

**History 212-05-08, Fall 2006**  
**The United States Since 1865**  
**Human Rights and the American Equal Rights Tradition**

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This is both a survey of U.S. history since 1865 and a close examination of case studies when the American equal rights tradition underwent debate, conflict and change. Throughout U.S. history, Americans have debated central questions about the meanings of freedom and national citizenship. What rights – civil, political, cultural, economic and social – should American citizens (and resident noncitizens) enjoy as a free people? How should these rights be defended or expanded? *What action should government take (or avoid) to make these rights real for everyone?* Who should be included in the circle of “We the People?” In our pursuit of “a more perfect union,” should we look to the fulfillment of American constitutional rights, or do we need to understand and fight for broader human rights?

The equal rights tradition is an excellent lens through which to view our conflicts, divisions, and common bonds. *When different people’s rights and interests came in conflict, who won? How did each side speak the language of rights to protect their interests?* For example, slaveholders’ “rights” to property in slave persons were abolished only as an unintended consequence of the Civil War. The constitution then enshrined national and state citizenship rights for *all* persons born in the United States. But conflicts over the extent and application of these citizenship rights endure to this day. *Finally, how were these rights in practice related to each other (the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment refers to them as “privileges and immunities”)?* For example, in the Reconstruction era many ex-slaves discovered that without the right to vote and the right to sit on juries, they lacked essential means to protect their rights to property and even life. Or as our textbook author Eric Foner stresses, to fully exercise personal and political freedom, Americans have often insisted they need a certain kind of economic freedom or security. In some cases, one group’s struggle for full citizenship helped expand rights for others (such as when the civil rights movement of the 1960s led Congress to reform the discriminatory system of immigration quotas inherited from the 1920s, at the same time that they extended job antidiscrimination laws to women).

Though concerned with politics and ideas, this is also a *social* history course, concerned with the dreams and experiences of ordinary Americans. We will read the writings and speeches of educated elite Americans: reformers, politicians, Supreme Court justices, and conservative defenders of the status quo. Equally, we will capture the voices of ordinary working people, women, minorities and political dissenters. I believe that those who have had to fight for an expansion of rights *within* this country have much to teach all Americans about their meaning.

**Course Goals:**

To improve your knowledge of the main themes and events in American history since 1865.

To help you appreciate change and continuity in the experiences of Americans, and in the nation's social structure and politics.

To introduce you to key **controversies** in the nation's past and to explore the interplay of interpretation and evidence that occupies working historians.

To refine your ability to bring together critical tools of analysis and reliable evidence. We will examine in depth several episodes when the equal rights tradition took a decisive turn (the expansion of constitutional rights for African Americans after the Civil War, women's right to vote in 1920, the statutory rights to social security and minimum wages in the 1930s, and so on). This component will rely upon your analysis of 1) primary documents from the past (testimonies, speeches, letters, songs, images) and 2) secondary historical scholarship (articles or sections from books written by historians who weave together stories and arguments from primary documents).

To improve your skills of critical writing and clear speaking.

### **Assignments and Evaluation:**

#### **Participation in Discussion 25%**

**3 in-class Exams – 15% each = 45%. There Will Be No Final [February 16, March 23, April 30].**  
**2 essays on 2 case studies -- 5 pp. each -- 10% each = 20% (Sign up for one before and one after 3/12 – DUE the day of the discussion – let your TA know if you want to write about African Americans in Reconstruction, due on 1/22)**

**Pop Quizzes and in-class writing exercises -- 10%**

#### **Reading: [Remember to bring all assigned readings to each class]:**

Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty! An American History, vol. 2* (New York: Norton Seagull Edition, 2006)

**Textbook Website:** [www.wwnorton.com/fooner](http://www.wwnorton.com/fooner) has chapter summaries and help with key concepts, interviews with the author, text, audio, and video. You will earn extra points on participation if you can reference some of the primary sources here relevant to the specific day's discussion.

**Primary Documents, Scholarly Articles and Other Materials Available on Blackboard or Internet.** I assign several short excerpts each week that speak to themes of equal rights. Though you will do more than your normal share of printing, I saved you money on extra books. Follow instructions carefully and remember: **bring all assigned material to class.**

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory. *You must email your TA in advance if you will miss class, or, in case of emergency, within 24 hours after class.* We can excuse absences only on the grounds of personal or family illness or serious emergency (*not* work schedules, appointments, oversleep, or extracurricular activity). You're on your honor not to ask for other excuses. Please do not provide long explanations. More than three unexcused absences and your final grade will go

down 2 points for every day missed. Three *consecutive* unexcused absences constitute grounds for asking you to withdraw from the course.

**Participation (25%):** Several practices constitute good participation. Offer an interpretation with reference to relevant evidence. Or pose good and pertinent questions. Try to stay on topic and respond to the questions we have before us. Engage each other directly. Balance listening and talking (equally important to good discussion). If you consider yourself relatively quiet in class, speak to one of us or visit the Speaking Center to improve this skill. Quieter students are not exempt from verbal participation, but may also raise questions or make comments on the Blackboard discussion board, where each week you will find a set of questions relevant to the discussion. Again this is not a formal requirement, but good entries on Blackboard will definitely inform class discussion and raise your participation grade, especially if you don't consider yourself a "talker." Discussion board is also a place where you may raise questions or post comments that were not adequately aired in class.

**In-class quizzes and informal writing assignments, unannounced -- 10%:** These might take the form of short essay questions or identifications or multiple-choice questions from the textbook web site. The good thing here is that you don't have to cram for a final; but you do have to prepare on a weekly basis. No surprises, *if* you do the reading and attend classes!

**2 Essays (10% each) due on discussion days that you choose:** In these 5-page essays, you will select a focused question and craft an essay that does not merely describe, but *explains* something about that week's case-study readings, something that *matters* to you and motivates you to think thoroughly and precisely. You will sign up in advance and these papers will be due on the day of discussion, so they can inform your participation. (Again you may only write about the specific "case studies" in the equal rights tradition under discussion on the day you hand in your paper). An "A" paper will have a clearly stated point of view or thesis; coherent and logical development of your ideas and evidence; and a conclusion unifying the essay and pointing to larger issues or questions. Stick to the assigned readings (or especially pertinent documents you find on the textbook web site). Do not quote extensively from the textbook or the Jackson lectures, and certainly not from general web sites. If through library or Internet research you discover another primary or scholarly secondary source especially relevant to the issues, you may earn bonus points (but if you add a source that is not germane to the issues, you will actually weaken your essay).

**A Note on Written Work:** All papers must be typed and formatted as follows: 11 or 12 font size, (Times New Roman preferred), double spaced lines, margins no larger than 1" all around. **Papers that are too short will be returned to you immediately for resubmission.** Citation styles: MLA, Turabian or Chicago Manual of Style 14<sup>th</sup> are all acceptable. Here is the Library's guide to MLA: <http://library.uncg.edu/depts/ref/handouts/mla.html> I personally favor footnotes, but use MLA if you want. Example of footnotes:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> If you need further guidance, consult Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* (New York: St. Martin's, 1995), excerpted on Blackboard. If you plan on majoring in history, BUY THIS BOOK IMMEDIATELY.

**Honor Code:** Find UNCG's policy at <http://saf.dept.uncg.edu/studiscp/Honor.html> **Know the definition of plagiarism and the rules of quoting, citing, and paraphrasing other sources.** Rampola's *Student's Guide to Writing in History* is a good guide (on Blackboard under Course Documents). All of your written work must be your own and you must not plagiarize other sources. Plagiarism includes failure to put in quotes phrases or sentences taken from another author, even if you footnote them or include them in your bibliography. Remember, the minimum penalty for blatant plagiarism is an "F" on the assignment or the course, and a permanent record on file in the Office of Student Affairs; the maximum penalty for repeat offenders is expulsion from the university.

**Conferences:** I and your TAs are here to help with questions, to guide you in developing your ideas and writing strategies, and to give you careful honest evaluation on your work. Do not hesitate to visit our office hours or schedule an appointment if that is not convenient.

**The Syllabus as Contract:** I have tried to spell out course requirements, goals and means of evaluation as meticulously as possible. By choosing to remain in the course beyond the drop deadline you agree to abide by its provisions. It is your responsibility to read the "fine print" and if questions remain, to clarify them.

**A Note on the Reading and General Reading Method:** I assign about 50-70 pp. per week, combining the textbook and short excerpts from a variety of sources. **Remember to read actively and strategically.** Don't just start at page one and plow through. **Preview** the material, look at the topic divisions and the flow of main ideas, and then dive in with **questions**. Ask yourself: what do I know already about this period, theme, or event? *Who wrote this, and for whom?* Am I reading **an historian's interpretation** of the past (a "secondary source") or **an historical actor's statement** (a "primary source")? Remember, the course is about human rights and American equal rights, so be keenly aware of when history speaks to these issues. As you read, you should **UNDERLINE** quotes and passages especially relevant to your questions (do this *after* you have read one or two paragraphs, so the process doesn't bog you down; remember, *if you underline everything, you emphasize nothing*). If you don't know the meaning of a word or concept, **look it up**. Along the way and at the end, **WRITE** in the margins of your texts, in your notebooks (or computers) what you have learned, and what still puzzles you. If you feel you need to develop college-level study skills, **COME SEE ME OR YOUR TAs or visit the Student Success Center or the Writing Center**. You paid for them; you might as well use them!

### **Schedule of Lectures, Discussions, Examinations, and Due Dates**

#### **WEEK 1: Freedom and Equal Rights Tradition**

**1/8: Introductions -- Sections**

**1/10: Rights Talk: The U.S. Constitution and the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights**

1) Download and print for class discussion: "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights," adopted and proclaimed December 10, 1948 by the General Assembly of the United Nations: <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

2) Read the Bill of Rights, Amendments 1-10 of the U.S. Constitution, reprinted in Foner, *Give me Liberty!* A-48-49.

**Questions:** We need to start by clarifying the beliefs and assumptions we bring to learning. What rights of American citizenship do you value? What do you already know of their history? How does the U.S. Bill of Rights compare to the human rights outlined in the UN Declaration? Which are the most controversial of the rights discussed in that document, and which are the most generally accepted in the United States? Was there a time when some were more generally accepted than others?

**1/12: Boundaries of Freedom in the Early Republic**

**1/15: No Class -- Martin Luther King Jr. holiday**

**WEEK 2: Reconstruction and African American Rights**

Foner, *Give me Liberty!* Ch. 15

**1/17: The Contagion of Liberty and White Southern Reaction**

**1/19: Reconstruction: Achievements and Defeats**

**1/22: Discussion and Essay Option -- Land, Labor and the "Social Conditions of Freedom"**

[NB: all of the following readings are available in PDF files under Course Documents for this day on Blackboard – download, print and bring them all to class ready to discuss].

1) "To My Old Master, Colonel P.H. Anderson," August 7, 1865, from Leon F. Litwak, *Been in the Storm So Long*, 333-334, by Jourdon Anderson;

2) Excerpts, *Black Voices from Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), by John David Smith, pp. 62-65, 70-75, 82-84, 92-97.

3) **Reconstruction Blacks and Native Americans. Only:** # 15-7, Richard H. Cain, "An Advocate of Federal Aid for Land Purchase" and #15-8, "Statistics on Black Ownership." in *Selected Historical Documents to Accompany America's History, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.*, 17-20 ONLY. [PDF file name: McSevery Blacks Indians.pdf -- print pages 2-5 of 8 pp. ONLY)

**Questions:** How did the freedpeople define freedom for themselves? Jordan Anderson was an exceptional man who escaped north and worked for wages. How did his experience and dreams of freedom compare with the vast majority of African American ex-slaves who remained behind to work in Southern agriculture? Why was land so important to newly freed African Americans? What was so abhorrent to (some) ex-slaves about working for wages? And what role did the federal Freedmen's Bureau play in creating the new plantation system that replaced slavery? In whose interests was it working? [Two African American newspapers at the time differed radically in their assessments, as you can read in Smith, *Black Voices*]. The two labor contracts in *Black Voices* typify what the Freedmen's Bureau helped arrange. What can these detailed documents tell us about the relationship between landowning ex-slaveholders,

landless ex-slaves, and federal officials? Finally, several of the voices in Smith give us clues as to why African Americans saw Voting as a cornerstone right in the Reconstruction era.

### **WEEK 3: Industrial America and the Incorporation of Peoples**

Foner, *Give me Liberty!* Ch. 16: America's Gilded Age, 1870-1890, 510-545

#### **1/24: The Thickening Mold of White Supremacy**

#### **1/26: Capital and Labor**

#### **1/29: Discussion and Essay Option: With Friends Like These: The Indian Reformers and the Indians**

1) David Wallace Adams, "Schooling the Hopi: Federal Indian Policy Writ Small, 1887-1917," in Dinnerstein and Jackson, eds, *American Vistas: 1877 to the Present*, pp. 27-44.

2) Thomas Morgan, Luther Standing Bear, "Viewpoints 3-4 on Indian Assimilation," from William Dudley, ed., *Native Americans: Opposing Viewpoints* (Greenhaven, 1998). [Viewpoints 1-2 are optional, so you or need only print out PDF file pages 9-18. The documents on pp. 1-8 deal with the policy of allotments of reservation land to individual Indians].

**Questions:** In the eyes of the Supreme Court, Native Americans were members of "domestic dependent nations," not citizens. The white "Indian reformers" of the 1880s had a particular view of what it would take to save the Indians from extinction and make them citizens with "rights." What kind of skills and values and habits did they hope to inculcate? Did the Native Americans and their advocates have notions of native rights that conflicted with the white reformers' policies of land allotment and education?

### **WEEK 4: The Crucible of the 1890s**

Foner, *Give me Liberty!* Ch. 17: Freedom's Boundaries at Home and Abroad, 1890-1900, 546-581

#### **1/31: Can an Empire Be a Democracy? US Foreign Relations, 1898-1917**

#### **2/2: Urban Masses and Moral Order**

#### **2/5: Discussion and Essay Option -- Andrew Carnegie and the Workers of Homestead**

Readings and discussion questions henceforth posted on Blackboard.

### **WEEK 5: Progressivism**

Foner, *Give me Liberty!* Ch. 18: The Progressive Era, 1900-1916, 582-619

#### **2/7: Progressive Men**

#### **2/9: Progressive Women and "Social Housekeeping"**

#### **2/12: Discussion and Essay Option -- Woman Suffrage and Women's Rights**

### **WEEK 6: World War I and American Dissent**

Foner, *Give me Liberty!* Ch. 19: Safe for Democracy: the United States and World War I, 1916-1920, 620-659

#### **2/14: World War I: A Trojan Horse for Repression**

#### **2/16: Examination 1**

#### **2/19: Discussion and Essay Option -- Civil Liberties in Wartime**

**WEEK 7: The 1920s**

Foner, *Give me Liberty!* Ch. 20: From Business Culture to Great Depression: the Twenties, 1920-1932, 660-695

**2/21: Political Economy and the Contours of Conservatism**

**2/23: Immigrant Life and Immigration Restriction**

**2/26: Discussion and Essay Option -- Immigration Restriction and the National Origins Quota System**

**WEEK 8: The Great Depression and the New Deal**

Foner, *Give me Liberty!* Ch. 21: The New Deal, 1932-1940, 696-735

**2/28: The Experience of Depression and the Paradox of American Political Culture**

**3/2: The Roosevelt Rescue**

**Spring Break**

**3/12: Discussion and Essay Option -- Political Culture and Relief – Did Americans' values change in the Depression and New Deal?**

Schedule for the second half of this course TBA. Keep in mind you will have to write one more essay. And mark the following dates on your calendars:

**3/23: Examination 2**

**4/30: Examination 3**