

HIS 724

The United States: Depression and War, 1929-1948

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Office Hours: Tuesday (12-1), Thursday (2-3), or by appointment

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This course will examine two key events in twentieth-century U.S. History, the Great Depression and World War II, and the impact they had on the political, economic, social, and cultural lives of Americans. Among the topics that will be explored are the origins and impact of the economic depression, the development of the New Deal, the role of Franklin D. Roosevelt during this era, the American diplomatic and military experience during World War II, and the impact of the war on the American home front. We will also investigate the growth of organized labor, changes in race and gender relations, and the transformation of the U.S. South during this period.

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

Ira Katznelson, Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time (W.W. Norton, 2013).

Lizabeth Cohen, Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Morris Dickstein, Dancing in the Dark: A Cultural History of the Great Depression (W.W. Norton, 2009).

Peter R. Mansoor, The GI Offensive in Europe: The Triumph of American Infantry Divisions (University Press of Kansas, 1999).

John W. Dower, War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War (Random House, 1986).

Todd Moya, Freedom Flyers: The Tuskegee Airmen of World War II (Oxford University Press, 2010).

Andrew E. Kersten, Labor's Home Front: The American Federation of Labor During World War II (New York University Press, 2006).

Kevin M. Kruse and Stephen Tuck, eds., Fog of War: The Second World War and the Civil Rights Movement (Oxford University Press, 2012).

Additional required course readings are included on the course schedule and will be available on electronic reserve (Canvas), or where indicated, through JSTOR.

Schedule

August 25: Why the Great Depression?

Read excerpt from Bernstein, The Great Depression

September 1: Depression and War: An Overview

Read Katznelson, Fear Itself

September 8: FDR

Read a book from the following list: Anthony J. Badger, FDR: The First Hundred Days; H.W. Brands, Traitor to His Class; Douglas Brinkley, Rightful Heritage: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Land of America; Adam Cohen, Nothing to Fear; Robert Dallek, Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945, 2nd ed.; Roger Daniels, Franklin D. Roosevelt: Road to the New Deal, 1882-1939; Roger Daniels, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The War Years, 1939-1945; John T. Flynn, The Roosevelt Myth; Burton W. Folsom Jr., New Deal or Raw Deal?; Frank Friedel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous with Destiny; Harvey J. Kaye, The Fight for the Four Freedoms: What Made FDR and the Greatest Generation Truly Great; Eric Larrabee, Commander in Chief; William E. Leuchtenburg, Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal: 1932-1940; Hazel Rowley, Franklin and Eleanor; Jeff Shesol, Supreme Power; Mason B. Williams, The City of Ambition

September 15: The New Deal

Read Bernstein, "The New Deal" and a book from the following list: Anthony J. Badger, The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933-1940; Alan Brinkley, Voices of Protest; Barry Cushman, Rethinking the New Deal Court; Colin Gordon, New Deals; Ellis W. Hawley, The New Deal and the Problem of Monopoly; Robin D. G. Kelley, Hammer and Hoe; Mark Leff, The Limits of Symbolic Reform; Neil Maher, Nature's New Deal; Suzanne Mettler, Dividing Citizens: Gender and Federalism in New Deal Public Policy; James T. Patterson, Congressional Conservatism and the New Deal; Sarah Phillips, This Land, This Nation; Mary Poole, The Segregated Origins of Social Security; Harvard Sitkoff, A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue, The Depression Decade; Lauren Rebecca Sklaroff, Black Culture and the New Deal; Jason Scott Smith, Building New Deal Liberalism; Susan Ware, Beyond Suffrage: Women in the New Deal

September 22: Labor in the 1930s

Read, Cohen, Making a New Deal, 2nd ed.

- September 29: Cultural History of the 1930s
Read Dickstein, Dancing in the Dark
- October 6: War in Europe
Read Mansoor, The GI Offensive in Europe; Adams, "Overseas"
- October 20: War in the Pacific
Read Dower, War Without Mercy
- October 27: African Americans and the Military
Read Moye, Freedom Flyers; Roberts, "The Innocent Suffer" (Canvas—Files)
- November 10: The WWII Home Front
Jacobs, "How About Some Meat?" Journal of American History (December 1997): 910-941 [JSTOR]; Daniel, "Going Among Strangers," Journal of American History (December 1990): 886-911 [JSTOR]; Anderson, "Last Hired, First Fired," Journal of American History (June 1982): 82-97 [JSTOR]; Escobar, "Zoot Suiters and Cops"; May, "Rosie the Riveter Gets Married"
- November 17: Labor and World War II
Read Kersten, Labor's Home Front; Friedman, "Exploiting the North-South Differential," Journal of American History (September 2008): 323-348 [JSTOR]
- December 1: World War II and Civil Rights
Read Kruse and Tuck, eds., Fog of War; Gilmore, "Guerrillas in the Good War"

Assignments

One of the primary assignments for this class is to do all of the weekly reading and come to class prepared to discuss the material. Each student should keep a reading journal and record the following for each week (except for 9/8 and 9/15): the thesis/essential argument of each assigned reading, a brief summary of the essential content of each reading, and some substantive analytical commentary about each

reading. I will ask to look at about one-fourth of these journals each week (randomly selected), so students should keep these journals up-to-date. My assessment of your reading journals will count as part of your class participation grade.

For the weeks of 9/8 and 9/15, bring a *one-page* précis of the book you read to class (make a copy for each member of the class). These documents should include the same kind of information detailed in the paragraph above.

For one of the weeks (other than 9/8, 9/15, and 11/10), write a 3-4 page essay about that week's readings. These essays—thought pieces—should represent your **analysis** and **commentary** on the ideas and/or arguments raised by the readings. You should neither merely summarize the readings nor ramble incoherently. You can discuss any subject, but your essays should focus on the assigned readings and should not focus too narrowly on some trivial point. You are exempt from completing journal entries for the week you write this essay.

Research paper: Each student will need to complete a 10-12 page research paper on some topic for the time period we are studying. You need to use both secondary and primary sources for this assignment. Please schedule a meeting with me to talk about possible topics, questions, and sources. I will also distribute a list of some readily available primary sources. Due dates: October 6—**Brief** research proposal outlining the topic, the historical question that will be investigated, and a preliminary annotated bibliography. December 8—Final paper due.

Your essays and research papers should be well written and well organized. They should be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. For citations and bibliography, use Chicago Manual of Style.

Grading:

Grades will be based on class participation (35 percent), précis (10 percent), essay (15 percent) and research paper (40 percent).