

**History of the Bicycle**  
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Fall 2022  
September 15 – October 6, 2022  
Thursdays, 6-7:30 pm (hybrid – In person & Online)

Course Description:

The modern bicycle has been present in human lives for less than a century and a half, but in that brief period it has spread throughout the world and its popularity is near-universal. In this course we will trace the evolution of bicycles in four distinct ways: **First**, as a transportation device, with a history of innovation and development that will focus on the bicycle's history as a machine. **Second**, we will look at the role of the bicycle in the shaping of race, class, and gender relations and zero in on the labor exploitation of race and class that was facilitated by the development of the bicycle. We also examine the role that social class had to play in the take-off of the bicycle as a transportation and leisure device. **Third**, we will discuss bicycles as devices for human pleasure, leisure time, exercise, and as a politicized site of environmental and political protest via Biketivism. **Fourth**, we examine the bicycle's role in the growth of female independence, popular club formation, the women's suffrage movement, and female marriage patterns. Each segment will also interpret and discuss the bicycle as visual art to explore the relationship between art, consumption, and commodity development. Similarly, bicycles, as forms of human expression, will help us evaluate cultural meaning as it pertains to bicycles and human societies. Combined, the four sections or moments of the course will assist us in exploring the bicycle's invention, growth, and development from the nineteenth through the twenty-first centuries in societies around the world – a global approach to its study.

Instructor:

I completed my B.A., majoring in History and minoring in Cultural Anthropology, at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs in 1987. I then moved to San Diego, California to enter graduate school at the University of California, San Diego. While there I earned my M.A. in History in 1990 and my Ph.D., also in History, in 1995. I then was employed by the University of Arizona in 1995 and have lived in the Tucson area since that time. My research focuses on Nineteenth-century Spain, particularly the press and political relations. I taught a variety of courses at the University of Arizona including: The Making of Modern Europe, 1648 to the present; History of Contemporary Spain, 1808-present; Colonial Spain, 1469-1815; Sexuality in World History; World Comparative Revolutions; History of Anarchism; and Perpetual Revolutions: The History of the Bicycle, among many other courses that straddled the sub-fields of social and cultural History.

The History of the Bicycle is an amalgamation of social and cultural history. I, like many of you, learned to ride a bicycle when I was very young and rode one on and off through my early adolescence. Like many American teens of my generation, I abandoned my bicycle to gather dust in the basement of my parent's house a few months before my sixteenth birthday.

Eventually, in my late twenties, I returned to University to further my formal education and picked up the bicycle as an inexpensive machine to get me to and from campus without having to pay for parking. I rode a bicycle throughout graduate school and became enamored with the sport of cycling and an enthusiast of the bicycle. When I arrived in Tucson to begin my career at the University I continued commuting to campus by bike, but also began logging a lot of cycling miles on the days I didn't have to be on campus. I became a cyclist. Since then my annual mileage steadily increased and I, typically, ride about 6,000 to 7,000 miles a year on my bicycles. I regularly enter Century rides (100 mile rides) in the Southwest and Southern California. In 2017, I rode the Transcontinental Route solo from Astoria, Oregon to Yorktown, Virginia, some 4,370 miles. Bicycling has become, in essence, an integral part of my life and identity.

### Class Schedule and Recommended Readings\*

\*Instructor's Note on the Recommended Readings: The readings are meant to supplement and provide deeper insight for topics that I introduce in lecture. There is no requirement to read them before class, nor any requirement to read them at all. However, I believe you will gain that much more from the class, as well as, perhaps, pique your interest into pursuing further exploration into the history of the bicycle on your own. I encourage you to read these at your leisure as I believe they will enhance your enjoyment of the class.\*

#### **September 15: Course Introduction and the History of the Development of the Bicycle**

In this section of the class we'll discuss the development of the bicycle from 1817 to the present, the circumstances that fueled the growth of the industry, and the different ideals the bicycle represented that then made the bicycle a symbol of human aspirations.

##### Recommended Readings:

David Ortiz, Jr. "News Cycle: The Local Press, the Bicycle Craze, and the Birth of a Cycling Culture in Tucson, 1882-1910," in *Journal of Arizona History*, vol. 63, No. 2, Summer 2022, pp. 187-230.

Richard Harmond "Progress and Flight: An Interpretation of the American Cycle Craze of the 1890s," in *Journal of Social History*, vol. 5, No. 2, Winter 1971-1972, pp. 235-257.

#### **September 22: Race, Class, Gender, and the Bicycle**

This week we will discuss the race, class, and gender components of the bicycle's identity. In each instance (race, class, and gender) the bicycle was an important catalyst for changing social relations. We will see that these changes were not always positive and often came loaded with political implications.

##### Recommended Readings:

Ellen Gruber Garvey "Reframing the Bicycle: Advertising-Supported Magazines and Scorching Women," in *American Quarterly*, vol. 47, No. 1, March 1995, pp. 66-101.

Melody L. Hoffmann “Bike Lanes are White Lanes: Gentrification and Historical Racism in Portland’s Bicycle Infrastructure Planning,” in *Bike Lanes are White Lanes: Bicycle Advocacy and Urban Planning*, Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2016, pp. 81-108.

### **September 29: The Bicycle as an Instrument of Political/Environmental/ Transportation Activism or Biketivism**

There is no doubt that the bicycle has become a platform technology for the advancement of ideas of social and environmental alteration and improvement. In this segment of the course, we will explore the various ways the bicycle has been employed as an instrument of social and environmental change.

#### Recommended Readings:

Peter D. Norton “Street Rivals: Jay walking and the Invention of the Motor Age Street,” in *Technology and Culture*, vol. 48, No. 2, April 2007, pp. 331-359.

Melody L. Hoffmann “Recruiting People Like You: Class-Based Recruitment and Bicycle Advocacy in Minneapolis,” in *Bike Lanes are White Lanes: Bicycle Advocacy and Urban Planning*, Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2016, pp. 111-141.

### **October 6: Female Emancipation and the Bicycle**

In the final class meeting we will zero in on the role of the bicycle in the emancipation of women from historical stereotypes about their fragility, lack of athletic ability, and unpreparedness for the rigors of the “public” sphere.

#### Recommended Readings:

Amy Lubitow, et. al. “Sustainable Cycling for All? Race and Gender-Based Bicycling Inequalities in Portland, Oregon: Sustainable Cycling for All,” in *City and Community*, December 2019, pp. 1-22.

Lisa Strange “The Bicycle, Women’s Rights, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton,” in *Women’s Studies*, vol. 31, No. 5, October 2010, pp. 609-626.