

HIS 560 Worlding the Middle Class: Readings in World History

Meetings: Tuesdays, 4:00 - 6:30 pm, LA 203

Instructor: Sanjay Joshi

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Office Hours: Tu-Thu 1:15 to 2:15 pm and by appointment

Zoom link and password for course meetings and office hours on BbLearn page for course

CHECK THE COURSE WEB PAGE <http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/middleclasscourse.htm> FOR A COPY OF THIS SYLLABUS WITH CLICKABLE LINKS TO ELECTRONIC READINGS.

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU ALSO LOOK AT NAU Syllabus Policy Statements: <https://nau.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/26/Syllabus-Policy-Statements.pdf>

Course Description

This course explores how, why, and with what effect, the “middle class” as a category has traveled across the world, primarily from the 19th to the mid-20th century. Though the category is widely used across the world, a “middle class” seems to refer to quite distinct groups and cultural productions in different parts of the world. In the United States, the middle class has become almost a synonym for “regular” people, the masses if you will. In other parts of the world, India or even the U.K., the category often refers to an elite. What is the history of this difference? What effect do these differences have on our understanding of this category, and history more generally? These are the questions that animate this course. We examine the middle class from the perspective of both social and cultural history. Not only will we discuss the usefulness of class (specifically, the middle class) as a category of historical analysis, but we will also explore the relation between the so-called middle class and other social groups. We will see the connections between (the middle) class and other axes of power and configurations of social hierarchy such as gender and race. We will examine the relationship between colonialism and the “universalization” of class, and the historical limits of Eurocentric categories.

Through this exploration, I hope this course will enable us to understand how and why the middle class as a category has been deployed very differently in different historical contexts. Even more significantly, I hope these explorations allow us to discuss the implications of such different deployments of the category. If there are to be comparisons, what sort of a global history of the middle class is possible? What are the implications of such a comparative history for world/global history? Through exploring a history of the middle class, this course illuminates the connections and contradictions that make up global history.

How the course will run

It is impossible to predict how the coronavirus pandemic will play out across the coming semester. I would like the class to meet regularly, each week, as a regular graduate seminar. But, at the same time, we need to be ready to pivot to a hybrid or even a synchronous online format if conditions so dictate. However, as long as health and safety concerns allow, we will be meeting in-person, each week as listed on the schedule below. That is how this course is planned. ***If circumstances change, the schedule, readings, and assignments will also be subject to change.***

Required Readings

The following books have been ordered for the course at the NAU Bookstore. I know times are difficult, but I would recommend strongly that you buy or otherwise have access to the following books throughout the semester:

1. Patrick Joyce, ed. *Class*. (Oxford, USA, 1995). ISBN-13: 9780192892522
2. Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c.1780-1840* (Cambridge, 1995). ISBN-13 9780521477109
3. Sarah Maza, *The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie: An Essay on the Social Imaginary, 1750-1850* (Harvard, 2005). ISBN-13: 978-0674017696 [Full text available online via Cline Library](#)
4. Catherine Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History*. (Polity, 1992). ISBN: 978-0-7456-0956-0
5. Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton Studies in Culture/power/history (Princeton, 1993). ISBN-13 9780691019437
6. A. Ricardo López-Pedrerros, *Makers of Democracy: A Transnational History of the Middle Classes in Colombia* (Duke, 2019) ISBN-13: 978-1478002857
7. Sherene Seikaly, *Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine* (Stanford, 2015). ISBN-13: 978-0804796613 [Full text available online via Cline Library](#)
8. Harvey Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet* (California, 2003) ISBN 13: 978-0520234390
9. Ricardo A. López, and Barbara Weinstein. eds. *The Making of the Middle Class: Toward a Transnational History*. (Duke, 2012). ISBN-13 978-0-8223-5129-0

In addition, selections from other books, that are part of the required reading for this course, will be made available electronically.

Recommended Readings

Are there to suggest other points of views or perspectives on the themes/areas being discussed through the main readings that week.

Course Requirements

1. **A FINAL PAPER** in the form of a historiographical essay on the middle class, focusing either on a geographical area (e.g. Middle Class in North America) and/or a theme (e.g. Middle Class and Religion; Middle Class and Empire; Middle Class Nationalism; Gender and Middle Class; Middle Class Environmentalism). The sources should be selected to provide an overview **and analysis** of the writing on the middle class on your selected topic or area. Comparisons with other areas or themes is strongly encouraged. It is recommended that your essay, should, in addition to relevant class readings, discuss at least three to five additional monographs, and five to ten additional scholarly essays on the subject.

I should point out that I am expecting something substantially more than a descriptive SURVEY of literature in this essay. Your essay needs to have a THESIS, demonstrating WHAT your analysis of the readings convey for a better understanding of the history of the theme/region you have chosen, and/or for a better understanding of the middle class a category.

STAGES OF THE PAPER: I expect a *preliminary proposal* from you **by week five, SEPTEMBER 15th**. This should include a topic, an argument for its significance, and some

suggestions as to your approach to writing the paper. A significantly revised and expanded proposal (graded) that should include a bibliography (briefly annotated) and a preliminary thesis for your paper is **due week 9, October 13th** which I will discuss with you individually via Zoom meetings on **October 20th**. The final paper, between fifteen and twenty pages in length, is due **VIA EMAIL on November 20th**.

POINTS: Proposal 05 points; Final Paper 35 points **Total 40 points**

2. SUMMARY and QUESTIONS: Reading Responses

By NOON on the day of *each week* of assigned readings (after Week One), ALL students must submit a brief explanation (two to five sentences) of the main argument of the readings that week, **and at least two questions** aimed at stimulate discussion in the seminar. You may also pose other questions asking for clarification of issues that are not clear to you. **You will submit the outline and questions to me, and send your questions alone to the rest of the class via e-mail.** I will be using your questions to organize the class discussion. I strongly recommend putting together some notes in response to your own questions to contribute to the class discussions that day. Each contribution will be evaluated out of 10 points, but count for only 3 points each. Together, your summaries and questions will count **toward 30 points** for the course.

3. LEADING DISCUSSION Starting Week THREE, one student will be held responsible for **LEADING CLASS DISCUSSION** once during the rest of the course. Other than administrative stuff, and some interventions from me, the running of that class will be in the hands of that student for that discussion. Of course, you have to work within the confines of the syllabus and assigned readings. I will take down student preferences, starting Week One. Weeks for leading discussion will be assigned on a first-come-first-served basis. Everyone in the course should have signed up for leading class discussion by Week Three at the latest. I would advise you to share your plans for leading discussion with me via email by Sunday before your turn to lead discussion. I will be happy to schedule a Zoom meeting with the student on the MONDAY prior to leading discussion to discuss plans. The meeting is not mandatory. **15 points**

5. Seminar attendance and participation, which will take into account the ENTIRE semester, **15 points.**

Grading Scale: 90-100 = A; 80-89 = B; 70-79 = C; 60-69= D; below 60 = F

PLEASE NOTE: I do not give extensions or incompletes except in the most extreme cases. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in failing the course. Please consult the *NAU Student Handbook's* sections on academic dishonesty if you are not certain of the meaning of this term. **IT IS THE STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITY TO FAMILIARIZE THEMSELVES WITH THESE MATTERS AS DEFINED BY THE UNIVERSITY.**

WORK HABITS: I strongly urge all students in all my classes to back up their written work in multiple ways and in multiple locations. In addition to your hard drive, please back up your work on a cloud (working on or uploading regularly to Google Docs is one possibility) and an external USB drive.

Provisional Class Schedule: *Subject to modification*

Week One August 18th

Introductions

Readings (links sent over email a week before the start of classes)

1. Raymond Williams, “[Bourgeois](#)” pp. 45-49 of his *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1979)
2. Rana Farooqar, “The Scary New Rich” <http://www.newsweek.com/unstable-and-less-liberal-global-middle-class-69469>
3. Kerry Fivecoat-Campbell “Who is Middle Class and Why it Matters” <http://www.forbes.com/sites/nextavenue/2015/08/04/who-is-middle-class-and-why-it-matters/#146bfd625422>
4. Sanjay Joshi, “[The Middle Class: A History of Our Present](#)” (original English of German translation published in the October 2014 issue of *Welt-Sichten*, Germany).

Recommended

Wikipedia entry on “middle class” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_class

Week Two August 25th

Class as a Category of Historical Analysis

Required Readings

Patrick Joyce, *Class*

SELECTIONS: pp. 3-68; 71-73; 99-103; 127-167; 183-192; 201-207; 233-35; 287-335.

Rius, Marx for Beginners extracts http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~sj6/Middle Class Course/marx_for_beginners extracts.pdf

Other Recommended

Benjamin Demott, *The Imperial Middle: Why Americans Can't Think Straight About Class*. 1st ed. (William Morrow & Co, 1990).

Assignment

Please sign up for your week of presentations on recommended readings. Unless the numbers don't work, I would prefer to have only one presentation each week.

Week Three September 1st

How does the Middle Class “Emerge”?

Required Readings

Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class*.

Other Recommended

Simon Gunn and Rachel Bell, *Middle Classes: Their Rise and Sprawl* (London, 2003).

Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority in the English Industrial City 1840-1914* (Manchester, 2008).

Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951* (Oxford, USA, 2000).

Week Four September 8th

But IS there a “Middle Class”?

Required Readings

Sarah Maza, *The Myth of the French Bourgeoisie*.

Other Recommended

David Blackbourn, *The German Bourgeoisie : Essays on the Social History of the German Middle Class from the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Century* (Routledge, 1991).

Bonnie Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class : The Bourgeoises of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, 1981).

Jürgen Kocka, *Bourgeois Society in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Berg, 1993).

Week Five September 15th

Race, Gender, and Middle Class Formation

Required Readings

Catherine Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class*.

Other Recommended

Carolyn Steedman, *Master and Servant: Love and Labour in the English Industrial Age* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867* (Chicago, 2002)

Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton University Press, 2006).

Assignment

Preliminary Paper proposal due

Week Six September 22nd

Nationalism: the Cultural Politics of a Colonized Middle Class

Required Readings

Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*.

Other Recommended

Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago, 1995).

Ritu Birla, *Stages of Capital: Law, Culture, and Market Governance in Late Colonial India* (Duke: 2009).

Wolfe, Joel. *Autos and Progress: The Brazilian Search for Modernity* (Oxford, USA, 2010).

Week Seven September 28th

Middle Class Democracy

Required Readings

Ricardo López-Pedrerros, *Makers of Democracy*.

We are fortunate that Professor Ricardo López-Pedrerros accepted my invitation to join our class over Zoom for a short while, at 4 pm.

Other Recommended

David S. Parker and Louise E. Walker ed., *Latin America's Middle Class: Unsettled Debates and New Histories* (Lexington Books, 2012).

Robert D. Johnston, *The Radical Middle Class: Populist Democracy and the Question of Capitalism in Progressive Era Portland, Oregon* (Princeton, 2006)

Jie Chen, *A Middle Class Without Democracy: Economic Growth and the Prospects for Democratization in China* (Oxford University Press, 2013)

Brian P. Owensby, *Intimate Ironies: Modernity and the Making of Middle-Class Lives in Brazil* (Stanford, 1999)

Week Eight October 6th

Middle Class at Home

Required Readings

1. Bonnie Smith, "[Introduction](#)" and "[Domesticity: The Rhetoric of Reproduction](#)," from *Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoises of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century*.
2. Afsaneh Najmabadi, "[Crafting an Educated Housewife in Iran](#)" in Lila Abu Lughod ed. *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East* (Princeton, 1998).
3. Omnia Shakry, "[Schooled Mothers and Structured Play: Child Rearing in Turn-of-the-Century Egypt](#)" in Lila Abu Lughod ed. *Remaking Women*.
4. Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid, "[Recasting Women: An Introduction](#)" in their *Recasting Women* (Delhi, 1989)
5. Sumanta Banerjee "[Marginalization of Women's Popular Culture in Nineteenth Century Bengal](#)" in Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid ed. *Recasting Women*.

Others Recommended

Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850*, 2nd ed. (Routledge, 2003).

Akram Khater, *Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870-1920* (California, 2001).

Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India* (Oxford, USA, 2003).

Week Nine October 13th

The Middle Class Table

Required Reading

Harvey Levenstein, *Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet*.

Others Recommended

Utsa Ray, *Culinary Culture in Colonial India: A Cosmopolitan Platter and the Middle-Class* (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (Cambridge University Press, 1983).

Burton J. Bledstein and Robert D. Johnston, ed.s *The Middling Sorts: Explorations in the History of the American Middle Class*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2001).

Olivier Zunz, *Why the American Century?* (Chicago, 2000)

Assignment

Revised paper proposal due

**Week Ten October 20th
students on their proposals**

No Class Meeting. Individual Meetings (over Zoom) with

Week Eleven October 28th

Class Capitalism and Colonialism

Required Readings

Sherene Seikaly, *Men of Capital*.

Others Recommended

Keith David Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class* (Princeton, 2006).

Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (California, 2005).

Seyyed Nasr, *Forces of Fortune : The Rise of the New Muslim Middle Class and What it will Mean for Our World*. (Free Press, 2009).

Week Twelve November 3rd Worlding the Middle Class

Required Readings

Ricardo A. López, and Barbara Weinstein. eds. *The Making of the Middle Class*.

Week Thirteen November 10th No Class work on your paper

Week Fifteen November 17th **FINAL PAPER DUE.**

Week Sixteen November 20th No Class