

HIS 401.01
Senior Colloquium: American Biographies

Satisfies: EXP+, SPK, WRTD

Wednesday 3:30-6:20 pm

Prof. Jennifer Anderson

As a quick perusal of the “New Books” shelf at any library or bookstore will reveal, biography is one of the most popular genres of nonfiction writing. Many regard it as a particularly accessible form of history given its focus on the stories of real people. Indeed, in the hands of a skilled biographer, anyone’s life story can offer insights about the time and place in which they lived, as well as the larger social, political, economic, and environmental currents that shaped their experiences and perspectives. In this capstone research seminar, we’ll explore the history of the genre and read a selection of biographies about diverse Americans, including public figures and lesser-known persons. Students will undertake original research to write a biographical profile of an individual.