History 702-02: Colloquium in American History (Spring 2021)
Time and Place: T 2:00-4:50pm, Online

Professor David M. Wight (dmwight@uncg.edu)
Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom

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 thirteen 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.


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:

- Participation: 30%
- Papers: 60%
- Presentation: 10%

Grading will be on the following scale: A = 93 and up; A- = 90-92; B+ = 87 to 89; B = 83-86; B- = 80-82; C+ = 77-79; C = 73-76; F = <73

**PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE**

Class will be held via Zoom each Tuesday. Weekly 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 Tuesday. Weekly readings will consist of a book and one or two articles. The “supplemental readings” are NOT part of the weekly readings (those will be used for presentations, see below).

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, particularly as discussed in the articles assigned for that week? 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?
PAPERS

You will submit nine papers, each 2½ to 3 pages, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, on the readings for that week (thus you have five “free” weeks) on Canvas. The papers should focus on the book for that week, and also incorporate a discussion of the assigned articles for that week as they pertain to the book and the historiography it is situated within, 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 your paper before the start of class. Late papers will generally not be accepted.

PRESENTATION

Each student will read ONE of the “supplementary readings” books and give a twelve to fifteen-minute oral presentation in class, covering the four points outlined for class discussions as they pertain to this book. Email me your top three or so picks for a supplementary reading, and I will assign supplementary readings on a first-claimed first-served basis, so as to ensure everyone presents on a different work and there are not too many presentations for any given week.

ETIQUETTE

Throughout the course, whether in video meetings, online discussion boards, or assignments, you are required to be respectful of other people and their arguments. Critiques and disagreements over the ideas we discuss are expected and even encouraged, but this does not permit anyone to be offensive or abusive toward others. I reserve the right to remove anyone from class for disrespectful behavior.

General behaviors to avoid include (but are not limited to): flaming, doxing, using or posting offensive images or language that is outside the scope of course materials, posting suspicious websites, and advertising yours or others’ businesses or products.

TECHNOLOGY

This course requires the capability of the student to use and regularly access a computer, a word processor, pdf files, the internet (including videos), and a webcam. The UNCG library is a resource for technology access.

On protecting your personal data and privacy, see https://policy.uncg.edu/university-policies/acceptable_use/.
If you encounter a technology problem, contact UNCG Information Technology Services as soon as possible. They have online, phone and walk-in options for technical support, all listed here: [https://its.uncg.edu/Help/](https://its.uncg.edu/Help/). If a technology problem poses the possibility of preventing you from completing coursework, communicate this to myself as soon as possible, too, so we can see if we can mitigate any negative impacts on your learning and grade.

**ACADEMIC RESOURCES**

UNCG provides a variety of useful services for you, the student. Check them out!

The UNCG Library ([https://library.uncg.edu/](https://library.uncg.edu/)) has a wealth of books, articles, archival materials, and other media resources, computers, inter-library loan services, and knowledgeable staff.

The UNCG Writing Center ([https://writingcenter.uncg.edu/](https://writingcenter.uncg.edu/)) provides assistance with writing assignments; contact staff members to set an appointment either in person or via instant-messaging.

The UNCG Speaking Center ([https://speakingcenter.uncg.edu/](https://speakingcenter.uncg.edu/)) provides assistance in improving your skill and confidence in public, group, and individual speaking.

If you have any needs or questions related to disability issues, please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) ([https://ods.uncg.edu/](https://ods.uncg.edu/)). I prioritize making this course accessible to all of the students in it, and I will work with OARS to accommodate students’ requests. You do not need to disclose details about your disability to me to receive accommodations.

**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/](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.

**COMMUNICATION**

I will make periodic announcements regarding important information about the course, accessible in the “Announcements” tab. Likewise, I will provide feedback on assignments under comments. I might also send you a message via Canvas or an email to your UNCG email address
if needed. It is your responsibility to monitor and read all of these communications in a timely manner.

I am happy to answer your questions by email or message in Canvas. Please allow me a full day to respond (or two on weekends and holidays), but I’ll usually reply sooner.

You can also schedule a Zoom meeting with me.

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 – 1/19 – Introduction to the Course

Week 2 – 1/26 – 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 – 2/2 – Immigrants and Industrial Capitalism


**Supplemental Readings:**


Week 4 – 2/9 – American Indians and Historical Memory


**Supplemental Readings:**


Week 5 – 2/16 – Jim Crow, Gender, and the Modern State


**Supplemental Readings:**


Week 6 – 2/23 – The United States as Overseas Empire


**Supplemental Readings:**


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

**Week 7 – 3/2 – Progressivism and Its Legacies**


**Supplemental Readings:**


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


**Week 8 – 3/9 – Political and Cultural Battles of the 1930s**


**Supplemental Readings:**


Week 9 – 3/16 – New Deal Liberalism


Supplemental Readings:


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


Week 10 – 3/23 – 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 11 – 3/30 – The New Left**


**Supplemental Readings:**


**Week 12 – 4/6 – 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 13 – 4/13 – Neoliberalism


Henry A. Giroux, “Neoliberalism and the Death of the Social State: Remembering Walter Benjamin’s Angel of History” (2011)

**Supplemental Readings:**


Week 14 – 4/20 – The Recent Past

Lisa Levenstein, *They Didn't See Us Coming: The Hidden History of Feminism in the Nineties* (2020)


**Supplemental Readings:**


