

HIS 4100: Senior Seminar

A History of the Middle Class

The 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

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

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](#)]
- * Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing In History*, 10th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2020. [[ASU Bookstore link](#)]
- * Cosse, Isabella. *Mafalda: A Social and Political History of Latin America's Global Comic*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019. [[ASU Bookstore link](#)]
 - Other books for possible research projects are at 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 8/19].

Another “go to” book on writing theses/papers in the field of history:

- * Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018. [[link](#)]

Class Hours

Section 103 - Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00 pm to 3:15 pm, ABH 228

Section 104 - Tuesdays, 5:00 pm to 7:50 pm, ABH 226

Course Websites

Main >><https://middleclasshistory.rwanysibaja.com>

* Password for Readings Protected Page (see instructor email or syllabus on AsULearn)

* AsULearn >> posting most assignments

Zotero Group Folder >> personal research collection AND HIS 4100 Group Library

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 8/19/2024)

Come to class each week prepared to discuss the following ...

W01: [Aug 20/22] Course Overview, Zotero 101

- Entire HIS 4100 “website” syllabus at: middleclasshistory.rwanysibaja.com
 - * Be prepared to lead discussions in small groups on the following sections of the course website: Historical Thinking, Research, Writing, and Student Support

W02: [Aug 27/29] 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. [\[Link\]](#)
- (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 – pp. 1-25. [\[Link\]](#)

Staying on Pace >> Read (CT) Cosse, Isabella. *Mafalda: A Social and Political History of Latin America’s Global Comic*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019. [Introduction: pp. 1-11]

W03: [Sep 3/5] Race, Gender, and Social Mobility

- (CT) *The Making of the Middle Class*, Part IV (pp. 299-376). Read all of Part 4. Take notes on all four chapters for yourself, but be prepared to lead discussion on two of the unit’s chapters by completing the two-note Zotero submission for this week.
 - * Gisele Mettele’s “The City as a Field of Female Civic Action: Women and Middle-Class Formation in Nineteenth-Century Germany” – pp. 299-314.
 - * Carol Harrison’s “Putting Faith in the Middle Class: The Bourgeoisie, Catholicism, and Postrevolutionary France” – pp. 315-334.
 - * David Parker’s “Siúuticos, Huachafos, Arribistas, and Gente de Medio Pelo: Social Climbers and the Representation of Class in Chile and Peru, 1860-1930” – pp. 335-354.
 - * Enrique Garguin’s “Los Argentinos Descendemos de los Barcos” – pp. 355-376.

Staying on Pace >> (CT) *Mafalda* [Chapter 1]

W04: [Sep 10/12] Modernity and Gatekeeping – Middle East & N. Africa

(CT) *The Making of the Middle Class*, Part I. The following groups will lead discussions ...

GROUP A: Michael O. West's "The African Middle Class in Zimbabwe: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives" – pp. 45-57.

GROUP B: Simon Gunn's "Between Modernity and Backwardness: The Case of the English Middle Class" – pp. 58-74.

GROUP C: Marina Moskowitz's "'Aren't We all?': Aspiration, Acquisition, and the American Middle Class" – pp. 75-86.

GROUP D: Franca Iacovetta's "The Gatekeepers: Middle-Class Campaigns of Citizenship in Early Cold War Canada" – pp. 87-106.

Staying on Pace >> (CT) Mafalda [Chapter 2]

W05: [Sep 17/19] 19th Century English Virtues and Sport

- 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. [\[Link\]](#)
- Young, Arlene. "Virtue Domesticated: Dickens and the Lower Middle Class." *Victorian Studies* 39, No. 4 (Summer 1996): pp. 483-511. [\[Link\]](#)
- Torres, Cesar. "Mass Sport Through Education or Elite Olympic Sport?" *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies*. 7 (1998), 61-88. [\[Link\]](#)

Staying on Pace >> (CT) Mafalda [Chapters 3 & 4]

W06: [Sep 24/26] Respectability and Professionalism

(CT) *The Making of the Middle Class*, Part II. The following groups will lead discussions ...

GROUP A: Prashant Kidambi's "Becoming Middle Class: The Local History of a Global Story" – pp. 141-160.

GROUP B: A. Ricardo López's "Conscripts of Democracy: The Formation of a Professional Middle Class in Bogotá during the 1950s and Early 1960s" – pp. 161-195.

GROUP C: Michael A. Ervin's "The Formation of the Revolutionary Middle Class during the Mexican Revolution" – pp. 196-222.

GROUP D: Valeria Manzano's "The Blue Jean Generation: Youth, Gender, and Sexuality in Buenos Aires, 1958-1975" *Journal of Social History* 42:3 (2009), pp. 657-676. [\[Link\]](#)

Staying on Pace >> (CT) Mafalda [Chapter 5 & Conclusion]. Book Review due by Sep 26.

W07: [Oct 1/3] Mafalda [Argentina]

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

- (CT) Cosse, Isabella. *Mafalda: A Social and Political History of Latin America's Global Comic*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019. [Entire Book – make sure to scan through the

Bibliography as well to analyze Cosse's primary sources, and the academic literature she relies on for her theoretical framework and middle-class historiography]

W08: [Oct 8/10] ¡Viva La Revolución! ??

- (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.
- Brewster, Keith and Claire Brewster. "Cleaning the Cage: Mexico City's Preparations for the Olympic Games," *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 26:6, 790-813. [\[Link\]](#)

W09: [Oct 15/17] Individual Conferences (30 mins.) – Asynchronous

- None

W10: [Oct 22/24] Race, Social Mobility, and Consumerism

Be prepared to lead discussion on the following ...

Group 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.

[\[Link\]](#)

Group B: Corwin Berman, Lila. "American Jews and the Ambivalence of Middle-Classness." *American Jewish History* 93, no. 4 (December 2007): 409-434. [\[Link\]](#)

Group C: Hubbs, Nadine. "'Redneck Woman' and the Gendered Poetics of Class Rebellion." *Southern Cultures* 17, no. 4 (Winter 2011): 44-70. [\[Link\]](#)

Group D: McNamara, Sarah. "A Not-So-Nuevo Past: Latina Histories in the US South." *Labor: A Studies in Working-Class History* 16, no. 3 (2019): 73-78. [\[Link\]](#)

W11: [Oct 29/31] – Independent Work – Asynchronous

- None

W12: [Nov 5] Writing Lab / [Nov 7] – Asynchronous

- None

W13: [Nov 12/14] Class Presentations of Research

- None

W14: [Nov 19] Writing Lab / [Nov 21] – Asynchronous

- None

W15: [Nov 26] Independent Work – Asynchronous

- None

W16: [Dec 3] Course Wrap-Up

- None

EXTRA ARTICLES AVAILABLE AT THE [READINGS \(PASSWORD PROTECTED\) PAGE](#)

USEFUL INFORMATION

Grading

Grades in HIS 4100 are based on earned points for meeting the requirements of each assignment. For the final paper, students will receive points for meeting the requirements of the final-paper assignment, but also quality points.

Final grades below “A”s will not include minuses (i.e. A, A- B+, B, C+, C, D+, D, or F).

- **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 will be unable to meet the HIS 4100/Senior Capstone requirement.]

Research Paper = 70 pts.

- Final Version / Final Exam = 30 pts.
- Preliminary Assignments (total = 40 pts.)
 - *Possible Topics, Research Plan, & Research Questions
 - *Secondary Source – Annotated Bibliography

- *Prospectus
- *Primary Sources and Analysis
- *Section Drafts
- *Complete Paper Rough Draft
- *Peer Review

Five (5) Zotero Notes = 10 pts.

Mafalda Book Review = 5 pts.

Engagement (class discussions-leading & participating, attendance, indiv. conference) = 10 pts.

Presentation of Research = 5 pts.

Policies

Academic Integrity

Let's commit ourselves to act with academic integrity this term – to be ethical in what we say and write, and to offer credit to others for thinking of ideas before us. Everyone in this course is fundamentally honest; together we will learn the conventions of academic integrity, such as citing sources correctly and being clear about where our own words begin and end.

If you'd like to read more about the college's Honor Code – which was written by students just like you, and which students co-govern with faculty – [you can find a copy at this page.](#)

COVID

According to the CDC, COVID is now endemic, much like the seasonal flu. Surges come and go. Please do what is necessary to protect yourself and others to ensure everyone has an opportunity to come to class.

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; attending each class is crucial to everyone's success. We will meet regularly in the first half of the semester, and then move to an irregular schedule for the second half. Plan to spend 6-8 hours each week on your class research and writing assignments.

Students who miss multiple class sessions will first meet with the instructor to discuss an action plan going forward. If absences continue, this can lead to failing the course.

- If there is a situation interfering with your progress, contact me immediately so I understand what is happening on your end. **Communication is essential.**

Technology

Students 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 228/226)

Per History Department guidelines, drinks are permissible in ABH 228 & 226, 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. These are small, intimate rooms, so we can better conduct weekly seminar-style discussions.

Learning Community

Being a member of a professional and academic learning community requires understanding, acceptance, and modeling an established set of 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 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.

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).

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) 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.

Course Commitment & Contact Information

At the outset of the semester, we will share ASU email contact information for everyone in our 4100 community. There are several ways you can communicate with your instructor. Email is the quickest and best way to reach me (sibajaro@appstate.edu). I should respond to your inquiries within 24 hours Mon-Fri. [Weekends are reserved for personal matters.] If I don't reply in this time frame, please contact me again as a follow-up.

Instructor

On Campus Office: Located in Anne Belk 249M.

DROP-IN HOURS

T & Th: 12:15-1:15 pm

T: 4-4:45 pm

(or Zoom by appointment – email in advance)