

## HIS 4100: Senior Seminar

# A History of the Middle Class

**T**he middle class is disappearing.

Across the world, anxiety has crept upon those who ascribe to the middle class. Stagnant wages, a decrease in the number of high-paying jobs, increased automation at factories, and a rise in the cost of daily living (food, utilities, higher education, rent, etc.) have all contributed to this uncertainty. According to the Pew Research Center, 2019 was the first recorded year that middle-income families no longer made up the majority in the United States. The same story can be heard across the Americas as the gap between the elite and the masses seems to widen with each passing year.



Margaret Bourke-White, "At the Time of the Louisville Flood," 1937

Middle-class sectors gained prominence across the world beginning in the mid-twentieth century ... although at different junctures and to varying degrees. The notion of a middle class is a fairly recent phenomenon in world history. Those who ascribe to this class (or at least a middle-class consciousness) often see themselves as a stabilizing force in society. Their main function, as some scholars suggest, is to act as “go-betweens,” or intermediaries, between the elite/powerful and the poor/powerless by virtue of their education and social ascendancy. Where and when do we first see the idea of a middle class? Why do so many politicians pitch their candidacies to this class sector? What are some markers, or identifiers, that have come to represent the middle class? What can we learn about a history that is not “from below,” nor “top-down,” but squarely in an imagined middle?

In this course, we will analyze primary and secondary source materials, discuss recent scholarship on the middle class, compile annotated bibliographies of academic literature on the subject, and, ultimately, produce a 20-25 page (not including bibliography nor appendices) research paper on a related topic of your choice. As the capstone course in the history major, HIS 4100 will demand the very best of you. As such, find a topic that excites you for your research project. Ground yourself in the necessary background information by reading and annotating our course readings, engaging in class discussions, and listening to and assessing your classmates' ideas and projects.

### ***What is a Senior Seminar?***

As the capstone to your history degree, HIS 4100 Senior Seminar is where you can demonstrate the skills, content knowledge, and research habits you have acquired over the years. The primary focus will be the development, preparation, and completion of a research project/paper of considerable depth in a particular area of interest related to the course topic. Papers must demonstrate extensive use of primary sources in addition to an adequate command of major secondary works. How you communicate your findings is also essential, and we will explore the latest tools historians use to share their research with diverse audiences.

The Senior Seminar is designed to produce the highest quality work that history majors at Appalachian can produce. It requires self-motivation and self-discipline. The role of the instructor will be as resource person and guide while members of the class work together to learn about the history of the middle class around the world. We will meet regularly during the early weeks of the session to discuss issues relevant to our study and to ongoing research projects in the group. Class meetings will also be the time to talk frankly about successes and/or problems encountered in the early stages of the individual research projects.

## ***HIS 4100***

### **Primary Objective**

To effectively communicate research findings [on a topic related to the middle class] to a general audience through textual and/or other means, adhering to the standards in the field of history.

### ***Specific objectives for this course***

1. Participants should be able to...consider historical thinking skills (how historians approach their research – from initial to final stages)
2. Participants should be able to...think critically about how technology shapes our access to and interpretations of the past
3. Participants should be able to...identify specific tools for researching, produce, and communicating their research topic
4. Participants should be able to...develop their identity as historians

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## **Assigned Textbooks & Readings**

- López, A. Ricardo, and Barbara Weinstein, eds. *The Making of the Middle Class: Toward a Transnational History of the Middle Class*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012. [[ASU Bookstore link](#)]
- Carassai, Sebastián. *The Argentine Silent Majority: Middle Classes, Politics, Violence, and Memory in the Seventies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014. [Available via ASU Bookstore, plus [e-copy via JSTOR](#)]
  - Other books for possible research projects are accessible via the [HIS 4100 \(Middle Class\) Amazon list](#)
  - All other course readings will be located on the course website private page [password will be emailed on 1/19] or via a link.

### **For “go to” books on writing theses and papers in the field of history, see:**

- Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing In History*, 10th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2020. [[link](#)]
- Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. [[link](#)]

# Weekly Schedule & Readings

All course readings are either a Course Textbook (CT) or journal articles located on our HIS 4100 website (password protected; password sent via email on 1/19/2021)

## **W01: [1/19] Course Overview / [1/21] UWC + Zotero 101**

- Read HIS 4100 “liquid” syllabus at: [middleclasshistory.rwanysibaja.com](http://middleclasshistory.rwanysibaja.com)

## **W02: [1/26 and 1/28] What is the “Middle Class”?**

- Stearns, Peter N. “The Middle Class: Toward a Precise Definition.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 21, No. 3 (July 1979): pp. 377-396.
- (CT) López, A. Ricardo, and Barbara Weinstein, eds. *The Making of the Middle Class: Toward a Transnational History of the Middle Class*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012. **Introduction.**

(CT) Carassai, Sebastián. *The Argentine Silent Majority: Middle Classes, Politics, Violence, and Memory in the Seventies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014. [Introduction: pp. 1-8]

## **W03: [2/2 and 2/4] Cold War Politics, Modernity, and Gatekeeping**

- (CT) *The Making of the Middle Class*, **Part 1** (pp. 29-118).
  - Read all of Part 1. Take notes on [and be prepared to lead discussion on] three of the unit’s chapters and the commentary by Barbara Weinstein.

(CT) *The Argentine Silent Majority* [Chapter 1: pp. 9-50]

## **W04: [2/9 and 2/11] Middle East & North Africa (with. Dr. Elizabeth Perego)**

- (CT) Watenpaugh, Keith David. “Being Middle Class and Being Arab: Sectarian Dilemmas and Middle-Class Modernity in the Arab Middle East, 1908-1936.” In *The Making of the Middle Class*, **Part III**, pp. 267-287.
- Gandolfo, K. Luisa. “Bridging the Economic Gap: The Rise and Fall of the Middle Class in Jordan.” *The Arab Studies Journal* 15/16, No. 1/2 (Fall 2007/ Spring 2008): pp. 100–122.

(CT) *The Argentine Silent Majority* [Chapter 2: pp. 51-101]

**W05: [2/16 and 2/18] 19th Century England (with Dr. Michael Turner)**

- Mangan, J.A. and James Walvin. "Introduction." *Manliness and Morality: Middle-Class Masculinity in Britain and America, 1800-1940*. Edited by Mangan, J.A. and James Walvin. Manchester, United Kingdom: Manchester University Press, 1987.

Also, pick TWO (2) of the following, and be prepared to lead discussion >>>

- Gunn, Simon. "Class, Identity, and the Urban: The Middle Class in England, c. 1790-1950." *Urban History* 31, No. 1 (May 2004): pp. 29-47.
- Wahrman, Dror. "National Society, Communal Culture: An Argument about the Recent Historiography of Eighteenth-Century Britain." *Social History* 17, No. 1 (January 1992): pp. 43-72.
- Young, Arlene. "Virtue Domesticated: Dickens and the Lower Middle Class." *Victorian Studies* 39, No. 4 (Summer 1996): pp. 483-511.

(CT) *The Argentine Silent Majority* [Chapter 3: pp. 102-150]

**W06: [2/23 and 2/25] Defining the Middle: Traditions, Respectability, and Professionalism**

- (CT) *The Making of the Middle Class, Part II*: Walkowitz, Kidambi, and López chapters (pp. 121-195).

(CT) *The Argentine Silent Majority* [Chapter 4: pp. 151-204]

**W07: [3/2 and 3/4] Politics & Revolution, Early-Mid 20th Century**

Pick TWO (2) of the following, and be prepared to lead discussion >>>

- (CT) Ervin, Michael. "The Formation of the Revolutionary Middle Class during the Mexican Revolution." In *The Making of the Middle Class, Part II*, pp. 196-222.
- (CT) García-Bryce, Iñigo. "A Middle-Class Revolution: The APRA and Middle-Class Identity in Perú, 1931-1956." In *The Making of the Middle Class, Part III*, pp. 235-252.
- Mark, James. "Discrimination, Opportunity, and Middle-Class Success in Early Communist Hungary." *The Historical Journal* 48, no. 2 (2005): pp. 499-521.

(CT) *The Argentine Silent Majority* [Chapter 5: pp. 205-266]

**W08: [3/8 and 3/11] Violence and Argentina's Middle-Class Sectors (book discussion)**

- (CT) Carassai, Sebastián. *The Argentine Silent Majority: Middle Classes, Politics, Violence, and Memory in the Seventies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014. [Entire Book - make sure to read "Conclusions" and "Epilogue"]

**W09: [3/15 to 3/19] Individual Conference Week (30 mins.); No class meetings**

- None

**W10: [3/23 and 3/25] Race, Social Mobility, and Consumerism**

*Pick one pair of readings - A or B - and be prepared to lead discussion >>>*

**READINGS A**

- (CT) Parker, David. "Siúticos, Huachafos, Arribistas, and Gente de Medio Pelo: Social Climbers and the Representation of Class and Perú" In *The Making of the Middle Class*, **Part IV**, pp. 335-354.
- Young, Louise. "Marketing the Modern: Department Stores, Consumer Culture, and the New Middle Class in Interwar Japan." *International Labor and Working-Class History* no. 55 (Spring 1999): pp. 52-70.

**READINGS B**

- (CT) Garguín, Enrique. "'Los Argentinos Descendemos de los Barcos': The Racial Articulation of Middle-Class Identity in Argentina, 1920-1960." In *The Making of the Middle Class*, **Part IV**, pp. 355-376.
- Piggot, W. Benjamin. "The 'Problem' of the Black Middle Class: Morris Milgram's Concord Park and Residential Integration in Philadelphia's Postwar Suburbs." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 132 no. 2 (April 2008): pp. 173-190.

**W11: [3/30 and 4/1] Ethnic Identity and Assimilation in the Americas**

*Pick one pair of readings - A or B - and be prepared to lead discussion >>>*

**READINGS A**

- Corwin Berman, Lila. "American Jews and the Ambivalence of Middle-Classness." *American Jewish History* 93, no. 4 (December 2007): 409-434.
- Eula, Michael J. "The Costa Family Society and the Formation of Middle Class Ethnicity in Postwar America, 1950-1970." *Italian Americana* 32, no. 1 (Winter 2014): 41-66.

**READINGS B**

- Gottlieb, Dylan. “‘Dirty, Authentic ... Delicious’: Yelp, Mexican Restaurants, and the Appetites of Philadelphia’s New Middle Class.” *Gastronomica* 15, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 39-48.
- TBD [Latino assimilation in the US]

**W12: [4/6] No Class Meeting / [4/8] Open Lab**

- None

**W13: [4/13 and 4/15] Class Presentations of Research**

- None

**W14: [4/20] Race, Gender, and the Southern Middle Class / [4/22] Open Lab**

*Pick one pair of readings - A or B - and be prepared to lead discussion >>>*

**READINGS A**

- Fultz, Michael. “‘The Morning Cometh’: African-American Periodicals, Education, and the Black Middle Class, 1900-1930.” *The Journal of Negro History* 80, no. 3 (Summer 1995): 97-112.
- Obadele-Starks, Ernest. “Black Labor, the Black Middle Class, and Organized Protest along the Upper Texas Gulf Coast, 1883-1945.” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 103, no. 1 (July 1999): 52-65.

**READINGS B**

- Hubbs, Nadine. “‘Redneck Woman’ and the Gendered Poetics of Class Rebellion.” *Southern Cultures* 17, no. 4 (Winter 2011): 44-70.
- Richards, Matthew S. “‘The Rhetorical Register of Class: Gender, Resistance, and Social Justice in Appalachia’s Coalfields.’” *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 26, no. 2 (Fall 2020): 248-263.

**W15: [4/27] Suburbia, Gentrification, and Challenges to “Middle Classness” & Class Wrap-Up**

- Anderson, Tamsen. “‘Beautiful New Homes’: The Development of Middle-Class Housing in the Industrial Suburb of East Chicago, Indiana.” *Indiana Magazine of History* 109, no. 3 (September 2013): 185-223.
- Stebenne, David. “Re-Stabilizing the Middle Class and the Poor: Lessons from the 1930s.” History News Network, July 12, 2020. <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/176380>.

# USEFUL INFORMATION

## Grading

In light of the restrictions and adjustments brought on by COVID-19 policies, students will receive the highest grade within each letter category (i.e. A, B+, C+, D+, or F). Please keep up to date with the latest university's grading and course policy modifications due to COVID on the [ASU Registrar's Covid Updates page](#).

- **A** Superior Work
- **B+** Above Average Work (With Some Room for Improvement)
- **C+** Acceptable Work (With Room for Improvement)
  - History majors must receive a "C" or higher to fulfill HIS 4100 reqs.
- **D+** Below Average Work (With Significant Room for Improvement)
  - This is a passing grade, but will require you to re-take HIS 4100 to fulfill department reqs.
- **F** Unacceptable Work

The final grade will be based on the criteria below of 100 pts. Note: if the final research paper is not turned in, a student cannot pass the course.

Research Paper	50 pts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Final Version / Final Exam (30 pts.)</i></li> <li>• <i>Topic; List of Secondary and Primary Sources; Research Plan and Guiding Questions; Annotated Bibliography; Rough Draft - Criteria; Peer Review (total 20 pts.)</i></li> </ul>	
Zotero Annotations	15 pts.
Attendance (incl. Individual Conference)	10 pts.
Carassai Book Review	10 pts.
Class Discussion (leading & participating)	10 pts.
Presentation of Research	5 pts.

## Policies

### ***COVID-19***

Please check the ASU COVID page for the latest updates: <https://www.appstate.edu/go/coronavirus/updates>. [Inside ABH, face masks must be worn per ASU policy]

**Please note:** Spring 2021 semester will begin fully online until ASU re-opens classrooms for face-to-face instruction.

### ***Participation***



HIS 4100 is your capstone history course. Because this is a small class, with a fair amount of work and shared discussion, arriving on time is essential. It is disrespectful to show up while someone else is speaking, disturbing his or her train of thought. Please extend the same courtesy to others that you would expect when you are the one speaking.

The course is a marriage of a seminar and lab format, which means that attending each class is crucial to everyone's success. We will meet twice a week early in the semester, and then move to a more irregular schedule (a mix of once and twice a week). Plan to spend 6-8 hours each week on your class research and writing assignments.

Students who miss more than two class sessions will see a reduction in their Attendance grade, and will need to meet with the instructor to discuss a plan of study going forward.

- If there is a situation interfering with your progress, and that does not allow you to join remotely via Zoom, contact me immediately so I understand what is happening on your end. Communication is essential.

### ***Technology***

It should be obvious, but participants in this course are encouraged to bring their own laptop and/or tablet to class when possible. Remember: computing devices are to be used for course work and the tasks at hand only. Your screen is visible to others; please do not let your screen become a distraction.

If your phone is your only computing device, let the instructor know immediately. Regardless, please silence mobile computing alerts and ringers before class begins. And no texting in class (it's rude and you cannot be present in two distinct conversations).

### ***Learning Space (Anne Belk Hall 240)***

Per History Department guidelines, drinks are permissible in ABH 240, but only if covered. Please be mindful of where you place your cups in relation to technology and other class participants. Food and tobacco are prohibited.

### ***Learning Community***

Being a member of a professional and academic learning community requires one to understand, accept, and model an important set of community ground rules,

which will be in effect throughout our entire semester together. Each of us is expected to uphold these common ground rules.

### **Ground Rules**

- Respect each other as co-learners and colleagues
- Listen to varying perspectives ... especially those that challenge your own assumptions
- Be thoughtful and measured when contributing to discussions (synchronous & asynchronous; oral & written; formal & informal)
- Help others to become successful

The Department of History at Appalachian State University is committed to supporting our students and fostering an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment, in the classroom and in the broader university community. We are a faculty that strives to model reflection, advocacy, and care for the community in order to work toward an equitable, democratic, and sustainable society. We value your participation in this process.

If you feel that our courses, programs, or department fall short of this commitment, we encourage you to engage in dialogue with your instructor and/or other program faculty. Please visit <https://edc.appstate.edu/equity-issues> for information related to Appalachian State University's Title IX and <http://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/syllabi> for the most up-to-date policies on students with special needs, academic integrity, religious observances, and student engagement with courses.

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## **Student Needs**

### ***Medical and Other Issues***

Every semester, an illness or a family emergency forces someone to miss an assignment or even class day. If you find yourself in this situation, speak to the instructor as soon as possible in person, by phone, or by email. Without an effort to communicate, missed assignments should be evaluated as such by both instructor and class participant (this may include class participation).

### ***Special Needs / Disability Resources***

Appalachian State University is committed to providing an inclusive experience, accessible learning environments and equal opportunity to individuals with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Individuals needing reasonable accommodations should contact the Office of Disability Resources (828.262.3056 or

[odr.appstate.edu](http://odr.appstate.edu)).

All students are encouraged to make use of the University Writing Center. Consultants can help with the unique needs of these students, including clarity, organization, grammar and spelling, formatting and the theory and practice of documenting outside resources. Consultants can also help students better understand assignment guidelines. To make an appointment, call 828-262-3144 or visit the website ([writingcenter.appstate.edu](http://writingcenter.appstate.edu)) for current hours and additional information and resources.

### ***Food Insecurity***

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students, 324 Plemmons Student Union, for a list of resources and support. The ASU Food Pantry and Free Store is a free resource with pantry and personal care items, located in the Office of Sustainability on the bottom floor of East Hall. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable us to assist you in finding the resources you may need.

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## **Course Commitment & Contact Information**

Senior Seminar is inherently a community environment. This class is designed for students to learn and work alongside other history majors. At just twelve course participants, this is not a class where you can hide; you will learn to rely upon others for help and support when you need it, step up and contribute regularly, and grow as a historian with your peers. We have two choices, then: feel overwhelmed by the research and paper writing process, or work together to reach our goals and showcase the culmination of your history training. I hope we will choose the latter and make HIS 4100 a memorable experience for all!

**INSTRUCTOR:** Establishing regular and effective communication is foundational to your success in this class, as well as your future career. More than an instructor, I will be your coach and guide through this senior seminar process. There are several ways you can communicate with me. Email is the quickest and best way ([sibajaro@appstate.edu](mailto:sibajaro@appstate.edu)); I should respond to your inquiries within 24 hours Mon-Fri. If I don't reply in this time frame, please contact me again as a follow-up. My office is located in Anne Belk 220 (knock on the 2nd door). You may

also use the conference space outside my office – when open – if you need a quiet place to work.

**OFFICE HOURS**

T & Th (8:30-9:15am / 12:15-1pm) in ABH 220

Th & F (8:30-9:30am) via Zoom

(or by appointment - email in advance)