

History 212 - 09: The United States since 1865 – Writing Intensive

Meeting: 6:00pm – 9:00pm Thursday

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Office Hours: 4:00pm – 6:00pm Thursday or B.A.

Course Description

This course examines, through "intensive" reading and writing, how individual lives and historical forces intersected in the United States since 1865. By examining a combined collection of primary historical sources (letters, journals, speeches, oral interviews and newspapers) and secondary materials we will explore many themes in United States history including industrialization, political movements, immigration, social reform, race, class, gender, and the role of the federal government. Rather than focusing solely on the effects of key individuals in U.S. history, which is important, this course will also examine the history of everyday individuals from a variety of backgrounds whose lives were an integral part of this country's complex historical landscape.

Course Goals

Students should be able to:

- identify and analyze key themes in U.S. history since 1865.
- explain the role and involvement of a variety of people in these key themes.
- analyze and interpret primary and secondary source materials.
- use historical knowledge and interpretations to understand current events.
- critically read, write, and discuss the issues and themes presented in this course.
- learn basic online course skills including the use of iSpartan and Blackboard
- develop critical writing skills for the construction and analysis of history

Required Texts: (available at UNCG bookstore, *also check out Amazon.com for these books as you may find them cheaper, used, or both.)

James West Davidson and Mark Lytle, *After the Fact, Volume II, with Primary Source Investigator CD (Paperback)* *** **Be sure that you have the CD-Rom, you will need it for your assignments.**

Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty!, Second Edition, Volume 2 (Give Me Liberty) (Paperback)*

Timothy Tyson, *Blood Done Sign My Name*

Occasional optional and required electronic reserves available on Blackboard for this class. Most of them in .pdf format available under "Course Materials" in Blackboard

Course Requirements (all percentages are approximate):

Participation and class citizenship: 10%

Three-page Character Analysis: 10%

Free Writing Exercises: 10%

Three 4-5 page papers: 20%

Primary source Analysis: 20%

Final Paper: 30%

We will use the following grading scale: 99 and above A+, 93 and above A, 90-92 A-, 88-89 B+, 83-87 B, 80-82, B-, 78-79 C+, 73-77 C, 70-72 C-, 68-69 D+, 63-67 D, 60-62 D-, 59 and below F.

Reading and Preparation: For this class to work, everyone must consistently prepare and be willing to share and evaluate your work verbally.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. *You must email me in advance if you will miss class, or, in case of emergency, within 24 hours after class.* I can excuse absences only on the grounds of personal or family illness or serious emergency (work schedules, appointments, oversleep, or extracurricular activity). After three unexcused absences your final grade will drop 3 points for every day missed. Three *consecutive* unexcused absences constitute grounds for withdrawal.

Blackboard and Hard Copy Free-Writing Exercises. 30%. These are discussion threads that I will post to provoke exercises in "free" writing. Aim anywhere from 100 to 300 words each week. I will be looking for unpolished ideas. Quotation marks and page references are expected when you bring in outside information. If you refer to news articles, provide adequate citation. Look for instructions and suggestions for writing on Blackboard a week in advance. Sometimes I could ask you to identify the best example of writing in the week's reading. Think about the question "what is good writing?" I might ask you to compare "then and now."

Primary and Secondary Sources: Throughout this course you will be responsible for understanding and interpreting both primary and secondary source materials. A primary source is a document or physical object which was written or created during a specific time period or series of events. These sources are specific to an experience or time period and offer a personal and precise reflection of a particular event. A secondary source interprets, analyzes, and synthesizes primary sources. These sources are removed from the event under study by time and place. Secondary sources may have pictures, quotes or

graphics of primary sources in them. Visit the following link for a good description:

<http://www.princeton.edu/~refdesk/primary2.html>

Primary Source Analysis: Each student is required to write a two to three page analysis of one the primary documents from your *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Investigation CD- Rom*. A good primary source analysis will identify the source type, its origins, its authenticity, and the context of the document in the larger historical picture. I will list four or five documents by the end of the first week of class for students to choose from as well as details and examples of how to approach this assignment. I strongly urge all of you to start this assignment as soon as you can.

Character Analysis: Each student is required to write a two-page character analysis of Tim Tyson's *Blood Done Signed my Name*. I would begin reading this book as soon as possible. Each analysis should identify the protagonists and antagonists of Tyson's story and what each character represents to the story and their importance to the historical moment that Tyson reveals. We will discuss this in greater detail throughout the course.

Short Papers: In these 4-5 page essays, you will select a focused question and craft an essay that both describes and explains something about that week's readings that surprised you. Davidson and Lytle are continually posing problematic questions about history and are trying to answer them with focused analysis and wider explication of contexts. Some may occur to you in class or appear on the Discussion Board. These essays should bring a new perspective or new evidence to the problem. Sixty percent of the paper can deal with the assigned readings, but you must supplement your discussion with one or more of the following sources. Especially with the final rewrite paper, you will be evaluated on the basis of how widely you sample the following kinds of sources and how deeply you analyze them:

1. *Another scholar's argument*, evidence, and point of view. These are provided at the end of each chapter of *After the Fact* under □Additional Reading.□ You can also do a search of the library's card catalog and other scholarly article search engines. Under no conditions will I accept the words of a textbook writer or a writer of Internet copy who is not a historical scholar (If I find any reference or unattributed text from something like wikipedia or about.com, I will hand the paper immediately back to you.)

2. *Primary documents:* these are letters, speeches, petitions, diaries, census records, photographs, produced by the historical actors that we are examining. Example: Harry Truman's diary as he reflects on dropping the bomb.

3. *Newspaper coverage*: also a primary source created at the time, but by a journalist, by definition an observer once removed from the action. They have biases and points of view that are in themselves interesting and revealing sometimes.

4. *Oral histories*: these also we consider primary documents, but they share a characteristic with secondary sources in that they can be quite removed in time from the actual decisions or events. Nevertheless they are the more or less reliable records of peoples' memories (the best example is the WPA ex-slave narratives from chapter 7 of the text).

Final Expanded and Rewritten Research Paper: In these essays, you will be rewarded for initiative and imagination in discovering just those sources that shed light on the issues defined in the original paper that you choose to revise. Use a mixture of primary and secondary sources to substantially rewrite your original essay. (Include the original essay with my comments on it in your final submission). We are getting into research here, which means developing some skills using our research library. Handouts, course documents on Blackboard, and in-class demonstrations will make these accessible to you. But you can get started on the following website with many tools on it:

http://library.uncg.edu/depts/ref/bibs/his/his340_us_since_1945.

Note on Internet research: When using the Internet, the general rule is to avoid non-scholarly writing and to find the most reliable sources of primary documents: official government statistics and documentary sources are followed by .gov; university professors often publish primary documents in web sites ending in .edu. Many organizations can be trusted to put up reliable primary sources under .org. You should avoid commercial web sites .com and especially the "paper mills" that churn out bogus "research" papers for you. These are easy to discover, and the university now has software to catch this kind of plagiarism.

Academic Integrity Policy: Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a failing grade for the course. Your written assignments should be based on your own ideas, conceived after reading the assigned readings, and written in your own words. This course will abide by the University's Academic Integrity Policy, which is available on the following website:

<http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/policy/academicintegrity/>
<http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete>

1. **Jan 22** – Course Introduction: Discussion of Course and Research Materials-
Free writing exercise
2. **Jan 29** –Reconstruction; Foner Chapter 15; Davidson and Lytle Chapter 8
3. **Feb 5** – The Gilded Age; Foner Chapter 16 ; Davidson and Lytle Chapter 9
4. **Feb 12** – The Progressive Era; Foner Chapter 18; Blackboard readings “The New Woman of the 1920s: Image and Reality.” **1st Short Paper Due**
5. **Feb 19** – **WWI and the Great Depression**; Foner Chapter 19 Pgs 719-730; Chapter 20 - **In-class free writing exercise**
6. **Feb 26** – The New Deal and WWII; Foner Chapters 21 and 22 – **Free writing exercise**
7. **Mar 5** – The Cold War; Foner Chapter 23; Davidson and Lytle Chapter 13 – **Primary Source Analysis Due**
8. **Mar 12 - Spring Break**
9. **Mar 19** – The Society of Affluence; Foner Chapter 24; Davidson and Lytle Chapter 14 **2nd Short Paper Due**
10. **Mar 26** – The Black Revolution; Blackboard readings; John Hope Franklin Chapter 23; **Discussion of *Blood Done Signed my Name*; Character Analysis Due**
11. **April 2** – The 1960s; Foner Chapter 25; Blackboard readings “A Generation in War and Turmoil: The Agony of Vietnam” **Final Short Paper Due**
12. **April 9** – The Rise of the New Right; Foner Chapter 26 – **In-class free writing exercise**
13. **April 16** – Globalization; Foner Chapter 27 ; Davidson and Lytle Chapter 17
14. **April 23** – Post 911United States; Foner Chapter 28 – **Peer review of rough drafts**
15. **April 30** – **Final Paper Presentations**