

Spring 2009 University of North Carolina at Greensboro
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Office Hours: W 3-5, and by appt, 2145 MHRA

Colloquium: U.S. History Since 1865

This course will introduce students to some of the major topics and debates in U.S. history since 1865. We will study different genres of historical scholarship and examine a range of methods of historical thinking. Topics that we will explore include: imperialism, sexuality, social policy, foreign policy, immigration, social movements, and the environment. Throughout the semester we will explore the following questions when analyzing books and articles: What questions does the work set out to answer? What are its arguments and methodologies? What are the strengths and limitations of the approach?

Requirements (all percentages are approximate):

Participation (30%): Everyone is expected to come to class prepared to engage in a detailed discussion of the week's reading. It is essential that you read thoroughly, make careful notes, and review your notes before class. You will be graded on the depth and insight of your contributions in class as well as your ability to respond to your peers and keep the discussion focused and moving forward. Attendance in class is mandatory. Absences will hurt your grade.

Class Presentation with Short Annotated Bibliography Handout (10%): Each student will make one presentation to the class. The presentation will introduce the class to the historiography on the topic we are discussing that day, discuss how the assigned reading fits into the field, and describe at least one other important book on the topic (listed under "additional reading"). Each student should bring a handout to distribute to the class that summarizes their presentation. The handout should have introductory paragraphs introducing students to the field and a short annotated bibliography listing important scholarly works (4-6 books or articles). You will be graded both on the handout and the presentation itself. Everyone should meet with me before you begin working on your topic. For those who have communicated with me, I am happy to look over drafts of handouts sent to me before noon on the Sunday before your presentation.

Weekly Assignments (30%): The first two weeks of class, everyone must post on blackboard. After that, you must write four response papers and four blackboard posts over the course of the semester. I encourage you to submit at least two response papers before your first paper is due. Response papers must capture the main arguments of the assigned book or articles and analyze their importance. Blackboard posts should be written like "mini" response papers--at least one paragraph explaining the arguments of the readings and at least one paragraph exploring an important issue or set of issues in more depth. Assignments must be e-mailed to me or posted by noon on the Tuesday before class (late assignments will be penalized). Everyone in the class must read the blackboard discussion before coming to class. You are encouraged to post more than once in response to your peers. If you want to participate in the discussion in an informal way (but not have it count as one of your graded contributions), indicate that in your post. Such "extra" blackboard posts will be looked upon favorably when final grades are determined.

Papers (10 + 15%): You will write two longer papers based on the assigned readings. Each paper must have a clear argument and bring some of the readings together in an interesting and insightful way. The first paper will be 5-7 pages, the second paper will be 8-10 pages.

NOTE: Since this course focuses on interpretive issues, students who do not have a good grasp of U.S. history in this period should consult a textbook frequently. I have textbooks that I am happy to lend.

Grading:

I use the following grading scale: 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.

E-mail Policy and Blackboard:

E-mail is the best way to reach me. I always confirm receipt of messages and try to respond quickly. If you do not receive a response from me within 48 hours (and even sooner in response to assignments), you should assume that I did not receive your message and try again. If you do not receive confirmation from me, it means that I did not receive your message and you will not be credited for any information that you communicated.

I will use e-mail to contact you, so it is imperative that you check your UNCG email account regularly. I can only send class e-mails to UNCG accounts.

I will use the blackboard website to post copies of the syllabus, handouts, and announcements. It will also host our class discussion board and links to e-reserves.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of others without giving them credit. Any source that you use in your work (i.e. books, documents, articles, internet sites) must be properly cited. If you use someone else's exact words they must be enclosed in quotation marks and followed by a citation. If you put someone else's ideas into your own words, you must also use a citation. Anyone who commits plagiarism will be penalized severely. For more information, see UNCG's academic integrity policy: <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>
I report all cases of plagiarism to the Dean of Students.