

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, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction* (Oxford University Press, 1993)

Ted Ownby, *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865-1920* (University of North Carolina Press, 1990)

Jacqueline Hall et al., *Like A Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (University of North Carolina Press, 2000)

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)

Aldon Morris, *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement* (The Free Press, 1996)

Joseph Crespi, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton University Press, 2007)

Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free*

Enterprise (Harvard University Press, 2009).

Timothy B. Tyson, *Blood Done Sign My Name: A True Story* (Three Rivers 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 Blackboard.

Schedule:

January 10: Introduction

January 24: The South after Reconstruction

Assignment: Read Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*; Ortiz, “The Promise of Reconstruction” and “To Gain These Fruits That Have Been Earned”; Bynum, “Civil War Unionists as New South Radicals”

January 31: Gender, Religion, and Change in Turn-of-the-Century South

Assignment: Read Ownby, *Subduing Satan*

February 7: Economic Change in the Postbellum South

Assignment: Read Hall et al., *Like a Family*; Eller, “Coal, Culture, and Community”

February 14: The Great Migrations

Assignment: Read, Gregory, *The Southern Diaspora*

February 21: Cultural History: Literature, Music, and the Southern Renaissance

Assignment: Read Cobb, “The Southern Renaissance and the Revolt against the New South Creed.” Also read one of the following books: Ryan Andre Brasseuax, *Cajun Breakdown*; 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*; Richard King, *A Southern Renaissance*; Alan Lomax, *The Land Where the Blues Began*; Bill Malone, *Country Music USA* (2nd 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*

February 28: The 1930s and 1940s

Assignment: Read Sullivan, *Days of Hope*; Schulman, "Bulldozers on the Plantation"

March 14: The Civil Rights Movement

Assignment: Read Morris, *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement* and one of the following books: Raymond Arsenault, *Freedom Riders*; Susan Youngblood Ashmore, *Carry It On*; Charles Bolton, *The Hardest Deal of All*; Taylor Branch, *At Canaan's Edge*; David Celeski, *Along Freedom Road*; William Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*; David Chappell, *Inside Agitators*; Connie Curry, *Silver Rights*; John Dittmer, *Local People*; Adam Fairclough, *Race and Democracy*; Lance Hill, *The Deacons for Defense*; Hasan Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes*; Danielle McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street*; Steven Lawson, *Running for Freedom*; Charles Marsh, *God's Long Summer*; Charles Payne, *I=ve Got the Light of Freedom*; Jason Sokol, *There Goes My Everything*; Timothy Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie*.

March 21: Race and Politics in the Recent South

Assignment: Read Crespino, *In Search of Another Country*

March 28: Economic and Social Change in the Recent South

Assignment: Read Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart*; Fredrickson, "The Cold War at the Grassroots"

April 4: Southern Autobiography

Assignment: Read Tyson, *Blood Done Sign My Name*

April 11: Southern Autobiography, pt. 2

Assignment: 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*; 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; Essie Mae Washington-Williams, *Dear Senator*; Richard Wright, *Black Boy*

April 18: The Modern South and Film

Assignment: Read Cox, "Dixie on Film" from *Dreaming of Dixie: How the South Was Created in American Popular Culture*, forthcoming (see Course Documents in Blackboard); Graham, "Civil Rights Films and the New Red Menace"

April 25: What Makes the South Still Southern?

Read Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*; Reed, "The South: What Is It? Where Is It?"; Hague and Sebesta, "Neo Confederacy and the Understanding of Race"

Student Learning Outcomes:

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

1. Discuss 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). One of the essays should be on either the civil rights readings (March 14) or the autobiographical readings (April 4 and 11). I will give you writing prompts for this paper. For the other three essays, you can choose any additional three topics, and I will not provide any prompts. These three 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; you can use a parenthetical notation style for these writing assignments.

Finally, there will be a take-home final examination for this class. The question(s) will be distributed at our last class meeting on April 26 and will be due by 5 pm on April 29.

Grading:

Grades will be based on class participation (35 percent), writing assignments (45 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.