

**History 3073**  
**Modern American, 1945 to the Present**

Class time and location: MWF 12:20 p.m.—Caldwell Hall, room 203  
Instructor: Robby Luckett  
Email: [robbyms@uga.edu](mailto:robbyms@uga.edu)  
Office hours: MWF 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.—LeConte Hall, room 133

This syllabus is a general plan for the course: deviations announced to the class may be necessary.

### **Course Description**

This course is a survey of American history since 1945. We will study major people, events, and eras, including the Cold War, Korea, the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, feminism, the 1980s, Ronald Reagan, and others. We will also examine less well-known figures and moments that have informed the dominant narrative of American history in an attempt to show the complexity of that history. We will particularly look at the roles of women, minorities, and the working class in this story.

Monday and Wednesday classes will be reserved primarily for lecture. Because much of modern American history has been recorded on film, we will view a substantial number of videos on those days as well, and, since violence has been a major part of that history, be prepared to be confronted with some graphic images. All videos will be considered to be the equivalent of lectures, and you should treat them as such. You should take notes on them, be prepared to discuss them, and study them as you would your lecture notes for the exams.

Fridays will be our discussion day and will focus on the readings for the week. On these days be prepared for pop quizzes and in-class writing assignments, which will count towards your participation grade. These exercises will be simple, but they will test whether you did the assigned reading for the week. As noted, participation will be a part of your final grade, so also be prepared to contribute in class.

History is much more than dates and figures and names. What has happened in the past is important but even more so is how people conceptualize what has happened in the past. Critical and analytical thinking and especially writing are essential in this process. With that in mind, this class centers on reading and writing assignments. The ability to analyze a document beyond what is presented and to express that critique on paper is an invaluable skill beyond a history class.

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend each class. I WILL TAKE ATTENDANCE EVERY DAY. If you have an excused absence, please notify me well before the scheduled class time.

Five unexcused absences (i.e. without documentary evidence of a medical or family emergency or similar event) will result in a half-letter grade deduction from your overall grade. If your overall grade was going to be an A-, then it would be a B+ instead. Every unexcused absence after that will result in another half-letter grade deduction. If you are late to class, you will be counted as tardy, and every three tardies will be counted as an unexcused absence. If you are more than 10 minutes late to class, you will receive an unexcused absence. *We will begin taking official attendance on January 11.* If you have perfect attendance, you will receive a half-letter grade increase in your overall grade.

### **Book Reviews**

There are two books assigned for this course: Laura Wexler's *Fire in a Canebrake* and Linda Van Devanter's *Home Before Morning*. You will be expected to write a two- to three-page book review. These reviews can cover specific questions that I will provide ahead of time or any aspect of these books

that you would like to discuss, but they should NOT regurgitate the material. In writing these, you can assume that I have read the books, and you can focus on an extended analysis of relevant topics. I am not looking for you to talk about whether or not you liked the book. Instead, I want you to analyze important issues in the books.

We will talk more about these assignments as they approach, but a few pointers here may be helpful. You do not need to do any outside reading or bring in any outside sources. Simply focus on the books at hand. If you paraphrase or use a direct quote from the books, you should cite it in parentheses with a page number. I do not need a full citation. Your papers should be the full required length; one and a half pages do not count. They should not exceed 4 pages. If you do not turn in your review on time, there will be a 10-point penalty for each day that it is late. Correct spelling and grammar are an essential part of writing; PROOFREAD your papers.

### **Exams**

There will be two exams: a midterm and a final. These will be written exams and will most likely include some identifications, short answers, and essays. The final exam will NOT be cumulative; it will only cover the material presented after the midterm. The exams will test you on the lecture material.

### **Extra Credit**

There will be opportunities for extra credit over the course of the semester. More information will be provided as these dates approach. Take advantage of them because, unless I have made a blatant error, grade-grubbing will NOT help you.

### **WebCT**

We will be using WebCT this semester to post important information from time to time. If you do not know what WebCT is or how to use it, come to see me or ask one of your fellow students. Do NOT use WebCT to contact me; I do not check the e-mail tool on it. Please use my regular UGA e-mail instead.

### **Disability or Health Related Issue**

Students with a disability or health related issue who need a class accommodation should make an appointment to speak with me as soon as possible.

### **A Culture of Honesty**

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Each student is responsible for becoming informed about those standards before performing any academic work.

### **Required Texts**

Laura Wexler, *Fire in a Canebrake*

Linda Van Devanter, *Home Before Morning*

You may purchase the two books at the UGA bookstore; the Off Campus, Baxter Street, East Campus, and FTX Bookstores; or online. Half.com is one of my personal favorites.

*The course packet can be picked up at Bel-Jean's.*

### **Grading**

Participation	10%
First Book Review	20%
Midterm	20%
Second Book Review	25%
Final Exam	25%

### **DUE DATE**

January 28
February 18
March 28
May 5

## Schedule

### Week 1

January 7  
January 9  
January 11

Introduction  
World War II  
*The Atomic Café*  
**No discussion but begin reading *Fire in a Canebrake*.**

### Week 2

January 14  
January 16  
January 18

The Dawn of the Cold War  
McCarthyism and Korea  
**Reading**  
Joseph McCarthy: *Speech Explaining the Communist Threat*  
<http://www.teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=858>  
NSC 68  
<http://www.teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=714>  
**Continue reading *Fire in a Canebrake*.**

### Week 3

January 21  
January 23  
January 25

**NO CLASS—Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**  
The Dawn of the Civil Rights Movement  
**Reading**  
John Dittmer, Course packet: *Local People*  
**Continue reading *Fire in a Canebrake*.**

### Week 4

January 28  
January 30  
February 1

Jackie Robinson  
Charles Hamilton Houston and the NAACP  
**Reading**  
Laura Wexler, *Fire in a Canebrake*.

## FIRST BOOK REVIEW

### Week 5

February 4  
February 6  
February 8

*Rosie the Riveter*  
Women in the 1950s  
**Reading**  
Betty Friedan: *The Feminine Mystique*  
<http://www.h-net.org/~hst203/documents/friedan1.html>

### Week 6

February 11  
February 13  
February 15

The Transformation of Rural America  
The Rise of Suburbia  
**No reading: Review for Midterm.**

### Week 7

February 18  
February 20  
February 22

**MIDTERM**  
*Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*  
**No reading:** Emmett Till

### Week 8

February 25  
February 27  
February 29

Montgomery and Little Rock  
**Reading**  
Howell Raines, Course packet: *My Soul Is Rested*, Down-Home Resistance  
Jo Ann Gibson Robinson, Course packet:  
*The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It*  
**NO CLASS—Leap Year!**

**Week 9**

March 3 Freedom Rides, Sit-ins, and Integration  
March 5 1963 and 1964  
March 7 **Reading**  
Math 254 Essays, WebCT

**Week 10**

March 10-14 **Spring Break. Begin reading *Home Before Morning*.**

**Week 11**

March 17 The Origins of the Vietnam War  
March 19 JFK and Foreign Policy of the 1960s  
March 21 **Reading**  
JFK: "1961 Inaugural Address"  
<http://www.historyplace.com/speeches/jfk-inaug.htm>  
**Continue reading *Home Before Morning*.**

**Week 12**

March 24 The Great Society  
March 26 The Vietnam War  
March 28 **Reading** **SECOND BOOK REVIEW**  
Linda Van Devanter, *Home Before Morning*.

**Week 13**

March 31 Watts and the Rise of Black Power  
April 2 Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam  
April 4 **Reading**  
Malcolm X, Course packet: *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*  
James Baldwin, Course packet: *The Fire Next Time*

**Week 14**

April 7 The New Left and the New Right  
April 9 Nixon and Watergate  
April 11 **Reading**  
Students for a Democratic Society: "The Port Huron Statement"  
[http://www3.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML\\_docs/Resources/Primary/Manifestos/SDS\\_Port\\_Huron.html](http://www3.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Resources/Primary/Manifestos/SDS_Port_Huron.html)  
Young Americans for Freedom: "The Sharon Statement"  
<http://www.yaf.com/statement>

**Week 15**

April 14 The 1970s  
April 16 Second-wave Feminism and the ERA  
April 18 **Reading**  
Phyllis Schlafly: "The Phyllis Schlafly Report"  
<http://www.eagleforum.org/era/psr/psrnov81.pdf>

**Week 16**

April 21 Reagan  
April 23 The End of the Cold War  
April 25 **Reading**  
Ronald Reagan: "*Evil Empire*" Speech  
<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=961>

**Week 17**

April 28 **REVIEW**  
May 5 **FINAL EXAM**