

HIST2112 – Introduction to U.S. History since 1865

University of Georgia – Fall 2009

TTh 12:30 – 1:45 p.m.

S306 Instructional Plaza

Instructor: Dr. Brian A. Drake

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The course syllabus is a general plan for the course, not a contract; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary

What is it about history that makes some people dislike history classes so much? The answer probably has a lot to do with the misconceptions people have about what “history” is. Lord Chesterfield is alleged to have once said that history is “a useless pile of facts.” The famous Supreme Court justice Oliver Wendell Holmes apparently agreed with him, saying “the literature of the past is a bore.” Even the British historian Arthur Toynbee (who should have known better) remarked that history is “just one damn thing after another.” But most professional historians will tell you that history is about far more than “the facts.” Names and dates are only the beginning. Any fool can tell you *what* happened in the past; the trick is to understand *why*. Look around you. Why is the United States of 2009 the way it is? Why does it have the social, cultural and political structures it does? How did it get that way? And how did YOU get that way? Why do you and I and our fellow citizens speak, act and believe as we do? Our mission in HIST2112 is to think about some possible answers.

Course Description and Objectives: This class is a broad, survey-level introduction to the history of the United States from the period of Reconstruction to the present day. It is not meant to be an exhaustive, comprehensive class in which you will be taught everything you will ever need to know about recent American history. Instead, the class is intended to help you explore and think about vital issues and themes in our nation’s past. Indeed, it aims to help you understand the great transformations and trajectories of American history since the end of the Civil War in 1865. Specifically we will focus on conflicting views about the “idea of America” – clashing opinions about what it means to be an American, and what America’s aim and role should be in the lives of its citizens. We’ll approach these conflicts through a mixture of lectures, readings, class discussion, and (of course!) paper assignments and exams.

General Course Requirements: If you do nothing else this semester, you will be asked to absorb a lot of information. Lectures are a key element of this. You are strongly

advised to come to class, and come ready and willing to listen actively and think critically – lectures are never passive activities.

Readings are vitally important as well – and there is a lot of it! I’ve chosen the required texts for this class based on their affordability, literary quality and general “readability.” They are usually very interesting readings, but at times they can be, like life itself, a little boring and sometimes a little too long. But the dedicated, attentive reader, one who “engages the texts,” as we say in the history profession, will be rewarded with a much-improved sense of our past. *You are expected to read all of the assigned texts in their entirety.*

Required Readings: Roark et al., *The American Promise, Vol. II – value edition*
Robert Marcus et al., *America Firsthand, 8th ed., Volume II*
Scott Martelle, *Blood Passion*
Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest*
David Farber, *Taken Hostage*
Ronald Story and Bruce Laurie, *The Rise of Conservatism in America, 1945-2000*
**We will also incorporate a handful of websites for use on September 11th and 25th.

Grade Breakdown: First Exam (September 22nd) – **25 percent**
Second Exam (October 29th) – **30 percent**
Final Exam (December 15th) – **35 percent**
Research Paper (due December 3rd) – **10 percent**

PAPER: You will write one 5-7 page research paper in this class. Approximately three weeks prior the due date of **December 3rd, 2009**, you will be given a “topic sheet” with a choice of specific topics for the paper. You will be required to use the texts from the course, proper Chicago-style citations and grammar, and an appropriate level of analysis.

GRADING STANDARDS: Grading standards in this class are simple. With modern word-processing programs, spell-check, etc, there is little excuse for papers filled with grammatical errors or ones that fail to meet the minimum required length. A typical “C” paper, exam, or essay has few or none of these kinds of weaknesses. On the other hand, while it may be technically solid, typical “C” work does not show much distinction in clarity of argument, creativity, or originality of insight. It may be repetitive or rambling, or obvious, or it may simply have no real thesis or “point” to it. It may not support its arguments sufficiently or it may fail to address important issues. Severe problems along these lines will result in grades of “D” or “F.” On the other hand, a “B” paper or essay shows a good grasp of reading and lecture material, some creativity and “fresh thinking,” and uses good evidence and examples from both lectures and readings. It is well-organized, too. *An “A” paper or essay demonstrates deep, penetrating insight and unusually good verbal facility. It is the work of someone who has thought long and hard about the issues, grappled with them, pulled together diverse strands of evidence into a convincing argument, and in general has achieved a truly impressive level of*

coherence, clarity, and critical thinking. Grading standards for tests are essentially the same as for papers, although I am not as concerned about tight organization or spelling. I understand the time pressures involved in an in-class exam. However, “A” exams will still be expected to achieve a level of coherence and analysis far above a typical “C” exam.

****All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty," http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/culture_honesty.htm. Each student is responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.****

Class Behavior: As a courtesy not only to me and our graders but to your fellow classmates, please arrive to class on time and refrain from reading the newspaper, talking, text-messaging, surfing the Internet, etc. after lecture begins. And turn off those cell-phone ringers – I get a kick out of the crazy things I hear as ringtones, but nevertheless the unexpected and clearly-audible call always disrupts the flow of class for both me and your fellow students.

Make-Up Policy: All students are expected to turn in all assignments on time, and attend all exams at their regularly-scheduled times. It is vitally important that, in the event you are absolutely unavailable to take an exam, that **you inform me (and your TA, if applicable) prior to the exam.** Please note that make-up exams will **ALMOST NEVER** be given without a good reason. A “good reason” is essentially limited to University-sanctioned absences, certain overlapping exams, deaths in the family, and severe illness or injury. Additionally, I will require **written evidence** for a makeup exam which meets the above conditions, and I will **not allow** make-ups to accommodate work or vacation schedules, “oversleeping” and missing part/all of an exam, non-functioning alarms, car trouble, etc.

Finally, a few words on **PLAGIARISM.** In this class we will adhere to UGA’s University Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy. Plagiarism – **the attempt to pass off another’s written work, from any source, as your own, without adequate reference or citation** – is strictly forbidden. Cheating on exams, quizzes, and so forth is forbidden as well. *If I or the TAs discover a student in an act of plagiarism or cheating, I WILL initiate procedures to charge him or her with academic misconduct (indeed, UGA regulations require it), and there is a serious possibility that I will recommend to the University that the student receive a zero in the entire course. I hate to sound vindictive, but plagiarism and cheating are serious matters and we will not tolerate them.*

Okay, everything clear as mud? Well, away we go.....

Week One – August 17-21, 2009:

Tuesday, August 18: Punishing or Pampering the South? Presidential and Radical Reconstruction

Thursday, August 20: Emancipation and the African-American “Freedman” Experience

Readings: *American Promise*, chapter 16
America Firsthand, “African Americans during Reconstruction,”
“White Southerners’ Reactions to Reconstruction,” “The Murder of Jim Williams,” and “Work Under Sharecropper and Labor Contracts.”

Week Two – August 24-28, 2009:

Tuesday, August 25: The Legacy of Conquest – Westward expansion

Thursday, August 27: The Age of Capital - Industrialization and the Rise of Big Business

Readings: *American Promise*, chapter 17 and 18
America Firsthand, “School Days of an Indian Girl,” “Points of View: Industrialism and Progress (1882) – ‘The Decline of the Independent Craftsman’ and ‘Workers Prosper as Industry Grows,’” and “Losing Out to Standard Oil.”

Week Three – August 31-September 4, 2009:

Tuesday, September 1: Urbanization, Immigration, and the Huddling Masses

Thursday, September 3: “Eight Hours for What We Will”- Unionization and the Labor Movement

Readings: *American Promise*, chapters 19 and chapter 20, pp. 620-28
Scott Martelle, *Blood Passion* (entire)

Week Four – September 7-11, 2009:

Tuesday, September 8: Lynching Freedom in Jim Crow’s New South

Thursday, September 10: Lynching Freedom, continued

Readings: *America Firsthand*, “Antilynching Campaign in Tennessee.”
** Browse some of the lynching postcards on the website
<http://www.withoutsanctuary.org/> and come to discussion prepared to analyze them.

Week Five – September 14-18, 2009:

Tuesday, September 15: Silver and Gold - The Populist Revolt against Industrialization

Thursday, September 17: Searching for Order - The Progressive Era

Readings: *American Promise*, chapter 20, pp. 613-20, 628-635, and chapter 21
America Firsthand, “Honest and Dishonest Graft,” “Protecting Yosemite,” “Points of View: The Triangle Shirtwaist Fire (1911) – “Conditions at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company,” and “A Fire Trap,” “Suppressing the ‘Dreadful Curse of Liquor,’”

Week Six – September 21-25, 2009:

Tuesday, September 22: **FIRST EXAM – in class**

Thursday, September 24: Catching the Spirit of Empire - American Imperialism at the Turn of the Century

Readings: *American Promise*, chapter 20, pp.635-46
**Browse the cartoons, newspaper headlines, and so forth at the websites <http://www.pbs.org/crucible/crucible> and <http://www.oah.org/pubs/magazine/1898/martinez-lesson.pdf>, and be prepared to analyze them. Also, read Mark Twain, “The War Prayer,” available at http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_War_Prayer

Week Seven – September 28-October 2, 2009:

Tuesday, September 29: World War I and The Red Scare

Thursday, October 1: The Roaring Twenties - Babbitts, Flappers, and Klansmen

Readings: *American Promise*, chapter 22 and 23, pp. 718-740
America Firsthand, “The Trial of Kate Richards O’Hare,” “The Harlem Renaissance,” “My Fight for Birth Control,” and “Advertising in the Interwar Years”

Week Eight – October 5-9, 2009:

Tuesday, October 6: “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?” – The Depression’s Effects on America

Thursday, October 8: A New Deal for America

Readings: *American Promise*, chapter 23, pp. 740-751, and chapter 24
Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest* (entire)

Week Nine – October 12-16, 2009:

Tuesday, October 13: “Daddy’s Gone to War”: the Home Front in WWII

Thursday, October 15: Containing the Red Menace: the Cold War begins

Readings: *American Promise*, chapter 25
America Firsthand, “Points of View: Building and Using an Atomic Bomb (1942-1945) – ‘To Build an Atomic Bomb,’ and ‘To Use an Atomic Bomb,’ ‘Rosie the Riveter,’ and ‘Memories of the Internment Camp’”

Week Ten – October 19-23, 2009:

Tuesday, October 20: Fluoride in the Water? McCarthyism and the Postwar Red Scare

Thursday, October 22: The Affluent Fifties: Suburbia, Consumerism, and the Liberal Consensus Era

Readings: *American Promise*, chapters 26 and 27, pp. 858-883
America Firsthand, “Blacklist: Post-World War II Red Scare,” and “Levittown: Making America Suburban”

Week Eleven – October 26-30, 2009:

Tuesday, October 27: To Redeem the Soul of America: The Civil Rights Movement

Thursday, October 29: **SECOND EXAM – in class**

Readings: *American Promise*, chapter 27, pp. 884-890
America Firsthand, “Mississippi Freedom Summer”

Week Twelve -- November 2-6, 2009:

Tuesday, November 3: Postwar Liberalism's High Water Mark

Thursday, November 5: Hearts and Minds - America and Vietnam

Readings: *American Promise*, chapter 28, pp. 891-904, and chapter 29
America Firsthand, "Points of View – The My Lai Massacre and Its Aftermath (1968-70) – 'Disbelief and Corroboration' and 'Cover-up and Outcome'"

Week Thirteen -- November 9-13, 2009:

Tuesday, November 10: Days of Hope and Rage: Panthers, Weathermen, and Yippies in the 1960s

Thursday, November 12: The Other Side of the Sixties: Barry Goldwater and the Rise Of Postwar Conservatism

Readings: *American Promise*, chapter 28, pp. 904-930
America Firsthand, "Feminism and Consciousness-Raising," and "The Young Lords"
Ronald Story and Bruce Laurie, *The Rise of Conservatism in America, 1945-2000*, pp. 38-43, 49-72

Week Fourteen -- November 16-20, 2009:

Tuesday, November 17: Watergate

Thursday, November 19: The Bummer Decade: the Oil Crisis, Existentialism, and the Unraveling of Postwar Liberalism in the 1970s

Readings: *American Promise*, chapter 30, pp. 965-982
David Farber, *Taken Hostage* (entire)

***** Thanksgiving Break – November 23-27, 2009*****

Week Fifteen -- November 30-December 4, 2009:

Tuesday, December 1: "Morning in America" - The Age of Reagan and the New Right

Thursday, December 3: The 1990s (**PAPER DUE TODAY IN CLASS!**)

Readings: *American Promise*, chapter 30, pp. 982-1000 and chapter 31
Ronald Story and Bruce Laurie, *The Rise of Conservatism in
America, 1945-2000*, pp. 97-106, 122-142

Week Sixteen: December 7-11, 2009:

Tuesday, December 8: Course Wrap-up

Readings: *America Firsthand*, “Border Crossings”

******FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, December 15, 2009 – 12 to 3pm******