MODERN AMERICA

US HISTORY SINCE 1865

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO
HISTORY 212-04
★ ★ ★ MODERN AMERICA ★ ★ ★
UNITED STATES HISTORY SINCE 1865
University of North Carolina at Greensboro ★ Spring 2017
MW: 5:00-6:15 ★ MHRA 1214

ERIC OAKLEY
BA UNC 1999 / MA Duke University 2006 / MA UNCG 2009 / PhD UNCG 2017
Office: MHRA 2108 (HOURS: MW, 12:00-2:00, and by appointment)
Email: eooakley@uncg.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION ★ What themes connect Frederick Douglass and MTV, gunfighters and Star Wars, or nationalism and Wonder Woman? This course explores the modern history of the United States through the lens of American popular culture from Reconstruction to the Global War on Terror. The course is structured around chronological themes, problems, and trends of interest to the development of national culture. During class meetings, students will assess popular artifacts, phenomena, and individuals that reflect the broader political and social issues in each period. Furthermore, we will investigate popular culture as a process of “remixing” the American past. Themes include the frontier, nationalism, race, urbanization, wartime, youth, mass movements, media, and globalization

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS ★ In addition to the thematic concerns above, the course trains students in historical thinking, assessment, and research. Upon completion, students will be able to:

- HISTORICAL COMPREHENSION: Evaluate the role of popular culture in reflecting upon, responding to, and shaping the development of Modern America.
- HISTORICAL ANALYSIS: Contextualize and assess cultural artifacts and secondary scholarship in order to characterize the contested history of Modern America.
- HISTORICAL RESEARCH: Conduct original research by investigating and interpreting cultural artifacts and secondary scholarship.

COURSE MATERIALS ★ The following materials are required for participation, assignments, and learning during this course.

- Articles and book chapters (Canvas)
- Everything Is A Remix (YouTube: linked from syllabus)
- American films of historical significance (forthcoming list)
ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

This course evaluates students on the successful integration of lecture content, primary sources, secondary sources, and film. Broad categories of assessment are weighted in the following manner:

- **PARTICIPATION AND READING RESPONSES**: Classroom participation, especially when discussing primary and secondary sources, is crucial to a meaningful student experience. Students are warmly encouraged to express intellectual curiosity and to propose creative interpretations. Students will lead discussion of daily readings on a rotating basis. Each student is expected to contribute in a substantive manner during each class meeting.

- **ANALYTICAL PAPERS**: Students complete two analytical papers during the semester. Each paper requires students to situate American films with respect to historical themes and events. Instructions and a list of historically-significant films will be distributed several weeks before each assignment is due. Students are responsible for obtaining the films in question.

  *Analytical Paper One*: assess a pair of films that reflect (a) different social perspectives in a single period, or (b) changing social perspectives over a span of several decades.

  *Analytical Paper Two*: assess considerations of narrative, silences, and accuracy in a biographical film.

- **FINAL EXAM**: The final exam requires students to curate and interpret a small collection of artifacts relating to Modern America. Students are permitted to use all course materials when completing the exam.

GRADING SCALE

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>99-100</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>59 and lower</td>
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COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE POLICY ⭐ Students each receive two “free” absences (no documentation or other excuses are required or desired). For each additional absence, your final grade in this course will be reduced by 5 points, on 100-point scale. The professor may grant a “free” absence for legitimate academic or athletic activities, but scheduled work must still be completed on time.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS & MAKE-UP EXAMINATIONS ⭐ Late assignments will not be accepted—no exceptions. If for any reason you cannot submit an assignment on the scheduled date, you must contact the professor more than 48 hours prior to the due date in order to request an alternate date. Requests for a make-up examination must be submitted to the professor one week prior to the regular exam date. All requests must be submitted by email.

INCOMPLETE GRADES ⭐ Incompletes will not be granted as final grades for this course, except in the most dire, unavoidable, and tragic circumstances. Consideration will furthermore be based upon the future schedule or availability of the professor, and student documentation of the situation is required.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT ⭐ UNCG complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act by providing a process for disclosing disabilities and arranging for reasonable accommodations (examples: tutors, service animals, testing accommodations, interpreters, testing, devices, etc.). To register for accommodations, please visit the Office of Disability Services (http://ods.uncg.edu/).

COURTESY ⭐ Students are expected to maintain a high level of courtesy toward the instructor and other students. Cell phones or other devices that make noise must be silenced before entering the classroom. During discussion, positive and respectful discourse with all individuals is expected. Students are allowed to use computers during class for purposes of taking notes, accessing Canvas, and other appropriate academic purposes. Persons using computers are asked to sit in the rear third of the classroom in order to avoid distracting other students. The professor will occasionally request that the entire class activate or deactivate electronic devices, according to course activities.

CLASS NOTES AND MATERIALS ⭐ Your assignments should be always based on your own ideas and written in your own words. When referencing or quoting from a source, you must properly cite that source using Chicago Style (http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html). Failure to properly attribute your work is ALWAYS considered plagiarism.

WRITING & CITATIONS ⭐ Selling class notes for commercial gain, or purchasing such class notes in this or any other course at UNCG, is a violation of the university’s copyright policy and of the Student Code of Conduct. Sharing notes for studying purposes, or borrowing notes to make up for absences, without commercial gain, are not violations.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY ⭐ Students are expected to read, understand and adhere to the UNCG Student Code of Conduct (http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/). The standards address cheating, plagiarism, falsification, and other forms of academic dishonesty. IGNORANCE IS NO EXCUSE! The professor will report all violations of the Student Code of Conduct to the Dean of Students. Furthermore, violations will result in penalties up to, and including, an automatic grade of “F” for the course.
Topics marked with asterisk (*) will be removed in the event of cancellation of classes due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances: Leisure (13 Feb) and Mythologies (3 May). The professor will announce changes to the course schedule by email.

HISTORY THROUGH POPULAR CULTURE

W 18 JAN   COURSE INTRODUCTION

M 23 JAN   POPULAR CULTURE
   Storey, An Introduction to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture, “What is Popular Culture?” (Canvas)
   “Everything is a Remix (all parts)” (Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9ryPC8bxqE)

THE 1880s

W 25 JAN   REUNION
   Blight, “What will Peace among the Whites Bring?: Reunion and Race in the Struggle over the Memory of the Civil War in American Culture”

M 30 JAN   FRONTIER
   Hine and Faragher, The American West, “Open Range” (Canvas)

THE 1890s

W 1 FEB   URBANIZATION
   Cronon, Nature’s Metropolis, “White City Pilgrimage” (Canvas)

M 6 FEB   EMPIRE
   Schlereth, “Columbia, Columbus, and Columbianism” (Canvas)
THE 1900s

W 8 FEB PROGRESSIVISM
ROSS-BRYANT, “Sacred Sites: Nature and Nation in the U.S. National Parks” (Canvas)

M 13 FEB LEISURE*
TRIPP, “The Most Popular Unpopular Man in Baseball: Baseball Fans and Ty Cobb in the Early 20TH Century” (Canvas)

THE 1910s

W 15 FEB THE COLOR LINE
ZIGLAR, “Community on Trial: The Coatesville Lynching of 1911” (Canvas)

M 20 FEB WORLD WAR I
ZIEGE, AMERICA’S GREAT WAR, “Mobilizing for War, 1917-18” (Canvas)

THE 1920s

W 22 FEB IMMIGRATION
★ Analytical Paper 1

M 27 FEB MASS CULTURE
MACDOUGALL, “The Wire Devils: Pulp Thrillers, the Telephone, and Action at a Distance in the Wiring of a Nation”
THE 1930s

W 1 MAR  THE GREAT DEPRESSION
   Ress, “Bridging the Generation Gap: Little Orphan Annie in the Great Depression”

M 6 MAR  THE NEW DEAL

THE 1940s

W 8 MAR  WORLD WAR II

F 10 MAR  Last day to withdraw from a course without receiving a WF (Withdraw Failing) grade.

11-19 MAR  Spring Break

M 20 MAR  COLD WAR
   Frost, “Good Riddance to Bad Company: Hedda Hopper, Hollywood Gossip, and the Campaign against Charlie Chaplin, 1940-1952”

THE 1950s

W 22 MAR  GENDER
   Coontz, The Way We Never Were, “‘Leave it to Beaver’ and ‘Ozzy and Harriet’”

M 27 MAR  YOUTH CULTURE
   Halberstam, The Fifties, “Chapter 37 [Marilyn Monroe]”
THE 1960s

W 29 MAR  CIVIL RIGHTS
Gallagher and Zagacki, “Visibility and Rhetoric: Epiphanies and Transformations in the LIFE photographs of the Selma Marches of 1965”

M 3 APR  THE VIETNAM ERA
Anderson, “American Popular Music and the War in Vietnam”

THE 1970s

W 5 APR  GOVERNMENT
Whitfield, “Richard Nixon as a Comic Figure”

M 10 APR  EDUCATION
Schildcrout, “The Performance of Nonconformity on The Muppet Show—or, How Kermit Made Me Queer”

THE 1980s

W 12 APR  TECHNOLOGY
Gray, “There Will Be War!: Future War Fantasies and Militaristic Science Fiction in the 1980s”

F 14 APR  Spring Holiday

M 17 APR  IDEOLOGY
Troy, Morning in America, “1988, Stanford: The Culture Wars”
THE 1990s

W 19 APR  GLOBALIZATION
   Barber, “Democracy at Risk: American Culture in a Global Culture”

M 24 APR  NARRATIVES
   Kopano, “Rap Music as an Extension of the Black Rhetorical Tradition: Keepin’ it Real”
   ★ Analytical Paper 2

THE 2000s

W 26 APR  THE WAR ON TERROR
   Dittmer, “Captain America’s Empire: Reflections on Identity, Popular Culture, and Post-9/11 Geopolitics”

M 1 MAY  MYTHOLOGIES*
   Reading to be Announced

W 3 MAY  Reading Day

M 8 MAY  ★ Final Exam Due

W 10 MAY  Final grades become available