learning and working community may contact the committee with concerns and questions. <https://history.washington.edu/diversity-resources>

Safety and Evacuation

Evacuation routes are posted throughout the building. In case of a fire, please evacuate and go to the evacuation assembly point, locations of which are posted on building walls. In case of a power outage or earthquake, please stay where you are and, for the latter, protect your head and neck. Students with disabilities which could impair evacuation should notify the instructor early in the quarter so accommodations can be made.

Concerns about a course, an instructor, or a teaching assistant

Instructors

If you have any concerns about the course or the instructor in charge of the course, please see the instructor about these concerns as soon as possible. If you are not comfortable talking with the instructor or not satisfied with the response that you receive, contact the Department of History's Director of Academic Services, Tracy Maschman Morrissey, in Smith 315A. If you are not satisfied with the response that you received from Tracy, make an appointment with the Assistant to the Chair in Smith 308B to speak with the Chair.

TAs

If you have any concerns about the teaching assistant, please see them about these concerns as soon as possible. If you are not comfortable talking with the teaching assistant or not satisfied with the response that you receive, contact the instructor in charge of the course. If you are not satisfied with the response that you receive, you may follow the procedure previously outlined, or contact the Graduate School in G-1 Communications.

Rev. September 2025