**Course Descriptions for History Fall Semester 2011**

**History 301: Minority Experience in US Hist (3 credits)  Dr. Smith (TR 11)**
In this course students will explore the experiences of a variety of ethnic, racial, and economic minorities in U.S. history as well as the experiences of some groups historically viewed as transgressive, traitorous, or deviant. Among the questions we will address: How do minority groups struggle for acceptance in American society? How do they assimilate yet retain ethnic, social, political, or personal distinctiveness? How do the country’s laws assist or impede them? What experiences do all minority groups in American society have in common? Areas of emphasis in this course have been designed not to duplicate content or emphases in other history courses. Therefore, we will focus on the experiences of Latino Americans, Asian Americans, and two groups of Euro-Americans: Jews and Poles, as well as the experiences of some political minorities and gay and lesbian minorities. We will also explore the lives and accomplishments of both well-known and unsung minority heroes in U.S. history. Students should expect to use a textbook, Ronald Takaki’s *A Larger Memory: A History of our Diversity*, and a number of additional readings posted to the course Blackboard site.

**History 301: Women in Film (1 credit)  Dr. Smith (Tues 6 PM)**
In this course we will study the evolving roles of women in the film industry throughout its 100+ year history. Starting with silent film, we will be able to connect changes in the ways women are depicted with changes in the status and roles of women in American society. We’re interested in the many ways that film has (and has not) been by, for, and about women – on screen and off. To that end, we will study the history of women’s participation inside the motion picture industry as writers, directors, and actors. We will consider issues such as film form and genre, representation, and spectatorship, and we will observe the ways that race, class, sexuality, and ethnicity intersect with gender through all of these categories of analysis. Among the films we will watch are early silent classics like “The Perils of Pauline” or “Way Down East,” films from the Hollywood heyday, such as “His Girl Friday” and “Adam’s Rib,” and late 20th century films like “Thelma and Louise.” Among more recent films about women, “North Country” and “The Hours” are possibilities. This is a one-credit course meeting for one three-hour session each week. Students will discuss films each week and keep and submit film journals.

**History 302: Introduction to History (3 credits)  Dr. Miracle (TR 12:30)**
This class assumes that everyone has a story to tell. Students will do an oral history project centering on an experience of a Kansan over 60. Do you have a grandpa who likes to talk about World War II? Do you have an auntie who was a school-teacher in Kansas during integration? Was your mom a riveter in World War II—or a politically active home-maker? These are a few of the topics that students can explore. History 302 introduces students to the strategies, methods, and critical thinking skills historians use to apply their craft. The class offers the opportunity to learn research and writing strategies that benefit anyone interested in improving their critical thinking skills.
History 310: Preclassical Age (3 credits) Dr. Gerish (MWF Noon)
This course will focus on cultures before the Classical era of Greece and Rome (500 B.C.E. – C.E.). We will start with “pristine” Bronze Age cultures (developed in isolation) that arose around 3000 B.C.E. in Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, and China. First, we must look at their origins in prehistoric and protohistoric times, where humans faced certain challenges from the environment and solved them in various ways. Their solutions eventually led to the formation of territorial states—polities based on control of certain lands and resources, as opposed to tribes based on family relationships. But as we will see, scholars have not come achieved a single satisfactory explanation for the rise of states. Some explanations focus on external factors such as environment and others on internal factors such as human relationships. While we consider both types of models, the latter will comprise our main enquiry for the semester, because “secondary” cultures (i.e., those that interact with each other) experienced more complications in the realm of human interaction. These secondary cultures in the eastern Mediterranean traded and conquered each other. Some formed empires, or polities including several ethnic and cultural groups. Others created vast trading networks that spanned the entire Mediterranean.

History 313: Medieval Europe (3 credits) Dr. Gerish (MWF 10)
Numerous stereotypes exist concerning the Middle Ages, 500–. Some are negative: everybody was superstitious, learning practically vanished from Western Europe, the Catholic Church controlled people’s thoughts, and crusaders brutally killed people in the name of religion. Some are positive or at least romantic—knights rode out to battle while their beautiful ladies waved goodbye, King Arthur ruled over a peaceful Britain and everybody was happy. Films like Monty Python and the Holy Grail combine both sets of stereotypes for laughs. The reality lies between these two extremes. While Catholicism dominated the religious sector, there was room for a lot of individual or regional variation. Educational and economic opportunities flourished alongside the growth of royal power. Finally, Christians from Western Europe encountered non-Christians and non-Europeans on a grand scale, which led to both crusading and long-distance trading. We’ll consider how medieval people thought about the world around them from primary sources. Their worldview will explain how they sorted themselves into communities based on religious beliefs, gender, social status, and ethnicity.

History 318: Age of Total War, 1900-45 (3 credits) Dr. Lovett (TR 11)
The Age of Total War covers the period from 1914 through 1945 including World War I, the Versailles settlement, the Russian Revolution, the rise of fascism and National Socialism, the coming of World War II, and the final defeat of Germany and Japan. The course will review the events and social forces that made all that possible, including the Great Depression and the negotiations to resolve the crises in Asia and Europe before the war.

History 342: Early Republic, 1789-1848 (3 credits) Dr. Miller (MWF 1)
For years, historians and the American public have generally ignored the era of the Early Republic. It just seemed like those years between the big, important wars that defined and then re-defined our nation. Yet, to truly understand the purpose of the Revolution and what was at stake during the Civil War, one can simply look to the years 1789-1848. The Early Republic saw the formation of vibrant political, social and economic cultures that continue to shape our society today. The elements of nationalism and what it means to be an American were all forged
in the aftermath of the Revolution. The era of the common man, or uncommon man, ushered in a period of rapid change, especially with market forces driving the nation forward. America also came to grips with the problems it had created and worked hard to end the injustice, the violence and the social upheaval that threatened to destroy the great experiment in American democracy.

This course will examine the Early Republic and provide you with a better understanding of the people and the events that forever shaped our nation. The course will mainly focus on the social and political cultures of the nation, since they both dominated how America moved forward as its own nation. We will center our exploration around four themes: Jefferson’s vision for an agrarian republic and what it meant to the American farmer, the contours of the Market Revolution and how a middle and working class ideology arose, Jackson’s democratic revolution that encompassed the common man and the rise of the individual and finally, the social changes brewing in America, centered around reform, religion, family and the construction of an American ideology. We will use the voices of the past, from artisans, farmers, women, Native Americans, slaves, abolitionists, presidents and politicians, as well as writers of the period, to guide us, as we seek to understand how and why America became America. In the end, will you be a loose-fish and a fast-fish, too? Students will be expected to complete weekly readings, several writing assignments and examinations.

**History 346: United States, 1945-74 (3 credits)** Dr. Schneider (MWF 11)

This course examines American history from the end of World War II in 1945 until the resignation of Richard Nixon in August 1974. The course features in depth discussion and investigation of issues such as: the origins and development of the Cold War, McCarthyism and the postwar red scare, the Korean War, postwar economic growth and its social and cultural impact, the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War and decline of liberalism in American politics. The course pays particularly close attention to the political, economic, diplomatic and intellectual developments during this era. There will be five books assigned and several review essays and two exams as requirements for the class.

**History 424: World War I (3 credits)** Dr. Lovett (Thurs 6)

World War I was once called the Great War, and many survivors had hoped that it would be the last conflict of its kind. The course will examine the origins of the First World War, including the rise of nationalism, the creation of offensive military alliances, the predominance of general staffs in diplomacy, and role of modern technology, as well as the birth of the modern era. Unbeknownst to many, World War I was the start of series of events that still shape our contemporary world stretching from a simple assassination in Sarajevo in June 1914 to the Cold War and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The course will examine all those facets, and many others, in what Woodrow Wilson once called “the war to end all wars.”

**History 446: Political Parties, 1789-1896 (3 credits)** Dr. Miller (ONLINE)

This course, designed as a virtual seminar, will explore the first century of political activity in American History. In our first one hundred years, our nation saw the rise and fall of three major political party eras. Our exploration will examine the Federalists, Democratic-Republicans, Whigs and Republicans. We will also look at the rise and fall of third party movements, including the Anti-Masons, Know-Nothings, Free Soilers, Liberty Party, Union Party and the Populists. In the midst of our discussions about particular political parties, we will look at the
questions of democracy, citizenship and voting rights in an era that evolved from selective voters to universal white male suffrage to universal male suffrage to extending the vote beyond the parameters of gender. As one would expect, we will look at major presidential elections that forever shaped American History: 1800, 1824, 1848, 1860, 1876 and 1896. Rather than participate in a weekly quiz, students will be expected to participate in a weekly discussion board, do extensive readings in primary and secondary sources, write four papers and complete a project on a presidential election of their choice. Students will depart the course with a better understanding of American political parties and the grand experiment of democracy during our first century.

**History 479: Conspiracy Theories (3 credits) Dr. Lovett (ONLINE)**

Historically during periods of uncertainty conspiracy theories thrive and are used either to explain a changing economic and political situation or to justify the persecution of those considered outside the mainstream. This is not new and has been around for generations involving the Illuminati, the Masons, and immigrants. This course will examine the major conspiracy theories, which have emerged from the nineteenth century to 9/11, often involving foreign bankers, Jews, and communists, as well as the Kennedy assassination and the collapse of the World Trade Center.

**History 484: Early American Women (3 credits) Dr. Miracle (Thurs 6PM)**

Sex! Scandal! Fashion! Oppression! Agency! Childbirth! Learn about women’s power and influence throughout history. Discuss the agency they exhibited from the colonial period to 1865. We’ll examine women’s roles, the effects of political and social reform, war, immigration and labor movements. Taking into account class and status, we will also try to answer the question, “How’d they do that?”—in regards to potty training, to espionage, to surviving witchcraft accusations, to everything in between.

**History 503/815: Research Seminar: Railroads (3 credits) Dr. Schneider (Monday 2PM)**

This research seminar will focus attention on the research and writing of a substantive paper on American railroad history (the professor is open to any transportation related topic if you don’t like railroads). The idea is to do primary and secondary research in the field of railroad history, to select a topic which will allow undergraduates to complete a 15-18 page research paper and graduate students a 20-25 page research paper. We will have several discussions on books related to railroad history and then select topics. Most of the time spent will be the students researching and writing the paper, though we will meet occasionally to gauge progress.

**History 504: Intro to Grad Studies (2 credits) Dr. Gerish (Thursday 1 PM)**

If you're considering graduate school, take this class. History MA students will share their questions and experiences, helping you decide whether you should pursue a graduate degree. Our textbook for the course will also help you find suitable programs, advisors, and research topics, so that you begin graduate coursework with some of the most difficult issues already resolved.

**History 740: U.S. Historiography to 1877 (3 credits) Dr. Miller (Wednesday 6PM)**
This course is designed to introduce graduate students to some of the central historical questions and interpretations of American history from roughly 1600-1877. In addition, our exploration of historical literature and scholarship is designed to shed light on the processes through which historians interpret the past as well as engage each other in debate. Weekly reading assignments will offer students an opportunity to sample from a variety of topics, methodologies and analytical approaches. Students will complete several writing assignments that assess historiography and will cover topics such as Native American contact, slavery, revolutionary ideology, gender, economics, politics, social and cultural history and memory.