

HIS 724  
The Twentieth Century South

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This course will explore the South's social, economic, political, and cultural development in the twentieth century. Among the topics that will be addressed are the changing status of African Americans in the region; political developments during the period (from one-party rule by the Democratic party in the early twentieth century to the re-emergence of the Republican party during the second half of the twentieth century); and the transformation of the South from an overwhelmingly agricultural, rural society to a region identified in the years following World War II with the phenomena of Sunbelt urbanization and industrialization, as well as increasing globalization.

Since the time of the Civil War, various Southerners and non-Southerners have proclaimed the coming of a New South--one in which the defeated Confederacy would rejoin and ultimately resemble the rest of the nation. Thus, this course will also attempt to answer the following questions: When, if ever, did a New South develop? What factors made the South distinctive from other American regions in the twentieth century? When did these unique characteristics disappear, or are they still present today?

In addition to looking at how historians have interpreted this century of change in the South, this course will also examine how Southerners themselves have explained these changes through the rich tradition of southern autobiography. We will also explore how the modern South has been portrayed in the medium of film.

Required Readings (available at the University Bookstore or many other outlets):

- Edward L. Ayers, *Southern Crossing* (Oxford University Press, 1995)  
Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (Oxford University Press, 1994)  
James N. Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America* (University of North Carolina Press, 2005)  
Patricia Sullivan, *Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the New Deal Era* (University of North Carolina Press, 1996)  
Neil R. McMillen, ed., *Remaking Dixie: The Impact of World War II on the American South* (University Press of Mississippi, 2007)  
Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (University of North Carolina Press, 2002)  
Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* 2 ed. (Louisiana State University Press, 2000)

Paul Harvey, *Freedom's Coming: Religious Culture and the Shaping of the South from the Civil War Through the Civil Rights Era* (University of North Carolina Press, 2005)

Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (Vintage, 1999)

Additional required course readings are included on the course schedule and will be available on electronic reserve or the documents section of Blackboard, or where indicated, through JSTOR.

Schedule:

August 19: Introduction

August 26: The South after Reconstruction

Reading: Ayers, *Southern Crossing*; Jonathan M. Wiener, "Class Structure and Economic Development in the American South, 1865-1955," comments by Robert Higgs and Harold Woodman and reply by Wiener, all in *American Historical Review* (October 1979): 970-1006 [JSTOR]

September 9: The South and Modernity

Reading: MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry*; Gatewood, "After Scopes"; McElya, "Commemorating the Color Line"

September 16: The Great Migrations

Reading: Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora*

September 23: Cultural History: Literature, Music, and the Southern Renaissance

Reading: Cobb, "The Southern Renaissance and the Revolt against the New South Creed." Also read one of the following books: Thomas Brothers, *Louis Armstrong's New Orleans*; W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South*; Paul Conkin, *The Southern Agrarians*; David Herbert Donald, *Look Homeward: A Life of Thomas Wolfe*; Peter Guralnick, *Sweet Soul Music*; Richard King, *A Southern Renaissance*; Michael Kreyling, *Inventing Southern Literature*; Alan Lomax, *The Land Where the Blues Began*; Bill Malone, *Country Music USA* (3rd rev. ed.); Bill Malone, *Don't Get Above Your Raisin*; Donald M. Marquis, *In Search of Buddy Bolden*; Robert Palmer, *Deep Blues*; Twelve Southerners, *I'll Take My Stand*; Elijah Wald, *Escaping the Delta: Robert Johnson and the Invention of the Blues*; Philip Weinstein, *Becoming Faulkner*

- September 30: The 1930s and 1940s
- Reading: Sullivan, *Days of Hope*; Badger, "How Did the New Deal Change the South"
- October 7: World War II
- Reading: McMillen, *Remaking Dixie*
- October 21: The Civil Rights Movement
- Reading: Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*; McKinney, "Finding Fannie Corbett"; Hogan, "Freedom Now"; Jeffries, "Remaking History"
- October 28: Race and Politics in the Recent South
- Reading: Carter, *The Politics of Rage*; Bolton, "The 1967 Governor's Race"
- November 4: Economic and Social Change in the Recent South
- Reading: Moreton, "Wal-Mart Country"; Raymond Arsenault, "The End of the Long Hot Summer: The Air Conditioner and Southern Culture," *Journal of Southern History* 50 (November 1984): 597-628 [JSTOR]; Lassiter and Kruse, "The Bulldozer Revolution"; Spruill, "The Mississippi 'Takeover'"; Cobb, "Beyond the Y'all Wall"
- November 11: Religion and the South
- Reading: Harvey, *Freedom's Coming*
- November 18: Southern Autobiography
- Read one of the following: Rick Bragg, *All Over But the Shoutin*; Septima Clark, *Echo in My Soul*; Edward Cohen, *The Peddler's Grandson*; Harry Crews, *A Childhood*; Mamie Fields, *Lemon Swamp*; Aaron Henry/Constance Curry, *Aaron Henry*; Florence King, *Confessions of a Failed Southern Lady*; Charlayne Hunter-Gault, *In My Place*; Charles Marsh, *The Last Days*; Carolyn Maull McKinstry, *While the World Watched*; Melton McLaurin, *Separate Pasts*; Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*; Willie Morris, *North Toward Home*; William Alexander Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee*; Noel Polk, *Outside the Southern Myth*; Jo Ann Robinson/David Garrow, *Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It*; Theodore Rosengarten, *All God's Dangers*; Jordana

Shakoor, *Civil Rights Childhood*; Tim Tyson, *Blood Done Signed My Name*; Essie Mae Washington-Williams, *Dear Senator*; Richard Wright, *Black Boy*

November 25: The Modern South and Film

Reading: Cox, "Dixie on Film"; Graham, "Civil Rights Films and the New Red Menace"

December 2: What Makes the South Still Southern?

Read Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*; Reed, "The Three Souths"; Reed, "The Banner That Won't Stay Furled"; Egerton, "The End of the South as an American Problem"

### Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the history of the twentieth-century South broadly (in terms of social, economic, political, and cultural developments).
2. Analyze how historians, Southerners themselves, and others have described the history of the twentieth-century South.

### Assignments:

The major assignment for this class is to do the weekly reading and come prepared to discuss the material. A sizeable part of your grade will be determined by your class participation. Non-participation or weak participation will obviously result in a low grade. For any week in which you have a choice of readings, you should choose a book you have not previously read. Attendance at and participation in all class meetings is essential. Any unexcused absences will adversely affect a student's grade. However, if you do have to miss a class, you need to let me know before class begins if at all possible. As part of your class participation grade, I will ask you to keep a reading reflection journal, which I will check periodically. There will also be a self-evaluation of your class participation at the midpoint of the semester to help you assess your performance in this area.

Each student should write four essays (roughly 4-6 pages each). Two of the essays should be on the civil rights readings (October 21) and the autobiography reading (November 18). I will give you writing prompts for these papers. For the other two essays, you can choose any additional two topics, and I will not provide any prompts. These two essays should represent your analysis or commentary on the issue(s) and/or argument(s) raised by the readings. These should be thought pieces, designed to demonstrate your serious reflections on what you are

reading. Address particular themes or theses. Feel free to bring in any other material you are familiar with to help compare and contrast the author's approach to a historical question. Creativity and critical thinking will be rewarded. All your essays should relate to the assigned readings in some meaningful way and should not focus too narrowly on some trivial point(s). All your essays, of course, should be well written and well organized.

All essays are due at the class meeting in which the topic is covered (no exceptions!) All papers should be typed and double-spaced, with a standard 12-point font and one-inch margins. Please use correct Chicago Manual of Style citations for these writing assignments.

Group presentation for November 25: A separate assignment sheet will be distributed in class.

Finally, there will be a take-home final examination for this class. The question(s) will be distributed at our last class meeting on December 2 and will be due by 5 pm on December 5.

#### Grading:

Grades will be based on class participation (30 percent), writing assignments (40 percent), group presentation (10 percent), and the take-home exam (20 percent).

Academic Honor Code: All students are expected to know and abide by the UNCG Academic Honor Code.