

HIST(POLS)(INTL) 2800: Introduction to Applied History

Fall 2025

Course Meeting Times

Class Meeting Time: Tuesday & Thursday, 1110-1225

Class Meeting Location: Baldwin Hall 307

Instructor & TA Information

Instructor: Elizabeth Tandy Shermer

Email: etshermer@uga.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2-4pm, in-person in LeConte 124 & Zoom, or by appointment

Emails will be responded to within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends.

Course Description & Details

What can we learn about current challenges and choices by studying the past?

This course delves deep into the complexity of making past policies that remain important now and will continue to matter in the future. We will explore across time and space how problems were discovered and conceived, what policymaking processes were, how a policy was implemented, how a policy was changed and/or repealed, and what might (or could) be done in the future. Each week, students will be asked to think comparatively to consider the power and importance of ordinary people, elected officials, institutions, and charismatic leaders as well as the complicated dynamics of the intended and unintended consequences of famous laws, like the 1944 GI Bill, and lesser known (but still important) policies, such as the Shock Doctrine that transformed the Eastern Europe after the Soviet Union's collapse.

[Official Course Catalog Description](#)

This course introduces undergraduate students to the theory and methods of Applied History. It also examines how different areas of policymaking – international relations, military strategy, domestic economic policy – can benefit from this approach. The course also introduces students to related subjects, such as counterfactual history and cognitive biases.

COURSE-LEVEL LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course you should be able to:

- arrive at conclusions through gathering and weighing evidence, logical argument, and listening to counter argument.
- write stylistically appropriate papers and essays by analyzing ideas and evidence, organizing their thoughts, and revising and editing their finished essays.

- identify how the theory and practice of applied history can shape responsible decisions and help leaders craft effective policies.

Required Course materials

TEXTBOOKS & TECHNOLOGY

All of course readings will be available through Perusall, an external website for which there are links in this syllabus and on eLC. All of these materials are open source so there is no need to pay for using them or Perusall.

You can go directly to [our course page](#) or start by creating an account on the [home page](#). Once you have an account page, select “Enroll in a Course” at the top and enter the following code: **SHERMER-NF6L6**.

Assessment and Grading

See eLC for more information about each course requirement.

Course Assignments & Requirements	Due Date	Portion of Final Grade
Perusall Discussions	Mondays & some Wednesdays @midnight	20%
Thursday In-Class History Lab Write-Up	Thursdays during class	20%
BYO Primary Source Paper	September 7	10%
Archival Sources Paper	September 26	10%
Policy Brief: Topic & Bibliography	October 10	5%
Policy Brief: Thesis & Outline	October 26	5%
Policy Brief Paper	November 26	10%
Take Home Final Exam	December 4	10%
Class Participation		10%

Perusall Discussions: Perusall helps you master readings faster, understand the material better, and get more out of your classes by collaboratively annotating the readings with others in your class. You can start a new annotation thread in Perusall by highlighting text, asking a question, or posting a comment; you can also add a reply or comment to an existing thread ([Perusall has an explanation of the tools available in each assignment](#)). Each thread is like a chat with one or more members of your class, and it happens in real time in order to stimulate discussion.

For each reading assignment, unless otherwise noted, you should submit **at least 10 on-time, thoughtful** annotations. Tuesday readings must be completed by Mondays at midnight and Thursday readings (if we have them) by Wednesdays at midnight. Your weekly grade will be based on the overall body of your annotations. You will receive a score for each assignment following [this rubric](#). Top-scoring, effective annotations **deeply engage points in the readings**,

stimulate discussion, offer informative questions or comments, and help others by addressing their questions or confusions. I encourage you to tag/mention your classmates if a comment/question relates to something they have mentioned/asked. Examples of top-scoring annotations can be found [here](#).

Thursday In-Class History Lab Write Up: Tuesday classes will generally focus one key policy so Thursday classes will be history labs, where we will both analyze that policy and compare it to others that we have studied. Students will work in pairs and small groups to write a 2-paragraph critical reflection on a key aspect of how that policy was made and why it mattered in the long run. Responses will be graded with [this 10pt rubric](#).

BYO Primary Source Paper: In lieu of a Thursday Perusall assignment for Week 4, students will need to use UGA's historical newspaper databases to find two different articles from two different newspapers on the bitter fights over the US joining the League of Nations. We will work with those materials in class on Thursday to prepare students to write a short, 1,500-2,000-word essay considering why the US did not join the League of Nations. [Complete directions available on eLC.](#)

Archival Sources Paper: In lieu of a Thursday Perusall assignment, students will need to look at *The Red & Black's* coverage of World War II veterans enrolling in UGA and post two articles about soldiers' experiences. On Thursday, September 25, we'll meet at UGA's Archives and Special Collections to look at how UGA faculty and professors dealt with the many veterans trying to use the most famous benefit in the 1944 GI Bill of Rights. From that material, students will write a short, 1,500-2,000 essay on what it took to pass, implement, and use the GI Bill. [Complete directions available on eLC.](#)

Policy Brief: Students will have the chance to research and write a 3,000-3,500 word policy brief on a topic of their choosing. We will be working on this project in stages over the second half of the semester. [Complete directions available on eLC.](#)

Final Exam: This take-home exam will give students a choice of policies to write an essay comparing how they were made and their consequences.

Note: Students who have earned a **B- average** for both their weekly Perusall and in-class writing assignments will have the option of **not** taking the final. Those students' final exam grade will be the average of their grades for the Perusall and Thursday assignments.

MISSED EXAMS, LATE ASSIGNMENTS, & RE-GRADING REQUESTS

If students miss a class with an in-person written assignment, they need to submit it by Sunday, 11:59PM CT on eLC. Students must meet the weekly deadlines for Perusall assignments, which cannot be made up. For other assignments, grades will be dropped by half a grade for each day that a student is late. Extra credit cannot be turned in after the due date.

EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES

I am constantly on the look-out for extra-credit opportunities & will update the class.

FINAL GRADES

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	F
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93-100	90-92.5	87-89.5	84-86	80-83	77-79.5	74-76	70-73	66-69.5	60-65	0-59.5
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Course Schedule & Activities

Week	Dates	Topic	Assignments Due
1	8/14	Course Introductions	Sign-up for Perusall
2	8/18-8/22	What should the President do? Drafting Article II	*Tues. & Thurs. Perusall Readings *Thursday in-class assignment
3	8/25-9/29	What are the uses of the university? 1862 & 1890 Morrill Acts	*Tues. & Thurs. Perusall Readings *Thursday in-class assignment
4	9/1-9/5	Go it Alone or Together? The Decision to Not to Join the League of Nations	*Tues. Perusall Readings *Wed. (9/3) Midnight: Newspaper Post *Sun. (9/7) Short Paper Due
5	9/8-9/12	A Country of Renters or a Nation of Homeowners? The 1934 Federal Housing Act	* <u>Only</u> Tuesday Perusall Readings *Thursday in-class assignment
6	9/15-9/19	What will it take for a Double V? The Fair Employment Practice Commission	*Tues. & Thurs. Perusall Readings *Thursday in-class assignment
7	9/22-9/26	How Should Veterans be Readjusted? The 1944 GI Bill	*Tues. Perusall Readings *Wed. (9/24) Midnight: <i>Red & Black</i> Post *Thursday: Meet in UGA Library's Archives and Special Collections
8	9/29-10/3	How can Europe be Rebuilt? The Marshall Plan	*Tues. & Thurs. Perusall Readings *Thursday in-class

			assignment
9	10/6-10/10	<u>Tuesday:</u> Policy Paper Discussions <u>Thursday:</u> No Class to Work on Assignment	*Friday 10/10: Topic Statement & Bibliography Due
10	10/13-10/17	Wheat Matters?!? <u>Tuesday:</u> Guest Lecture: Prof. Nelson <u>Thursday:</u> History Lab	*Tues Perusall Readings *Thursday in-class assignment
11	10/20-10/24	Opium & Empire <u>Tuesday:</u> Guest Lecture: Prof. Yang <u>Thursday:</u> History Lab	*Tues Perusall Readings *Thursday in-class assignment 10/26: Intro/Outline Policy Paper Due
12	10/27-10/31	Shocking the Soviets into Capitalism <u>Tuesday:</u> Guest Lecture: Prof. Kellner <u>Thursday:</u> History Lab	*Tues Perusall Readings *Thursday in-class assignment
13	11/3-11/7	Disaster Relief in Puerto Rico <u>Tuesday:</u> Guest Lecture: Prof. Roman <u>Thursday:</u> History Lab	*Tues Perusall Readings *Thursday in-class assignment
14	11/10-11/14	Iran & the Cold War in the Middle East <u>Tuesday:</u> Guest Lecture: Prof. Jones <u>Thursday:</u> History Lab	*Tues Perusall Readings *Thursday in-class assignment
15	11/17-11/21	What Does It Take to Pass a Bill? The Modern Congress <u>Tuesday:</u> Guest Lecture: Prof. Madonna <u>Thursday:</u> History Lab	*Tues Perusall Readings *Thursday in-class assignment
16	11/24-11/28	<u>Tuesday:</u> Virtual Office Hours for Help with Paper <u>Thursday:</u> Enjoy Thanksgiving!	Policy Paper Due: Wed. Nov 26

Course Statements & Policies

UGA Honor Code

"I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at honesty.uga.edu.

Accommodation for disabilities

If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by visiting Clark Howell Hall, calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or 706-542-8778 (TTY), or by visiting <http://drc.uga.edu>.

Attendance & Participation Policy

Students may miss two in-person classes, no excuse necessary. If students miss a class with an in-person written assignment, they need to submit it by Sunday, 11:59PM CT eLC. Additional unexcused absences will result in a lowering of a student's participation grade, which will be judged both on their in-class participation and participation in Perusall assignments.

Use of AI in this Course

UGA's policy is that the use of AI for coursework is not permitted unless explicitly authorized by me (your course instructor) ahead of time. In this class, AI is not permitted.

Well-being Resources

UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community.

Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit sco.uga.edu. Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the Embark@UGA program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.

UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.

- Well-being Resources: well-being.uga.edu
- Student Care and Outreach: sco.uga.edu
- University Health Center: healthcenter.uga.edu
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: caps.uga.edu or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273
- Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu
- Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: drc.uga.edu

Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting <https://well-being.uga.edu>.

Disclaimer

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.