

Fall 2011 | University of North Carolina, Greensboro
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., and Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

HIS 316: Interpreting American History Course Syllabus

Covering more than four centuries, this course explores a broad swath of American history. Through an in-depth examination of seven episodes, the course will familiarize students with the analytical skills employed in the study of history. By contextualizing these transformative moments, the course will introduce students to the controversies, trends, events, and actors that shaped America's past.

Course Requirements: The requirements for this course include assigned readings for each class, periodic in-class assignments and quizzes on the assigned readings, several take-home assignments, and a final exam.

Assigned Readings: There are six required books assigned for this class: Richard Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt: A Brief History with Documents* (2011); Edward Countryman, *What Did The Constitution Mean To Early Americans?* (1999); Kenneth S. Greenburg, *The Confessions of Nat Turner and Related Documents* (1996); Marilyn S. Johnson, *Violence in the West: The Johnson County Range War and the Ludlow Massacre: A Brief History with Documents* (2009); Frederick E. Hoxie, *Talking Back to Civilization: Indian Voices from the Progressive Era* (2001); Steven F. Lawson, *To Secure These Rights: The Report of President Harry S. Truman's Committee on Civil Rights* (2004); and Meg Jacobs and Julian E. Zelizer, *Conservatives in Power: The Reagan Years, 1981-1989: A Brief History with Documents* (2011). The books can be purchased at the University Bookstore. Additional assigned readings are on Blackboard and the internet. These readings will be listed under Course Documents on Blackboard as they become available. The assigned reading list may undergo minor changes, including the addition of primary source readings; students should be sure to consult the most current version of the syllabus on Blackboard under Course Information.

In addition to the required readings, there is a recommended textbook for this course, *American Passages: A History of the United States* (4th Edition, 2009), which is also available at the University Bookstore. If you choose not to purchase the book, you are *strongly* encouraged to obtain a copy of a textbook with an equally broad scope and recent publication date.

Electronic Devices: The use of laptops, tablets, cellular phones, or any other type of electronic device is prohibited during class.

Attendance and Late Policy: You are allowed two unexcused absences. After two unexcused absences, you will receive a zero for participation for that day. The instructor

will excuse absences with a doctor's note or legitimate documentation of other emergencies. In addition, students will be dropped from the class for excessive absences. Assignments submitted in class are due at the beginning of the class period. Students who submit assignments after the deadline will be penalized with a grade deduction based on the lateness of the assignment. No assignments will be accepted one week after the due date. All assignments must be submitted in hard copy.

Plagiarism Policy: The University defines plagiarism as "intentionally or knowingly representing the words of another, as one's own in any academic exercise."¹ (See the University's [Academic Integrity Policies](#) for further information.) All sources (books, articles, documents, internet sites, etc.) used in any paper or assignment must be properly cited or will be considered plagiarism. Any instance of plagiarism will receive a zero and will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for appropriate action, including suspension or expulsion from the University.

Final Grade Composition

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| ▪ Participation | 10% |
| ▪ In-Class Assignments | 10% |
| ▪ Take-Home Assignments | 70% |
| ▪ Final Exam | 10% |

Participation: Participation in discussion is mandatory. **Students should be prepared to discuss the readings on the day that they are assigned.** Attendance alone is not sufficient for full participation credit.

In-Class Assignments: Students will be given brief in-class assignments based on the assigned readings. Students will also be periodically quizzed on readings and lectures.

Take-Home Assignments: Students will complete seven take-home writing assignments based on assigned readings. All sources in the papers should be properly cited according to the guidelines laid out in [The Chicago Manual of Style](#), which is available on-line.

Final Exam: Students will take a final exam on December 13.

Class Schedule

Week 1 (August 23, 25)

Tuesday: Introduction

Thursday: Exploration and Encounter

¹ <http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/policy/academicintegrity/violation/plagiarism/>

Required Reading: Jules R. Benjamin, "How to Take Notes in Class," in *A Student's Guide to History*, pp. 37-43 on blackboard; Jules R. Benjamin, "How Historians Work," in *A Student's Guide to History*, pp. 10-16 on blackboard
Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 1-23

Week 2 (August 30, September 1)

Tuesday: Anglo Settlers in the New World

Required Reading: Richard Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, pp. 1-15, 35-49

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 28-51

Thursday: Life in New England

Required Reading: Richard Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, pp. 15-34, 50-101

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 56-65

Week 3 (September 6, 8)

Tuesday: Strife in Salem

Required Reading: Richard Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, pp. 102-167

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 66-68

Assignment due before class begins.

Thursday: The Spread of British North America

Required Reading: Richard Godbeer, *The Salem Witch Hunt*, pp. 167-184

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 68-79

Week 4 (September 13, 15)

Tuesday: The American Revolution and War of Independence

Required Reading: Edward Countryman, *What Did The Constitution Mean To Early Americans?*, pp. 1-67

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 115-142

Thursday: Constructing the Constitution

Required Reading: Edward Countryman, *What Did The Constitution Mean To Early Americans?*, pp. 69-88

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 145-169

Week 5 (September 20, 22)

Tuesday: Riots and Rebellions

Required Reading: Edward Countryman, *What Did The Constitution Mean To Early Americans?*, pp. 89-140

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 171-175, 182-188

Thursday: America in the Age of Revolutions

Required Reading: Edward Countryman, *What Did The Constitution Mean To Early Americans?*, pp. 141-163

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 176-181, 188-193, 205-215

Assignment due before class begins.

Week 6 (September 27, September 29)

Tuesday: Creating Slave Country

Required Reading: Kenneth S. Greenberg, *The Confessions of Nat Turner and Related Documents*, pp. 1-36

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 202-205, 225-234, 237-241

Thursday: Slave Life in the “Old South”

Required Reading: Kenneth S. Greenberg, *The Confessions of Nat Turner and Related Documents*, pp. 37-58, 91-102

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 277-281

Week 7 (October 4, 6)

Tuesday: Riots and Rebellions

Required Reading: Kenneth S. Greenberg, *The Confessions of Nat Turner and Related Documents*, pp. 61-90

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 251-254, 202-205

Assignment due before class begins.

Thursday: Slavery and the Sectional Crisis

Required Reading: Kenneth S. Greenberg, *The Confessions of Nat Turner and Related Documents*, pp. 103-131

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 315-324

Week 8 (October 11, 13)

Tuesday: Class Cancelled – Fall Break

Thursday: Manifest Destiny

Required Reading: Marilyn S. Johnson, *Violence in the West: The Johnson County Range War and the Ludlow Massacre*, pp. 1-34

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 293-306, 446-450, 432-438

Week 9 (October 18, 20)

Tuesday: How the West was Won

Required Reading: Marilyn S. Johnson, *Violence in the West: The Johnson County Range War and the Ludlow Massacre*, pp. 35-81

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 446-451

Thursday: Class Conflict on the Plains

Required Reading: Marilyn S. Johnson, *Violence in the West: The Johnson County Range War and the Ludlow Massacre*, pp. 82-144

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 438-446, 485-489, 547-549

Week 10 (October 25, 27)

Tuesday: (Mis)Remembering the “Old West”

Required Reading: Marilyn S. Johnson, *Violence in the West: The Johnson County Range War and the Ludlow Massacre*, pp. 144-155

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 414-416, 460-468, 472-476

Assignment due before class begins.

Thursday: Age of Progressivism

Required Reading: Frederick E. Hoxie, *Talking Back to Civilization*, pp. 1-28

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 513-538, 543-546

Week 11 (November 1, 3)

Tuesday: The Vanishing Indian

Required Reading: Frederick E. Hoxie, *Talking Back to Civilization*, pp. 29-107

Thursday: From Civilization to Assimilation

Required Reading: Frederick E. Hoxie, *Talking Back to Civilization*, pp. 108-174

Assignment due before class begins.

Week 12 (November 8, 10)

Tuesday: Before the “Movement”

Required Reading: Steven F. Lawson, *To Secure These Rights: The Report of President Harry S. Truman’s Committee on Civil Rights*, pp. 1-54

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 423-431, 451-454, 495, 501-509, 520-523, 584-585, 601, 611-613, 667-669

Thursday: WWII and the Crucible of Race

Required Reading: Steven F. Lawson, *To Secure These Rights: The Report of President Harry S. Truman’s Committee on Civil Rights*, pp. 55-125

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 674-676, 688-695

Week 13 (November 15, 17)

Tuesday: An American Dilemma in the Cold War

Required Reading: Steven F. Lawson, *To Secure These Rights: The Report of President Harry S. Truman’s Committee on Civil Rights*, pp. 126-158

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 709-715, 719-724

Assignment before class begins.

Thursday: The Civil Rights Era and Beyond

Required Reading: Steven F. Lawson, *To Secure These Rights: The Report of President Harry S. Truman's Committee on Civil Rights*, pp. 159-185

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 740-744, 753, 765-766, 768-769, 771-775, 780-787, 800-805

Week 14 (November 22, 24)

Tuesday: The Rise of the Right

Required Reading: Meg Jacobs and Julian E. Zelizer, *Conservatives in Power: The Reagan Years, 1981-1989*, pp. 1-19, 67-88

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 735-756, 787-794, 805-819

Thursday: Class Cancelled – Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 15 (November 29, December 1)

Tuesday: Mo(u)rning in America

Required Reading: Meg Jacobs and Julian E. Zelizer, *Conservatives in Power: The Reagan Years, 1981-1989*, pp. 20-40, 89-140

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 828-832, 835-839

Thursday: Fighting the Evil Empire

Required Reading: Meg Jacobs and Julian E. Zelizer, *Conservatives in Power: The Reagan Years, 1981-1989*, pp. 41-66, 141-217

Recommended Reading: *American Passages*, pp. 833-835, 839-843

Assignment due before class begins.

Final Exam: Saturday, December 10, 3:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.