



# History of Rochester and Western New York



| HIST 179 | Spring 2025 | Mon-Wed 1815-1930 | Meliora 221 |

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## Required Coursework and Grading

- **Four papers are required, as noted below:**
- **Three historical papers are required (30 points each)** – Each to be four to six double-spaced pages (not counting images, notes, etc.), longer papers are fine. Images, maps, etc., are encouraged. E-mail a PDF of your paper to me by the end of class on the due date. Papers are due by the end of class on the date due (except for the last paper which is due on Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup> at 10 am), late papers will lose points. Each paper will cover a topic of your choice for the relevant time period, but some topics may overlap periods which is fine. You must use and cite at least three sources (not counting Wikipedia), one of which must be a primary source, include a list of references. You may use any common citation form. Paper topics can be anything mentioned in class, on the syllabus, or the reference list, or anything else to do with Rochester and/or Western New York. Take time to investigate your topic in depth, especially if you are writing about Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, or George Eastman. E-mail me if you have any questions about your topic. If you want me to look over your paper before you hand it in, send it to me at least one week before the due date. Using the Writing Center is encouraged. Longer papers are fine if you have more to say.
  - **Paper #1: Topic before 1900** – Due March 5<sup>th</sup>
  - **Paper #2: Topic after 1900** – Due April 16<sup>th</sup>
  - **Paper #4: Rochester’s past, present, and future** – Due at 10 a.m. on Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup>. Any topic of your choosing about the history of Rochester and/or Western New York.
- **Paper #3: Historical or other site visit (10 points)** – Due on April 30<sup>th</sup> (last class meeting)
  - Visit a historical site, museum, or other location in Rochester or Western New York, research it and write three to four double-spaced pages about it and how well you think it delivers its message to the public. A virtual visit is acceptable, many local museum web sites include virtual tours, and many have YouTube videos.
- Class attendance is not required but is appreciated. Assignment grades will be posted on Blackboard. The course grade will be based on the total number of points earned in the course, with letter grades assigned according to the following scale:

95-100	A	85-87	B	78-80	C	70-72	D
92-94	A-	82-84	B-	75-77	C-	68-69	D-
88-91	B+	80-81	C+	73-74	D+	0-67	E

## Texts and Resources

A comprehensive list of references is posted on Blackboard. Lecture slides for each class will be posted on line. There is no assigned course textbook, but the following books are useful and recommended. Some have been scanned and will be posted on Blackboard.

*Rochester, the Water-Power City, 1812-1854*, by Blake McKelvey (1945) (available on archive.org)

*Rochester, the Flower City, 1855-1890*, by Blake McKelvey (1949)

*Rochester, the Quest for Quality, 1890-1925*, by Blake McKelvey (1956)

*Rochester, the Emerging Metropolis, 1925-1961*, by Blake McKelvey (1961)

*Rochester on the Genesee: The Growth of a City*, second edition, by Blake McKelvey (1993)

*Smugtown, U.S.A.*, by Curt Gerling (1957)

*A Shopkeeper’s Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837*, by Paul E. Johnson (1978)

*The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850*, by Whitney R. Cross (1950)

*Crucible of the Millennium: The Burned-Over District of New York in the 1840s*, by Michael Barkun (1986)

*The Remaking of a City: Rochester, New York 1964-1984* by Lou Buttino & Mark Hare

**Sources** - Many books and articles can be found on jstor.org, books.google.com, archive.org, HathiTrust.org, and the Rochester Public Library web site. Electronic copies of many newer books are available, with many relevant titles listed on the course reference list.

Some of these require you to be logged into the UR network.

Links to several on-line local and regional newspapers are also included on the reference web page.

**Primary Sources** are immediate, first-hand accounts of a topic from people who had a direct connection with it. Primary sources can include: Texts of laws and other original documents; Contemporary newspaper articles by reporters who witnessed an event or who quote people who did; Speeches, diaries, letters and interviews - what the people involved said or wrote; Datasets, survey data, such as census or economic statistics; Photographs, video, or audio that capture an event. E-mail me if you have a question about a particular source, as this can get fuzzy sometimes.

**Class Schedule** (subject to change)

1	22 January	Introduction, overview and course objectives. The Physical Geography of western New York – lakes, rivers, water, forests, mountains and swamps.
2	24 January (Friday)	Indigenous peoples of western New York.
3	27 January	The conflict between France and England in western New York; The Proclamation Line of 1763; The American Revolution, the Sullivan Expedition and the Treaty of Paris
4	29 January	Becoming a State – Sovereignty, ownership, and settlement.
5	3 February	The Louisiana Purchase, the War of 1812 and the Problem of Transportation.
6	5 February	Settlement and growth of Rochester; Agriculture and flour milling
7	10 February	The Rise of Western New York: Turnpikes, horses and the Erie Canal
8	12 February	Poverty, Poor laws and Debtors' Prisons
9	17 February	The Burned-Over District
10	19 February	Railroads
11	24 February	Temperance and Women's Rights – The Rochester and Seneca Falls Conventions of 1848; Suffrage and New York's voting laws
12	26 February	Rochester and the telegraph
13	3 March	Slavery in New York, The Fugitive Slave Act, Abolitionists; the Underground Railroad and Rochester's connection to John Brown's Raid on Harper's Ferry
14	5 March	<b>Paper #1 due</b>   The Civil War
	<b>10 &amp; 12 March</b>	<b>Spring Break – no class</b>
15	17 March	A city of immigrants; Local government and public services
16	19 March	Public, parochial, and private schools
17	24 March	Business, Industry, and Labor; Rochester's food supply and distribution
18	26 March	The struggle against monopolies
19	31 March	Higher Education
20	2 April	Disease, Medicine, and Public Health; The Flexner Report and a new Medical School
21	7 April	Rapid transit and new suburbs
22	9 April	Electricity, gas, and telephones; Radio and television
23	14 April	World Wars and the Great Depression
24	16 April	<b>Paper #2 due</b>   The Great Migration (1910 to 1970) and the local response
25	21 April	Highways and urban renewal; Are highways racist?
26	23 April	Smugtown, U.S.A.: The Golden Years (?)
27	28 April	The 1964 Riots and their aftermath
28	30 April	<b>Paper #3 due</b>   The decline of industry and impact of a new economy in a city of poverty
		<b>Paper #4 due at 10 am on Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup></b> (Day after last day of finals)



The College's credit hour policy on undergraduate courses is to award 4 credit hours for courses that meet for the equivalent of 2 periods of 75 minutes each week. Students enrolled in HIST 179 are expected to devote at least one hour each week to identifying the main lines of argument in course readings, working alone or in groups, and to researching in depth their topics for their papers.

**Students with disabilities:** The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources. The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can reach the [Office of Disability Resources](#) at: [disability@rochester.edu](mailto:disability@rochester.edu); (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall.

**Academic honesty:** All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and will be treated as such. Anyone who engages in such activities will be turned over to the College Board on Academic Honesty for disciplinary action, as outlined at <http://www.rochester.edu/College/honesty/>.

For a helpful discussion of plagiarism (including subtle instances), see the American Historical Association's "Defining Plagiarism," <https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/teaching-resources-for-historians/plagiarism-curricular-materials-for-history-instructors/defining-plagiarism>.