

HIS 10094

Making History: The Rise of the Railroad

Fall Semester 2011
MWF 3:15-4:05 pm.
Alumni Recitation Hall 314

COURSE INFORMATION

Dr. Kelly J. Maynard, Grinnell College Department of History

Office: Mears #305

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Office Hours MWF 2:15-3:00 at the Grill, TR 10:00-10:45 in Mears 305, and by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an introduction to issues of historical causation, argumentation, and evidence through the lens of one of the most significant developments in modern history: the rise of the railroad. After introductory units on historical methods and the technological history of the railroad, we will spend the bulk of the semester examining the political, social, economic, environmental, and aesthetic repercussions of the railroad at particular junctures including Grinnell itself, British India, 1890s Chicago, mass transit in the early twentieth century, and train transport during the Holocaust.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is intended to cultivate the skills essential to becoming a historian or, at least, a history major. We engage critically with a range of primary sources, learning to interrogate their authorship, biases, contexts, and variably interpretable meanings. We examine the work of modern scholars and learn to position their arguments in relation to one another, developing sensitivity to the multiplicity of ways in which one can construct history. We develop skills in the clear, concise formulation of ideas with particular attention to the writing of thesis statements and the marshalling of appropriate evidence in support of a scholarly argument. We nurture information literacy, conducting a semester-long individual research project culminating in formal presentations and a substantial annotated bibliography. Simultaneously, however, this course also introduces students to five very different contexts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in which the railroad played a central role in historical events and experience.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Please come to class awake, on time, and prepared for discussion with the reading assignments for that day in hand, thoughtfully read and annotated. I do take attendance as well as careful notes about the quality, frequency, and collaborative character (or not) of your participation in class discussions, group projects, etc. Because I place such emphasis on our cooperative learning together in the classroom, your participation grade makes up fully one third of your overall grade for the course. Thus it is your responsibility and in everyone's best interests

to come to every class except in case of dire, documented emergency. Three unexplained absences will earn you an F for the participation grade in this course. Four will earn you an F for the course itself. Your grade will be calculated according to the following formula:

Participation	35%
Film review	5%
Thesis statement assignment	5%
Thesis statement revision	5%
Article review assignment	5%
Thesis statement assignment	10%
Final presentation	15%

M Sep 5 Discussion of *A Midwife's Tale*
Film review assignment handed out in class

W Sep 7 Truth, truths, and the tools of dissent
Reading for Discussion:
• Arnold Chapters 57

F Sep 9 Visit to the Iowa Room/Special Collections
Note: class meets downstairs in Burling Library

UNIT I

"Township 80 North, Range 16 West": The Founding of Grinnell and the Railroad in Iowa

M Sep 12 Introductory lecture: Grinnell and the Railroad in Iowa
Film review assignment due in class

W Sep 14 The Telling of the Tale I
Reading for Discussion:
• Josiah B. Grinnell, Chaps. VI & VII from *Men and Events of Forty Years: Autobiographical Reminiscences of an Active Career from 1851 (1891)*

F Sep 16 The Telling of the Tale II
Reading for Discussion:
• Henry M. Hamilton, *A Historical Sketch: A Chapter in the Early History of Grinnell, Iowa (1892)*
Thesis statement assignment I handed out in class

M Sep 19 Selling the Railroad
Reading for Discussion:
• Circular statement of the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad Co. (1854)
• The Central Railroad of Iowa ..its first mortgage (1869) [excerpts]

W Sep 21 Thesis evaluation exercise
Final project and annotated bibliography discussion
Thesis statement assignment I due in class

F Sep 23 Outsourcing I

UNIT II

The Meaning and Experience of the Railroad in the Nineteenth Century: Schivelbusch

M Sep 26 Reading for Discussion:
• Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, Chaps. I-V, pp. 188

W Sep 28 Reading for Discussion:
• Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, Chaps. I-V, pp. 188
• Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, Chaps. I-V, pp. 188

Thesis revision due in class

