History 702-02: Colloquium in American History (Spring 2020)
Time and Place: W 6:30-9:20pm, MHRA 1304

Professor David M. Wight (dmwight@uncg.edu)
Office Hours: M 12:45-1:45 PM, W 3:20-5:20 PM, and by appointment, MHRA 2117

STRUCTURE & SCOPE

Welcome! This course examines issues of historical interpretation for the United States from Reconstruction to the beginning of the twenty-first century. The emphasis of the course will be on recent scholarship and the historiographies they are building upon.

REQUIRED READINGS

There are fourteen books assigned for the course, listed below. Books with a “***” after them are available for free as ebooks through the UNCG library. The books can also be purchased at the University Bookstore. Additional articles/excerpts will be provided on Canvas.


Kenyon Zimmer, Immigrants Against the State: Yiddish and Italian Anarchism in America (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015) ***


Michael Koncewicz, *They Said No to Nixon: Republicans Who Stood Up to the President’s Abuses of Power* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018) ***


**GRADING**

Your final grade will be comprised of the following:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Papers</td>
<td>60%</td>
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Grading will be on the following scale: A = 94 and up; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87 to 89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; D+ = 67-69; D = 64-66; D- = 60-63; F = <60

**PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE**

Daily class attendance and participation is mandatory. If you arrive late, leave early, or are absent, your participation grade for that day may be half or zero credit. You will be given one excused absence for any reason (i.e. your lowest participation score will be dropped), but no more, so plan accordingly.

You are required to complete the readings listed below each week before arriving to class on Wednesday. Weekly readings will consist of a book and one or two articles. The “supplemental readings” are NOT part of the weekly readings.

The class will primarily consist of discussing the readings, with minimal guidance from my part. Discussions should cover the following four points, roughly sequentially: First, what are the main arguments of the book. Second, how does the arguments of the book fit within the historiographies of the historical subfields to which it pertains? Third, what evidence, sources,
methods, theories, and/or logics are utilized in the book to defend its arguments? Fourth, what critiques do you have of the book, and where might the field further advance after this work?

PRESENTATION

Each student will read one of the “supplementary readings” books and give a ten to fifteen-minute oral presentation in class, covering the four points outlined for class discussions as they pertain to this book. I will explain how books will be selected at the end of the first seminar.

PAPERS

You will submit nine papers, each 2-3 pages, double-spaced, on the readings for that week (thus you have five “free” weeks). The papers should focus upon the book for that week, addressing the four points outlined for class discussion. These papers will serve as a useful summarization of books and themes that you can use in your qualifying examinations and future research and teaching.

I require that you submit a hard copy of your paper at the start of class. Late papers will generally not be accepted.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro prohibits any and all forms of academic dishonesty. It is the student’s responsible to know what constitutes academic integrity and academic dishonesty, and to be familiar with UNCG policies on academic integrity laid out here: https://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integrity-policy/. Students who engage in an academically dishonest act (such as plagiarizing part of a paper or cheating during an exam) will receive a grade of “F” in the course and be reported to the Academic Dean for possible additional disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion from the university. Do not attempt it.

CONTACTING ME

I encourage you to meet with me at my office hours or at another arranged time. You can also ask me questions by email. Please allow me a full day to respond (or two on the weekends), but I’ll usually reply sooner.

USEFUL WEBSITES

History Department Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/UNCGDepartmentofHistory/
History Department Website: https://his.uncg.edu/

SYLLABUS MODIFICATIONS

I reserve the right to modify or alter any part of the syllabus as the course progresses. It is your responsibility to keep up with class announcements regarding any alterations.

CLASS TOPICS

Week 1 – 1/15 – Introduction to the Course

No Readings or Assignments Due

Week 2 – 1/22 – The Battle Over Reconstruction


Supplemental Readings:

Kenneth M. Stamp, The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (1965)

David Blight, Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory (2001)


Week 3 – 1/29 – Gender and Sexuality in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century


Supplemental Readings:


Week 4 – 2/5 – Immigrants and Modern Capitalism


Supplemental Readings:


Week 5 – 2/12 – American Indians and Historical Memory


Supplemental Readings:


Patricia Limerick, The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West (1987)

Pekka Hamalainen, The Comanche Empire (2008)

Elliott West, The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story (2009)

Week 6 – 2/19 – Jim Crow and the Modern State


Supplemental Readings:


Crystal Feimster, Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching (2009)


Week 7 – 2/26 – The United States as Overseas Empire


Supplemental Readings:


Bruce Cumings, *Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power* (2009)


Week 8 – 3/4 – BREAK WEEK

Week 9 – 3/11 – Progressivism and Its Legacies


Supplemental Readings:


Thomas Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (1992)


Week 10 – 3/18 – The Great Depression and Political Extremism


Supplemental Readings:


**Week 11 – 3/25 – World War II, the Cold War, and Science and the Environment**


Seymour Mauskopf and Alex Roland, “The Historiography of Science and Technology,” *The Oxford History of Historical Writing* (2011)


**Supplemental Readings:**


David Zierler, *The Invention of Ecocide: Agent Orange, Vietnam, and the Scientists Who Changed the Way We Think About the Environment* (2011)


**Week 12 – 4/1 – Class, Gender, and Race in the Post-War Era**


Supplemental Readings:


George Lipsitz, *Rainbow at Midnight: Labor and Culture in the 1940s* (1994)


Week 13 – 4/8 – The New Left


Supplemental Readings:


Week 14 – 4/15 – The New Right

Michael Koncewicz, *They Said No to Nixon: Republicans Who Stood Up to the President’s Abuses of Power* (2018)


Supplemental Readings:


**Week 15 – 4/22 – The United States in a Globalizing World**


**Supplemental Readings:**


**Week 16 – 4/29 – Neoliberalism**


**Supplemental Readings:**


