

Thomas Jackson, Ph.D.
University of North Carolina Greensboro
Department of History
Office: HHRA 2141
Office Hours: Wednesday, Friday, 11:00-12:00, and by appointment

HHRA 1207
Monday, 6:30-9:20
Off: 334-4040; Hm: 574-2010
tjackson@uncg.edu

History 702 02 (Spring 2007)
Graduate Colloquium in US History, 1865- Present

This course balances several objectives: 1) coverage of major issues and developments in the political, social, and cultural history of the United States; 2) exposure to varieties of research methodology, narrative, analysis, and argumentation that all fall under the rubric "historiography"; 3) consistent thematic attention to race, class, ethnicity and gender as they help us shed light on lived experience, systems of cultural meaning, patterns of migration and settlement, economic inequality, social status, and political power. We will also consider war and social policy as powerful instruments of social change and control. America's cities and suburbs as sites of competition, conflict, and cooperation will be a frequent point of discussion.

We examine ongoing conversations among historians about U.S. politics, culture and society. Overlapping terrain among these fields is where I find the most exciting action, where historians work with diverse sources and balance considerations of culture and structure, power and agency, analysis and narrative, qualitative and quantitative research. I have selected works that are synthetic, yet original. The monographs are broadly cast, often crossing boundaries of sub-discipline or making important methodological breakthroughs. The syntheses give you good grounding in history and historiography.

Graduate students should be building a base of knowledge and notes that will serve you in comprehensive exams and in your careers as scholars, teachers, or public historians. So obviously you should be thinking on several levels simultaneously as your professional identity takes shape.

Ask yourself:

1) Do I have a good general knowledge of the historical canvas we are covering? If not, read one of the textbooks listed or others of the synthetic works. Could you explain to an undergraduate how the 15th amendment was subverted, why the U.S. entered World War I and why its aftermath engendered a Red Scare, where the KKK and the CIO had their social bases, what the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Hart-Celler Immigration Act of 1965 achieved?

2) How good am I at situating a book or article in its larger historiographical context, the community of historians, living and dead, where you find evidence, criticism, support and guidance? Use historiographical reviews, book reviews, and recent attempts at scholarly synthesis to get a sense of these "ongoing conversations." Authors often tell you what they are contributing, who they are taking to task, who they consider kindred spirits in their fields (those footnotes tell

their own stories). There is no way to fully “master the historiography” in this vast and fragmented field! But you should be aware of important ongoing conversations and select those sub-fields that you might want to join as an active participant.

3) A sense of the wider historiography should support, not detract, from the human beings and their *history* that shines through the best monographs and articles. We must of necessity often skim or sample scholarly work. But certain books deserve to be read *deeply*, with attention to their methods, writing styles, and skills at balancing interpretation, evidence and narrative. Is this book a model for your own work? How does the author relate the evidence they have found to the tools historians have developed or borrowed from other disciplines?

Hint: You forget the vast majority of what you read, but you must read it to remember anything! Take thoughtful analytical notes that will make sense to you later! I do this a lot in the margins and then just flag the pages. Consult the reviews and historiographical essays to help clue you into what might be important to evaluate in a work. Choosing what to record, copy, or cite is a skill learned over years. Research has shown that people remember facts, dates, personalities and concepts that *matter* to larger questions they deem important. Is there something here I would want to put in a lecture? Is there a note or a quote here that might end up in something I would want to write? What is his or her basic approach to historical explanation or education? What is the key interpretive storyline?

Requirements:

Class Discussion (40%): Of course this is crucial, because so much of functioning well as a historian is the ability to capture the gist of an argument, to be fair yet critical, and to be able to contribute to ongoing conversations. So much time and work can be saved if you make this a professional group process. Please stay on-topic, stay high-minded, limit tangential anecdotes, and don't go negative on a piece of scholarship until we have a fair appreciation of an author's efforts and contributions. This is a seminar, a collaborative enterprise. You get one unexcused absence.

Discussion Board (weekly) (20%). Informal 1--2 pages (300-500 words). Write a Blackboard entry answering two of the following questions: 1) How have these readings changed my understanding of US history or the historiography of this topic? 2) Is there a model here for *doing* good history? 3) Are there particularly good examples or concepts that I might incorporate into an undergraduate lecture? I generally start the conversation with some questions. We continue them in class. This worked beautifully last time. Please be succinct. As with everything, these are reflective and evaluative, not simply descriptive or comprehensive.

4 5-page historiography papers (sign up in advance; I want 2 by week 7) (40%). These are due on the day of discussion. Evaluate the week's readings and several recommended sources which either contest or complement the argument under review. Articles or selected chapters with a common focus are what I'm after. Ask me, I am a walking bibliography. I will post on blackboard a series of bibliographic suggestions pertinent to each week, with questions you might address.

These papers should not merely recapitulate or describe the literature. You are evaluating the merits of different scholars' explanations and argumentation in relation to the bigger questions historians address (and their methods of finding, organizing, and presenting evidence). Sometimes a book takes on several questions and interpretive challenges: your solution would be to focus on one aspect in relation to other arguments in the historiography. There's a trick to this, a balance of broad and deep. *If your grade is suffering by the end of the semester, I will give you the opportunity to expand and improve upon one of these essays.*

On reading: With a book a week under discussion, you need to develop skills of skimming, scanning, and critical reading that might run against the grain of how you have worked up until now. Use book reviews to help you appreciate the essential issues, strengths and possible weaknesses. Don't believe everything book reviewers say. *Reviews in American History* is an essential tool, as are specific book reviews and general historiographical essays. The essays in *Journal of Southern History*, *Journal of American History*, *Journal of Urban History* are generally more substantive than *American Historical Review* or *Historian*. We are blessed with Info-Trac, EBSCO, and many online journals.

Readings:

Foner, Eric. *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. 1st ed, *New American Nation Series*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.

Krause, Paul. *The Battle for Homestead, 1880-1892: Politics, Culture, and Steel*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992.

Kasson, Joy S. *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History*. 1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 2000.

Ladd-Taylor, Molly. *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890-1930*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994.

Cecelski, David S., and Timothy B. Tyson. *Democracy Betrayed : The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Boyle, Kevin. *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age*. 1st ed. New York: H.Holt, 2004.

Roediger, David R. *Working toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White : The Strange Journey from Ellis Island to the Suburbs*. New York: Basic Books, 2005.

Katznelson, Ira. *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2005.

Linenthal, Edward Tabor, and Tom Engelhardt. *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996.

Cohen, Lizabeth. *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*. New York: Knopf, 2003.

Jackson, Thomas F. *From Civil Rights to Human Rights: Martin Luther King Jr., and the Struggle for Economic Justice* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

Rosen, Ruth. *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America*. New York: Viking, 2000.

Appy, Christian G. *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993.

Davis, Mike. *Magical Urbanism : Latinos Reinvent the Us City*. London ; New York: Verso, 2000.

For understanding crucial developments in US history you will need in your teaching and scholarly career, there really is no substitute for good synthesis. We are fortunate to have quite a few to appear in the last 15 years. Here are some suggestions.

Textbooks: Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty*; James Henretta, et. al., *America's History*

Citizenship and Historical Synthesis: Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom*; Michael Schudson, *The Good Citizen*; Robert Wiebe, *Self Rule: A Cultural History of American Democracy*; Alex Keysar, *The Right to Vote*; Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History*; Nelson Lichtenstein, *State of the Nation*; Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible*. Recent syntheses by Christopher Lasch, Robert Norrell, Thomas Holt, Olivier Zunz all try to get their interpretive hoops around 20th-century US history.

[Consult Blackboard "Course Documents" for bibliographies and suggestions for essays pertinent to each week]

MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

1/10: Introductions

What is your favorite historical study and why? Who do you imagine your most important audience(s) will be in your career?

1/22 Reconstruction -- Historical Synthesis

Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution*

Recommended:

Eric Foner, *Nothing But Freedom*; Leon Litwak, *Been in the Storm Too Long, Trouble in Mind*; Edward L. Ayers, *Southern Crossing: A History of the American South, 1877-1906*; C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913*; Hahn, *A Nation under Our Feet* ; John Cell, *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy: The Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South*. A good paper here might compare the methodologies of Hahn and Litwak with a view to answering how well each balances opposing factors of black agency and white coercion.

1/29: Native Americans and the West: Culture, Empire, and Agency

Joy Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show*

Adams, David Wallace. "Schooling the Hopi: Federal Indian Policy Writ Small," *Pacific Historical Review* v. 48, n. 3, August 1979, 335-356.

Recommended: Richard White, "Western History." In *The New American History, Revised and Expanded Edition*, edited by Eric Foner. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997. Ellis, Clyde,

"We Don't Want Your Rations, We Want This Dance': The Changing Use of Song and Dance on the Southern Plains." *Western Historical Quarterly* 30:2(1999): 133-54.

2/5: Alternative Americas: 19th Century Labor History

Paul Krause, *The Battle for Homestead*

2/12: Sex, Violence, and White Supremacy in North Carolina

David Cecelski and Timothy Tyson, eds., *Democracy Betrayed*

2/19: Women's Political Sphere and the Rise of Maternalist Reform

Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work*

Rodgers, Daniel T. "An Age of Social Politics." In *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, edited by Thomas Bender, 274-94. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

Recommended:

Kornbluh, Felicia A. "The New Literature on Gender and the Welfare State: The U.S. Case." *Feminist Studies* 22, no. 1 (1996): 171-97.

2/26: Race from Within: Narrative History and the Origins of the Urban Crisis

Boyle, *Arc of Justice*

Recommended:

Higham, John. *Send These to Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America*. Atheneum, 1975, ch. 2 "The Politics of Immigration Restriction"

Gerstle, Gary. "Liberty, Coercion, and the Making of Americans." *Journal of American History* 84, no. 2 (1997): 524-58.

3/12: Race from Below: Language and Praxis

Roediger, *Working toward Whiteness*

3/19: Race from Above: Policy

Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White*

3/26: War, Culture and the Culture Wars

Edward Linenthal, et. al., eds., *History Wars*

Gar Alperovitz, "Hiroshima: Historians Reassess," *Foreign Policy* 99 (Summer 1995). EBSCO

Young, Marilyn. "The Age of Global Power." In *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, edited by Thomas Bender, 274-94. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

4/1: Citizenship and the Suburban Nation

Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic*

4/9: The Black Freedom Movement

Jackson, *From Civil Rights to Human Rights*

4/16: Second Wave Feminism

Rosen, *The World Split Open*

4/22: Crucible of Nationalism: Vietnam

Appy, *Working Class War*

4/30: The Future of Us All: Latinos in the United States

Mike Davis, *Magical Urbanism*