

SYLLABUS

History 212

United States History since 1865
Fall 2005

Instructor: Dr. Peter S. Carmichael
Mclver 241

Lecture

Tuesday and Thursday
9:30–10:45
Office Hours: T, Th 11:00-12:30 and by
appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is an introductory course that provides an overview of United States history since 1865. We will employ a biographical approach to understand the conflicts that have shaped the American past. Understanding how ideas motivate people of all classes and various backgrounds is one of the most important tasks facing a historian. We will confront this challenge by exploring the political awakening of certain historical figures. In other words, how did events, private issues, cultural trends, and social conditions politicize certain individuals? Some of the people we will study are household names; others are less well known. The text, A People and a Nation, and my lectures will provide the necessary contextual information. This is essential background material for Contending Voices, which offers a close-up examination of two individuals who stood on opposite sides of important issues. Contending Voices will serve as the basis of our discussions and your analytical papers. These are valuable exercises that will prepare you for the capstone of the course---a ten-page biographical study. You will interview and write about a family member or friend who came of age in the 1950s or 1960s.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Through weekly readings and discussion you will become familiar with the major developments and historical patterns in American history from 1865 to Watergate.
- Write analytical reviews that have a clearly stated thesis and that are well organized and written.
- Understand the connection between the private and public lives of individuals and how that dynamic shapes political action.
- Write a biographical study that employs primary and secondary sources.

GRADING: A final grade will be based upon written work and class participation.

Preliminary work for projects 25 points
Final Project... .. 200 points
Response Papers 250 points
Quizzes 50 (10 points each)
Final Exam 150 points

Total course points 675 points

Biographical Study:

Students will research and write a ten-page biographical study of an individual of their choosing. The student will need to interview the subject, keeping in mind that the paper hinges on trying to explain how a particular public event or cultural development reoriented an individual's understanding of the world. You need to analyze, in other words, the political awakening of your subject. This will also require that you understand the connection between the private and public life of your subject. For instance, you could ask a relative who attended college in the late 1960s how they viewed the student protests against Vietnam. Compare their reactions to the attitudes of most young people in 1960s. Ask your grandmother how she and her friends felt about the emergence of Elvis Presley. The possibilities are endless, but be certain that your paper explains how a particular moment brought about a fundamental shift in your subject's political outlook and actions. A more detailed list of instructions will be forthcoming.

Analytical Reviews:

You will write five two-page papers based on the readings in Contending Voices. The lowest score will be dropped automatically. These papers are designed to help you with paragraph development, organization, thesis construction, and the integration of secondary and primary sources. These papers will also help you prepare for classroom discussion.

Quizzes:

There will be six quizzes during the course of the semester. The lowest score will be dropped automatically. The quizzes will focus on Into the Wild and Autobiography of Malcolm X. You must pass at least two of the three quizzes on each book. If you fail more than one quiz for any one book, you will have to write a ten-page research paper on a topic arranged by the instructor.

Participation

This assessment will be based on the following criteria:

- This is not a lecture course. Thorough preparation for this class is essential. All readings should be done before class. It is imperative that you have either handwritten or typed notes that outline the central questions and arguments of the assigned readings.
- It is essential that you contribute to class on a consistent basis, that you intellectually engage with your peers, and that you are an active listener. In order to create an inviting environment for everyone to participate, please follow the guidelines:
- Be ready to explain the broader argument and sub-themes of the assigned material and how the various readings fit together or diverge.
- Instead of just criticizing a book, focus on understanding the contributions of the assigned readings and why they have had a lasting influence on the field.
- You should feel free to disagree with others, but be specific in your own assertions and support them with evidence. You should also be willing to change your mind and concede to others when they make persuasive, well-reasoned arguments. Please challenge each other in a polite and courteous manner.
- The success of a discussion depends on group interaction. Listen carefully and respond to your peers. There should be a dynamic give-and-take between the discussion leaders and the rest of

the class. This can only happen if you elaborate upon the assertions of classmates or ask for clarification if you don't understand. Simply answering the questions will not lead to vigorous debate, and the discussion leaders will end up giving a monologue.

- Make your point succinctly, avoid repetition, and stick to the subject.

FINAL EXAMINATION: You will receive the final examination question by the second week of class. Throughout the course of the semester you will be able to craft your response to this question, using your readings, class notes, and discussions. I will be more than happy to look at your drafts to this question. You will also be allowed to use outline for the final examination which is scheduled on the final day of class.

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is mandatory. Missing a class will hurt a student's overall performance. You are allowed **three excused absences**. For every absence after three you will lose **three percentage points from your final grade**. If you miss a class, it is **your** responsibility to get the notes for that day.

BOOKS:

Norton, et. al. A People and A Nation (Brief Sixth Edition)
Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby
Salinger, The Catcher in The Rye
Kraauer, Into the Wild
Malcolm X The Autobiography of Malcolm X
Hollitz and Fuller, Contending Voices

CLASS SESSIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1 (August 16-18) **Begin Into the Wild**
Read: Th Into the Wild Introduction and 1-60

(Into the Wild Quiz August 18)

Week 2 (August 23-25) **Continue Into the Wild**
Read: T Into the Wild 61-156; Th Into the Wild 157-203

(Into Wild Quiz August 23 and Into Wild August 25)

Week 3 (August 30-September 1) Reconstruction
Read: T People Chapter 16; Contending Voices 1-12

(Turn in description of the person you plan to interview, explain what you consider to be the defining moment in their political life, and a list of the questions that you intend to ask, September 1)

Week 4 (September 6-8) Industrial America
Read: Great Gatsby vii-64, T People Chapter 18 and 19; and Th Contending Voices 22-34

(Based on chapter two in the Contending Voices, you should respond to either question one or two (p. 43) in two-typed pages, Sept. 8)

Week 5 (September 13-15) The New South
Read: Great Gatsby 65-118, and Th Contending Voices 45-64

Week 6 (September 20-22) Progressive America
Read: Great Gatsby 119-189; T People Chapter 21 and Th Contending Voices 65-81

(Based on chapter four in Contending Voices, you should respond to question one (p. 86) in two-typed pages, Sept. 22)

Week 7 (October 4-6) 1920s

Read: T Contending Voices 127-144 and People Chapter 24

(Turn in two-typed pages on Great Gatsby, Oct. 6)

Week 8 (October 11-13) Depression and the New Deal

Read: Salinger 81-134; Th People Chapter 25 and Contending Voices 147-59

(Turn in copies of primary evidence, one page contextual analysis, and one page summary of turning point, October 13)

Week 9 (October 18-20) Cold War

Read: Salinger 135-174; T People Chapter 28, 29, and Th Contending Voices 186-97

(Based on chapter nine in Contending Voices, you should respond to question one (p. 206) in two-typed pages, October 20)

Week 10 (October 25-27) Life in Postwar America

Read: Salinger 174-214; T Contending Voices 207-219

(Turn in two-typed pages on Catcher in the Rye, October 27)

Week 11 (November 1-3) The Civil Rights Movement

Read: Autobiography of Malcolm X

(Malcolm X Quiz, November 3, Chapters 1-12)

Week 12 (November 8-10) Black Power

Read: Autobiography of Malcolm X

(Malcolm X Quiz, November 8, Covers Chapters 13-16 and November 10, Covers Chapters 17-19)

Week 13 (November 15-17) Vietnam

Read: T People Chapter 31

(Rough Draft of final project due November 17)

Week 14 (November 22-24) 1960s

Read: T People Chapter 30

November 24 No Class: Thanksgiving

Week 15 (November 29-December 1) Watergate

Read: Th Contending Voices 247-259

December 1 Final Examination

Week 16 (December 6) **Final projects due**

NOTE: While attempting to adhere to the outlines within this syllabus, the instructor reserves the right to adjust components with due notice to the class.