

“Dissent is the highest form of patriotism.”
- Thomas Jefferson

“What is Past, is Prologue”
- William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

HISTORY 2112 - 01H — HONORS UNITED STATES HISTORY II, CRN 8274

FALL SEMESTER, 2009

Tuesday, Thursday, 1:30-2:45 (J-130)

DR. ALBERT CHURELLA

Office: J-311, Phone # 678-915-7941

E-mail: achurell@spsu.edu

Web page: <http://www.spsu.edu/sis/churella/>

Office Hours: Monday 3:30 – 4:30; Tuesday, 12:30 – 1:30 and 2:45 – 3:45;

Wednesday, 2:00 – 3:00 and 5:00 – 6:00; and by appointment

Course Description:

At its most basic, this course provides a broad overview of American history from 1877 to the present. Even though this is a span of only a little over 100 years, it is simply impossible to cover every aspect of modern U.S. history in sixteen weeks. Since this is an honors class, we will have considerably greater flexibility than in a more traditional survey course. We will incorporate many different types of material into the course, including historical narratives, autobiographies, novels, and films. We will also dispense with traditional exams in favor of more self-directed writing and discussion assignments. Finally, we will assume a certain level of basic background knowledge in American history. Based on this assumption, we will downplay (although NOT ignore completely) a number of major historical events.

In their place, we will focus extensively on three key themes. While other historians might disagree with me, I am convinced that this trilogy defines the American experience in the modern era. **First**, the rise of big business in the United States gave rise to both the expansion of the scope and power of the federal government and led to **the development of organized labor**—and gave rise to issues of social justice that are still being debated today. **Second**, the growing power of **the civil rights movement** forced this nation to confront its persistent unwillingness to extend the protection of the Constitution and the promise of the American dream to all Americans—and gave rise to a more just society and to greater rights for all Americans. **Third**, American involvement in **the Vietnam conflict** created millions of casualties, incurred billions of dollars in expenditures, and, more than any other issue of the twentieth century, threatened to tear this nation apart—and led to ongoing debates over the morality of American foreign policy, and of this nation’s role in the world. Its effects linger, even today, and affect our response to issues such as global terrorism.

Each of these three issues requires us—indeed, requires all Americans—to confront weighty ethical issues. At heart, then, this is not so much a course about what happened, but about what might have happened, what should have happened, and, most

importantly, about how we can use our heightened ethical perspective to better influence events that have not yet happened. In the process, we should develop an appreciation for the role of dissent in American society. In many cases, individuals engaged in dissent are the one most responsible for change, both for good and for ill. Above all, we should empathize with people who are outside the mainstream – the marginalized, the atypical, and the unpopular – for they are the ones who dissent, who challenge society’s norms, and who induce the change over time that we often simply call “history.”

History would be of little value to us if it did not help us to formulate solutions to real-world problems that we face today. As the Shakespeare quotation indicates, the past is indeed prologue, other people and other societies have already been where we are going, and they have developed solutions for the problems that we face. We can, and we should, heed their lessons. To that end, we will tailor the course to address some real-world issues, including those chosen by the students in the course, and examine them in historical context.

Learning Outcomes:

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

1. Identify historical issues in and cite knowledge of the American past.
2. Reach informed conclusions about historical sources and develop multiple explanations for historical events.
3. Describe the ways in which the past affects current events.
4. Identify the cultural values of the U.S. and the role of minority views in reshaping those values.

For Honors course only:

5. Integrate artistic, cultural, or other extracurricular activities into their study of U.S. history.
6. Work in a small-class setting to develop their individual analyses of historical events.

Readings:

The following books are available at the campus bookstore. All four books are required reading for the course. You are expected to have read (and, if necessary, reread) assigned materials **prior to** the class meeting for which those readings were assigned.

Retrieving the American Past, various chapters, as assigned – all are available on-line, through GeorgiaVIEW Vista 8 (formerly WebCT Vista)

Thomas Bell, *Out of this Furnace*

Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*

Philip Caputo, *A Rumor of War*

Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin, *Three Cups of Tea*

Textbook: if you are unfamiliar with the basics of U.S. history, please get a good quality Modern U.S. history text – I am using Tindall and Shi, *America, Brief 7th Edition, Vol. 2* in my History 2112 survey classes, and this will work fine

Assignments:

In that case, your final grade will consist of the following components:

CLASS PARTICIPATION (20%)

Student participation is an integral part of any course, particularly in a small class with highly motivated students. In particular, students will need to:

- **Respond to my questions**
- **Formulate your own questions**
- **Discuss issues amongst yourselves**
- **Comment on your own written work, and that of your fellow students**
- **Lead class discussions on a variety of topics**

Class participation will be focused primarily on:

- **The course readings**
- **The films**
- **Class field trips**
- **Student written work, and other projects**
- **Current events**

This means that, at a minimum, you will have to develop (or at least try your best to develop) a thorough understanding of:

- **The readings**
- **The films**
- **The daily newspaper (such as the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, the *New York Times*, or the *Washington Post*), which are available at the library, or via a low-cost subscription)**

WRITTEN WORK

Every student, regardless of his or her intended career, needs to develop the ability to communicate effectively, especially in writing. As such, you can expect to write (or rewrite) something virtually every week of the semester. Please remember that each paper should be double-spaced, typed, 11 or 12 point type, one-inch margins all

around, which means approximately 300 words per page). You can also expect that both your fellow students and I will critique your work in an effort to improve your writing skills.

Please make three copies of EVERY paper that you submit, one to keep in pristine condition, and two to give to me. I will retain one and return the other to you, with my comments. In some cases, when students critique each other's work, please make enough additional copies for everyone in the class. Since the final project will include a portfolio of your work, be certain that you save all of the written work that you have completed in this course.

When possible, we will try to integrate films, lecture, readings, and class discussion on each of the three main themes in this course. In other words, how do *Matewan* and *Norma Rae*, in combination with *Out of this Furnace*, increase your understanding of the labor movement in the United States? How can you combine *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *A Long Walk Home* with *Coming of Age in Mississippi* to better understand the Civil Rights era? How do *The Quiet American* and *Apocalypse Now*, in tandem with *A Rumor of War*, help you to understand the Vietnam conflict?

The written work will consist of the following components:

- 1.) **“Reaction Papers” on each of the films (25%) – Due dates listed in the “Class Schedule” at the end of this syllabus: On the HIST 2112 Honors web page, I have listed (or will list) a question or two relating to each of the films. Keep these questions in mind as you view the films. Afterwards, write a properly formatted paper, approximately 500 words in length, on the question(s) pertaining to that week’s film.**
 - **The films are listed at the end of this syllabus, as well as on my HIST 2112 Honors web page. You will watch one film per week, at a time of your choosing. The films are located in two places – the Honors Lounge, in D-103 and in the Honors Dorm Lounge. Please view the films in one of these two rooms. If you remove them from either room, then they are likely to go astray, which would certainly annoy your fellow students. I STRONGLY encourage students to view the films as a group – it will be a more social occasion, and it will give you the opportunity to talk about the important issues that the films portray.**
 - **The Film Reaction Papers are due at the beginning of class on the Thursday of the week for which they are assigned.**
- 2.) **First Class Project (15%) – Due NO LATER THAN the beginning of class on Tuesday, October 6: For the section of the course relating to organized labor, this will be a collaborative effort to development a long range strategic plans for the imaginary “Mon Valley Steel Museum.”**
- 3.) **Second Class Project (20%) – Due NO LAER THAN the beginning of class on Tuesday, November 10: For the section of the course relating to the civil**

rights movement, students will design a website for a civil rights unit in an imaginary history class.

- 4.) **Final Class Project (20%) – Initial Draft Due NO LATER than the beginning of class on Thursday, December 3; Final Draft Due NO LATER THAN Noon on Thursday, December 17: You will be asked to develop a strategy for success in the War on Terror, based on your readings in *A Rumor of War* and *Three Cups of Tea*, as well as current-events information.**

Field Trips:

Atlanta offers a wealth of resources to history students. While I have not yet worked out the details, I will try to arrange trips to historical sites, etc. In addition, I will try to arrange for the class to see a play or other live performance relating to modern U.S. history. Participation in these events is expected, and will be a required part of the class (in addition to being enjoyable). Depending on the nature of the trip, I may ask you to write a brief paper summarizing the trip or I may expect that you incorporate your experiences in one of the papers or in the broader course project.

Grading Scale:

89.5%-100%	A
79.5%-89.4%	B
69.5%-79.4%	C
59.5%-69.4%	D
Below 59.5%	F

Class Policies:

- Please refrain from private conversations in class—if you have a question, ask the instructor, not your neighbor.
- Turn off all cell phones, pagers, etc., before entering the classroom.
- **Any student using a cell phone or similar device during class (except to turn it off) will have his / her course grade reduced by one letter grade for each infraction.**
- Tape recorders and calculators are not permitted, except under extraordinary circumstances, and only with the prior permission of the instructor. **Laptop computers are not permitted under any circumstances.**
- Students may not, under any circumstances, work on material from any other course during class time.

- Pay attention to the withdrawal date – I will not authorize any withdrawals (with a “W”) after this date, except under extraordinary circumstances, that are clearly beyond the student’s control.
- Please do not request extra credit – each student is judged by the quality, and not the quantity, of their work.
- **If you do not agree with the policies listed above, then you should not take this course.**
- Any student who has a learning disability should see me as soon as possible.

Make-up Policy:

Make-up and late assignments are inherently unfair to all concerned, and I try to avoid them whenever possible. However, students with a legitimate excuse (serious illness, death in the family, etc.) may certainly make up a missed assignment. If you anticipate missing any quiz, assignment, or deadline, you *must* contact me *prior* to the scheduled date and time of this assignment. You must also be able to document your absence. Note that heavy course loads, poor planning, and other circumstances under your control do NOT constitute grounds for special consideration. In these cases, the paper assignments will incur a penalty of five points (½ a letter grade) for each day that it is late.

Academic Misconduct:

Academic misconduct (i.e., cheating, plagiarism, etc.) is not just unfair to your fellow students; it also deprives you of the opportunity to learn the information and, more importantly, the knowledge skills that will serve you long after you have left college. At its most basic level, you need to do your own work and give proper acknowledgement to the work of others. Rule #1: if you are unsure about academic misconduct issues, ask me **BEFORE** you turn in an assignment. Rule #2: if you aren’t sure whether or not to cite a source, cite the source. My website has a link to a very good overview of academic honesty and dishonesty, written by two SPSU professors. Please understand that academic honesty and proper citation of sources is not just “busywork.” Instead, it follows the essence of the Golden Rule: just as you would expect other people to give you credit for your work, you must also give proper credit to the work of others.

Class Schedule and Assignments:

- Aug. 25 & 27 Course introduction
- Sept. 1 Discussion: RTAP “Temperance and Prohibition” PLUS: supplemental readings, available online at: the Office of National Drug Control Policy (www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/publications/pdf/mj_rev.pdf) and NORML (http://www.norml.org/index.cfm?Group_ID=3418)
- Sept. 3 Film: *Matewan*
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- Sept. 8 Discussion: RTAP “The Grueling Battle for Women’s Suffrage”
- Sept. 10 Film: *Inherit the Wind* AND *Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial*
- Sept. 15 Discussion: RTAP, “The First Sexual Revolution”
- Sept. 17 Film: *Grapes of Wrath*
- Sept. 22 Discussion: RTAP, “Advertising and Marketing in the 1920s and 1930s”
- Sept. 24 Film: *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- Sept. 29 Discussion: Out of this Furnace
- Oct. 1 Film: *Pleasantville*
- Oct. 6 **“Mon Valley Steel Museum” project due**
- Oct. 8 Film: *Fail Safe*
- Oct. 13 Out-of-class study day
Last day to withdraw from a class without a WF
- Oct. 15 Film: *Citizen Cohn*
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- Oct. 20 Discussion: RTAP, “Japanese Internment”
- Oct. 22 Film: *The Long Walk Home*
- Oct. 27 Discussion: Coming of Age in Mississippi
- Oct. 29 Film: *Norma Rae*
- Nov. 3 Discussion: RTAP, “Nonviolence and the Civil Rights Movement”

- Nov. 5 Film: *The Quiet American*
- Nov. 10 **Civil Rights project due**
- Nov. 12 Film: *Apocalypse Now*
- Nov. 17 Generic class day
- Nov. 19 Film: *The Pentagon Papers*
- Nov. 24 Discussion: A Rumor of War
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- Nov. 26 Thanksgiving Holliday – No Class
- Dec. 1 Generic class day
- Dec. 3 Film: *All the President's Men*
Initial Draft of "War on Terrorism" paper due
- Dec. 8 Discussion: RTAP, "The Vietnam Era Antiwar Movement" AND "Why
the United States Lost the Vietnam War
- Dec. 10 Film: *The Fog of War*

**Final Draft of the "War on Terrorism" paper due no later than Noon, Thursday,
December 17**