

Living History

American Studies 301 / English 350

Professor Bross

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Course goals

The aims of this course are fourfold, but fairly straightforward. By the end of the semester, I hope that you will

1. Hone your skills in researching, both in digital and “bricks and mortar” archives, using both primary and secondary sources.
2. Become skilled in close reading and analyzing all sorts of texts, artifacts, photographs, buildings, and memories.
3. Have a greater theoretical appreciation for the ways that history is not a series of events but a construct created by and through archives, memories, and narratives. To that end, we will be analyzing the ways that archives and memories are created, not as objective reflections of “what really happened,” but as political and social entities. We will read and analyze historical fiction and historical nonfiction to consider how the best of these genres actually have much in common.
4. Look at our community with new eyes, understanding better how our local past is both significant to those whose roots are here and also how it connects to larger currents at the state, national, and global level.

I will, of course, be evaluating your progress toward these goals in several ways: through discussion in class, through exercises, through essays, through a final exam, and possibly through quizzes. But, importantly, I will expect you periodically to assess your own growth in these four areas and let me know via email or in person if you wish to make deeper or more rapid progress.

One last point: we have a real privilege this term of making this study in a small group, which (I hope you’ll agree) is both exciting, because it gives us a greater chance for in-depth discussion and a closer knit intellectual community, but also a bit of a pain, as there’s nowhere to hide in discussion. To enhance the former dynamic and mitigate the latter, this syllabus should be considered a draft, subject to radical change. We’ll revisit the schedule and sequence of assignments after the first unit to see if our collective wisdom at that point suggests changes.

Texts (all at Von’s Books)

Eric Rolfe Greenberg, *The Celebrant*

Caroline Preston, *The Scrapbook of Frankie Pratt*

Nancy Horan, *Loving Frank*

Also, quite a few readings will be available online or through our class Blackboard site.

Schedule of readings, assignments, and events

- August 20 Introduction to the course and to each other
Reading: Morrill Act (handout in class)
- August 22 Remembering Purdue, 1903
- *A Century and Beyond*, excerpt on train wreck (Blackboard)
 - Archival materials (handout)
- August 24 Remembering Purdue, 1903
Class meets at Felix Haas Hall
- David Charles Sloane, "Roadside Shrines and Granite Sketches" in *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture* Volume 12 (2005): 64-81. On-line through Purdue Libraries
- August 27 Remembering (and researching) Purdue, 1903
Class meets at the Karnes archives;
Assignment: Familiarize yourself with the Karnes website, the eArchives and archival catalog. In pairs, you should follow some research angle (generated on August 24) and send me research requests by Monday, 7:00 am.
- Optional: brief introduction to microfilm after class on August 27 or before class on August 29 in HSSE Library. Sign up with me if you plan to come on the 29th.
- August 29 Remembering (and researching) Purdue, 1903
Class meets at the Karnes archives
- John Miller and Simon Miller scrapbooks (Access TBD)
 - Katherine Ott, Susan Tucker and Patricia P. Buckler, "Introduction." *The Scrapbook in American Life*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006: 1-28.
- August 31 Remembering (and researching) Purdue, 1903
Class meets at the Karnes archives for research presentation by Bross
Readings: Selected archival and *Exponent* materials (TBD; announcement and handouts in class)
Assignment: by class time, each of you should have emailed me your nomination for a "site of memory" on Purdue's campus that you think is has the potential to be both interesting for our course goals and for contribution to the "Remembering Purdue" handbook distributed in class. Please give me a description of its location, a picture of the site, and a paragraph or so explaining why you have nominated it for our consideration.

September 3 LABOR DAY

September 5 Sites of Memory assignments distributed
Small group research meetings (with me)
• “Remembering Purdue” (handout)

Assignment: Skim through Purdue Exponent coverage of sports/baseball in 1900-1905. Choose an issue or meaty article to assign the class. Make a PDF and upload into onto our class Blackboard site. Make your recommendations to me by Friday, September 8.

September 7 Theories of living history

- “The Presence of the Past: Patterns of Popular Historymaking,” in Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998: 15-37. (Blackboard)
- Stephen Gapps, “Mobile Monuments: A view of historical reenactment and authenticity from inside the costume cupboard of history,” in *Rethinking History*. Vol. 13, issue 3 (September 2009): 395-409

September 10 Theories of living history

- Richard Turner, “The Kinds of Historical Fiction” in *Genre* 12 (1979): 333-355. Find the print copy in the library and copy for class. Contact me if you have trouble.
- Sarah Johnston, “Chapter 1--The Appeal of the Past,” in *Historical Fiction: A Guide to the Genre*. Westport: Libraries Unlimited, 2005: 1-12 (Blackboard)

September 12 Historical non/fiction, part 1

- Chad Seifreid and Donna Pastore, “Analyzing the First Permanent Professional Baseball and Football Structures in the United States: How Expansion and Renovation Changed Them into Jewel Boxes” in *Sport History Review*. Vol. 40 Issue 2 (Nov 2005): 167-196. (Online through Purdue Libraries)
- John F. Kassen, “Introduction” from *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2001: 3-21. (Blackboard)
- Purdue *Exponent* readings, suggested by class (TBD)

September 14 Historical non/fiction, part 1

- *The Celebrant*
- “The Eastern European Jewish Immigrant Experience with Baseball in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century,” in *Modern Judaism: A*

Journal of Jewish Ideas & Experience. Vol. 28 Issue 1 (Feb 2008): 79-104. (Online through Purdue Libraries)

September 17 Historical non/fiction, part 1
Readings: *The Celebrant*

September 19 Historical non/fiction, part 1
Readings: *The Celebrant*
William Kashatus, "Christy Mathewson: Baseball's Gentleman and Tragic Hero." *Pennsylvania Heritage*. Vol. 34 Issue 4 (Fall 2008): 14-22. (Blackboard)

September 21 Historical non/fiction, part 1
Readings: *The Celebrant*
John M. Harris, "Matty the Red." *Timeline*. Vol. 29, Issue 2 (April-June 2012): 24-37. (Online through Purdue Libraries)

September 22-23: Feast of the Hunter's Moon
Sometime over the course of the weekend, attend the Feast. If you take pictures (I encourage you to do so, load them into the "photos" folder in our Blackboard file and we'll have a slide show on Monday). We'll be discussing reenactment all next week.

September 24 Reenactment as/and History

- Stephen Gapps, "Mobile Monuments: A view of historical reenactment and authenticity from inside the costume cupboard of history," in *Rethinking History*. Vol. 13, issue 3 (September 2009): 395-409

September 26 Reenactment as/and History

- Anja Schwarz, "'Not this year!' reenacting contested pasts aboard *the ship*" in *Rethinking History*. Volume 11, Issue 3 (2007): 427-446. (Online through Purdue Libraries)

September 28 Reenactment as/and History

- Guy Westwell, "Critical Approaches to the History Film—A Field in Search of a Methodology" in *Rethinking History* Volume 11, Issue 4 (2007): 577-588. (Online through Purdue Libraries)

Research week: for each class period this week, arrange to meet with your small group either in the classroom, the archives, or elsewhere. I'll meet with each research group individually over the course of the week.

October 1 Research meetings
October 3 Research meetings
October 5 Research meetings

October 8 BREAK

Presentation run: each small group will have one class period to teach us how to remember their site of memory

October 10 Presentations

October 12 Presentations

October 15 Presentations

October 17 Remembering West Lafayette, 1920
Class meets at the West Lafayette Public Library
Discussion of annotation assignment—class sets parameters and goals
Readings: on principles of transcription, annotation; and/or some kind of technical presentation or digital versions?

Readings: Stratte papers (TBA)

First unit evaluation

October 19 Reading day: class does not meet as a full group, but by the end of class today, each group should email mw with the top three choices of letters and a paragraph providing your reasons for the selection.

October 22 Remembering West Lafayette, 1920
Class meets at the West Lafayette Public Library
Professor Curtis of the history department will lecture on 1920s West Lafayette.

October 24 Remembering West Lafayette, 1920
Class meets at the West Lafayette Public Library
Group reading/annotation of Stratte letter.
Readings: Stratte papers (TBA) and other readings as needed

October 26 Remembering West Lafayette, 1920
Class meets at the West Lafayette Public Library
Group reading/annotation of Stratte letter.

Extra Credit Assignment: Choose one of the sites of memory that did not get assigned in unit one, research and write “Remembering Purdue” entry for it. This assignment can be researched in groups, but each student must submit an individual essay for full credit (10 points)

October 29 Remembering West Lafayette, 1920
Group reading/annotation of Stratte letter

October 31 Remembering West Lafayette, 1920
Class meets at the West Lafayette Public Library; 1920s costumes encouraged!
Readings: (TBA). We will meet as a whole group briefly, then split into groups.

November 2 Remembering West Lafayette, 1920
Readings: (TBA)

Presentation Week: Each group will have a day to teach us how to read their assigned Stratte letter

November 5 Presentations

November 7 Presentations

November 9 Presentations

November 12 Historical non/fiction, part 2
Readings: *The Scrapbook of Frankie Pratt*

Annotated Stratte Letters due

November 14 Historical non/fiction, part 2
Readings: *The Scrapbook of Frankie Pratt*

November 16 Historical non/fiction, part 2
Readings: *The Scrapbook of Frankie Pratt*

Stratte letter essay due (if needed, I will make extensions until class time on November 19).

Saturday, November 17 at 2:00 OR Monday, November 19 during class: Tour of Samara House
We have been invited to attend a longer tour of Samara House than we can manage during our class meeting time. If you can all attend this tour on Saturday, November 17, from 2-4, we will cancel our Monday class (Happy Thanksgiving!). If, however, the Saturday time is not possible, we will take a briefer tour as scheduled during our class time on Monday.

Highly recommended! A bonding experience with the family! Watch the Ken Burns documentary *Frank Lloyd Wright*.

November 21 THANKSGIVING

November 23 THANKSGIVING

November 26 Remembering West Lafayette, 1950s
Readings: TBA

November 28 Historical non/fiction, part 3
Readings: *Loving Frank* (please have the entire novel read by this date)

Proposals for final project due

November 30 Historical non/fiction, part 3
Readings: newspaper accounts of the fire

December 3 Historical non/fiction, part 3
Readings: *Loving Frank*

December 5 Historical non/fiction, part 3
Readings: *Loving Frank*

December 7 Wrap up

December 10-15 exams (date and time to be announced)

Assignments:

10% Site of Memory presentations: By August 31, you should email me a description and picture of your nomination for the subject of this assignment: a place on campus that somehow registers and makes visible Purdue's past (plaques, statues, busts, named buildings, graves, "honors," etc.). On September 5 in class, I'll divide you up into three groups and give each group a "site of memory" assignment, drawn from your nominations. As a group you will have until the week of October 1 to research as deeply as possible your site and to create a presentation for the class. I will evaluate these presentations according to the depth with which you've researched. By "depth" I mean that you should have a good understanding of the significance of the site: how and why it was created, what kind of memory it is meant to hold for the community today; and also you should have some more pointed and informed speculation as to the meaning of the site in an academic sense. For instance, in the "Remembering Purdue" handbook, the Nick Mars EE plaque essay talks about the significance of Mars's gift to his status as a Greek immigrant. I won't expect you to know every possible angle of thought connected to your site, but to be authoritative about those aspects you found most important, to be able both to support your authority with information drawn from *all* available resources, especially the Purdue archives and also to be open-minded about alternative approaches that the rest of us may suggest to you.

20% Site of Memory essay, due Friday, October 12 in class. This individual, 4-5 page essay will build on the research you performed with your small group. You will model this essay on those in the "Remembering Purdue" booklet. Each essay should begin with a description of your site of memory, a discussion of the history/memory associated with the site, and an offering of questions or thoughts that a fuller understanding of the history or memory might provoke. Essays will undoubtedly differ among group members. Ideally, each of you will choose some aspect of the research that you personally followed—or even some aspect that you didn't present but that you were interested in nonetheless. Depending on the quality of your submission, I will be asking you for permission to edit these essays together for inclusion in a future edition of the "Remembering Purdue" publication.

20% Annotated Stratte letter and presentation: On October 17 we will meet at the West Lafayette Public Library, where you'll be introduced to the Stratte family papers. The following Monday, small groups will be assigned one of the letters. Your group's task will be to transcribe the letter according to the principles we develop in this class and to annotate it—that is, to define unfamiliar or archaic words, to footnote events, people, material culture, mores or other elements of the letter that may be unfamiliar to the contemporary reader. Ideally, our transcriptions and annotations will be professional enough to be included on the West Lafayette Library website; certainly we will make your transcriptions and annotations available to the Stratte family, even if the library does not choose to make them public. I will evaluate this group report on the perfection of the transcription and the thoroughness of the annotation. In addition, I will be looking to see that each group makes use of *all* available research tools to find information for the annotation.

20% Stratte letter essay: This individual, 4-5 page paper is due on November 16 (with extensions possible until November 19). This essay can take a couple of approaches, but in

general, the thesis of the essay should be generated from a question that one of the Stratte family letters prompted you to ask. While I assume that these essays will be fairly closely tied to the Stratte archival collection, you may range quite far from the initial prompt, in the way that my initial interest in the Memorial gymnasium has led me to investigate the legacy of the Morrill Act evidenced by the mourning practices of Purdue, post-train wreck.

20% Final project: choose one of the following three possibilities for the final project. No matter which option you choose, please give me a 1-page proposal on November 28 explaining the direction you want your research and writing to take for the final project. The due date of essays and projects will be during our scheduled exam period if it is scheduled early enough, but no later than Wednesday morning of exam week.

- 1) **Essay:** Choose either your site of memory essay (either the one written for regular course credit, or your extra-credit assignment, if you completed it) OR your Stratte letter essay and develop it into a full 10-12 page critical analysis.
- 2) **Research project:** there are several prompts for this project, each of which should result in an annotated bibliography and a 4-6 page analysis of something you've found. The histories we've been developing of the 1900s and 1920s both have components in our rival to the south, the University of Indianapolis as well as more to discover closer to home. For this project, you can either
 - a) compile, read and briefly analyze the local newspaper and/or student press reporting on Purdue-IU football games (or other sports) in the months or weeks leading up to the wreck and/or the coverage in Bloomington of the crash itself. I am particularly interested in elements relating to race, class, or gender.
 - b) Compile, read and briefly analyze any information about Stratte in her time at IU.
 - c) Compile, read and briefly analyze any information about women or gender at Purdue in the 1920s. Did the "new woman" have a place here?
- 3) **Creative criticism:** Create a fictional scrapbook inspired by the Miller brothers' examples or by *Frankie Pratt* and the Stratte papers. To anchor your fiction, choose a real Purdue student from either the classes of 1903/04 or from 1922/23. Research this student as fully as possible, using texts and images from newspapers, *Debris* volumes, advertisements, family papers, eBay and elsewhere, create a scrapbook that will give your reader some understanding of what it is like to be a young man or woman at Purdue in the first part of the twentieth century. You can mock up letters, photos, dance cards etc., if needed. Feel free to "reenact" scrapbooking from your period as closely as possible. Although I hope you'll be playful and include a wide variety of materials in the book, keep in mind that this project should be a work of criticism, so you'll want to make an implicit argument about your character through his or her scrapbook, drawing on what you've learned about historical events, gender, class, race, etc. in your chosen period. Finally, imagine that you've discovered this book in the archives, and write a 4-5 page critical introduction to it, presenting your research "findings" about the scrapbook.

10% Participation, quizzes, occasional assignments, either scheduled or as the need arises: I hope that this category for evaluation is self-explanatory. Given the small size of our class, your prepared, active participation in class discussion is more necessary than usual. I expect that you will attend each class period, and I don't give "excused absences" for any reason. However, I do expect that if you are ill or an emergency arises, that you will contact me as soon as possible to let me know. We have a couple of ungraded assignments scheduled throughout the term. These will be factored into this grade category, as will any (presently unscheduled) quizzes or assignments that I assign.

Course Policy on Honesty and Plagiarism: As the Purdue Student Code of Conduct states, "our foremost interest is toward achieving noble educational goals" (http://www.purdue.edu/usp/acad_policies/student_code.shtml). I believe that striving to understand and appreciate (with fair-minded criticism) our early American forebears through their written and cultural expression is a noble enterprise. I believe that you will best achieve such understanding and appreciation by reading regularly (even doggedly) through the assigned texts, participating in open discussions inside and outside of class and—perhaps most importantly—by wrestling with early American language and ideas in written work created expressly for this class (that is, you are writing new assignments within the context of this English class rather than recycling material written at other times or for other classes), using your own intuition, building on your own textual observations for proof, and sometimes, relying on other peoples' ideas as scaffolding, building blocks, skeletons, frames, etc. When you turn to this latter strategy, which is itself a perfectly respectable and noble academic practice, you should give these other people credit for having gone before you and made your ideas possible.

The problem is, of course, that not everyone has had the kind of introduction to research and citation practices that I assume. How many of us take the time to read through Purdue's Code of Conduct or to wade through a standard handbook's explanation of plagiarism and proper citation? (If you lack such a handbook, see the OWL's nifty page: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/ResearchW/plag.html>).

As a professor, I routinely direct students to these sources for information about staying on the side of truth and light for assignments in my class—I hope you'll take the time to remind yourself of their contents up front. I assume that you've had an introduction to basic research and citation techniques. I evaluate assignments and grade accordingly. If I find plagiarized material in your work, I will forward the details of the problem to the Dean's Office, no matter what the circumstances, and I will assign penalties ranging from a redo on the assignment, a grade of F on the assignment, to an F in the class. Please come and see me if you are a) unsure about how to make proper citations—bring in a past paper if you like, and we can work through it—or b) overwhelmed by an assignment and are starting to get panicky about its completion; the temptation to plagiarize can be overwhelming at such times. While I most likely will not be setting aside time in class to talk about research approaches and citation issues, I am very happy to help you figure these things out on your own, in small groups, or in office hours.

Campus Emergencies

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. Announcements will be made on <http://kristinabross.weebly.com/> or by email.