

COURSE SYLLABUS

Texas History

HIS3398.01W

CRN 80044, Face-to-Face

The Woodlands Center (TWC)

Room 140; 6:00pm – 8:50pm Mondays

3 credit hours

FALL 2017



San Jacinto, Spring Day, by Van Jones 1986

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Texas History 398 is a “W” course, which means that at least 50% of your course grade will derive from writing activities designed to help you master course objectives. Writing in this course is one of the tools your instructor will use to help you learn course material. Some writing activities will require you to draft and revise your work, with or without instructor feedback. Others may not receive a grade but are designed to assist you in critical reflection of the course material. You should approach writing in this course as a tool to use a part of your learning as well as a tool your instructor will use to assess your level of learning.

—posted per directive, College of Humanities & Social Sciences

CONTACT PROTOCOL

I will try to be available at TWC on Monday afternoons. The faculty offices are located on the 3d floor of the building. I am always delighted to meet with students—especially those who email in advance and make an appointment! Please know that prior commitments as well as unforeseen circumstances may occasionally keep me from holding office hours...another good reason to drop me an email and let me know you would like to meet.

Please use your university-issued email address exclusively. If you use an outside address, there is a good chance it will go straight to spam. Normally I respond to my students quickly. If you have an emergency, please call the history department office.

Important Note Regarding TECHNICAL ISSUES

In the event you experience a technical issue, you might try switching servers (e.g., if you are on Firefox, switch to Chrome). You should also make sure your software is updated. Otherwise, the number for **Blackboard (Bb)** support is 936-294-2780. Also, be aware of two useful items in your **Bb** course menu. The “Need Help?” tab will let you know whom to contact. The Technical Support icon located just above the course menu will lead you to additional **Bb** support.



A Note of admonition and fair Warning!!!

Everyone needs to see this [link](#) and this [link](#)

NOTE: Please know that I reserve the right to make revisions to the syllabus.
If I find it necessary to make changes, I will try to notify the class by email.

University & Personal Policies

- o The following link will take you to the University policies regarding **Academic Dishonesty, Absences for Religious Holidays, Students with Disabilities, and Visitors in the Classroom**. Be advised that you are bound by these policies whether you read them or not: <http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>
- o The following link will take you to the University policies regarding **Attendance**: [LINK](#).
- o The following link will take you to Dr. C's policies regarding **Use of Technology**: [LINK](#).
- o The following link will take you to Dr. C's policies regarding **Classroom Behavior**: [LINK](#).

Another important note...*never* use the “digital drop box!”

Textbook:

Calvert, De León, & Cantrell, *The History of Texas*, 5th ed. (hereafter “C&D”)

Reader

Swanlund & Bane, *A Lone Star Reader*, 2nd ed. (hereafter “LSR”)



Course Objectives and Instructional Method

Students will develop an understanding of the history, land, and culture of Texas through lectures, text, readings, and film. Beyond a survey knowledge of Texas history, students will learn to think critically, form opinions, and express themselves through written work and class discussions.

Schedule of Activities and Examinations

To view the assignments for each unit, go to **Bb**.

The pace and periodization for this course is organized around the C&D textbook. As a matter of routine, you will be assigned a chapter from the textbook almost weekly. I will deliver corresponding lectures (these will be posted to **Bb** as audio files), and a reading from the LSR will normally be assigned as well. Occasionally you will have a virtual assignment (i.e., a reading or video from the web). Weekly examinations covering the unit information will be administered via **Bb**. The course grade will be calculated on an averaged 100-point scale, contingent upon the volume and quality of your written work as outlined below.

[LINK](#) *A Lone Star Reader* (click on “LINK” for formatting instructions/content guidelines)

- You will be responsible for reading **12** chapters from *A Lone Star Reader* as well as submitting synopses/reviews for selected chapters. Go to “Units” on Bb to view the assignments.
- No student will pass the course who has not produced and submitted *in a timely manner** at least one acceptable paper that faithfully follows the formatting instructions and content guidelines.
*If you cannot complete a writing assignment on time, you would be wise to contact me for an extension. I will be lenient—up to a point.
- Be aware there will be questions over the current LSR reading on almost every exam. Ergo...you will not have to produce papers for every assignment, but you will have to read each one.

○ Grading for LSRs

- Expect to hear from me if you submit a paper that needs work, or if it is unacceptable. If your paper is acceptable, you may not receive feedback. You will, however, receive acknowledgment from me that I have received your work.
- An “acceptable” paper is one that demonstrates sufficient reading comprehension, and that you have summarized the thesis, conveyed the main points, and suitably expressed your opinion. A paper that “needs work” will count. Perhaps you need to work on reading the material more thoroughly, or put more effort into expressing yourself. “Unacceptable” simply indicates an unacceptable effort, and it will not count toward your total. No re-do’s! If you submit an unacceptable paper, move on to the next assignment, but learn from the feedback that tells you why the paper did not clear the bar.

Lectures & Virtual Assignments

- Lectures
 - Audio files of the lectures will be posted to **Bb** each Tuesday. On the rare occasion when class does not meet, I will post a previous lecture.
 - If for some reason you cannot open the audio file, make sure your software is up-to-date, or try switching servers as suggested under the header, “In Case of Technical Issues” above. If all else fails, let me know, and I will follow up.
- Virtual Assignments
 - “Virtual assignments” refers to various online selections (e.g., Handbook of Texas Online, and YouTube)
 - Please let me know if a link is unavailable; if I have to post an alternate link or assignment, I will inform the class by email.

Studying for the Textbook

- “Reading Checks” for *The History of Texas* (C&D)
 - For each C&D chapter, you will find a corresponding set of questions in **Bb**. These will provide a reading check. When the time comes for you to take the weekly exams, all questions over the textbook will come straight from these pools.
 - The reading checks are not compulsory, nor will you receive a grade for them. The answers are in your book...all you have to do is dig them out! Look at it this way...if I provided the answers, no one would have the incentive to read the chapters. I believe making the test bank available is quite generous. If you would rather prepare for each exam by having a long list of ID terms for which you will be expected to know the “who, what, when, where, why, how, significance, and consequences” associated with them, I will be delighted to provide those for you and disable your “Reading Checks” link.

Studying for Lectures, LSRs, & Virtual Assignments

- Expect to see two types of lecture questions on the exams. One type will test your grasp of the context, or “big picture”; the other type will test to see how well you listened.
- Study tip: Many students have told me they have taken the time to revisit the audio lectures right before opening the exam, rather than taking notes. They contend that it takes more time to study their notes than to listen to the audio file. This makes perfect sense. There are all kinds of studies that say a person has “X%” recall within an hour of a lecture (would it make you feel better if I fabricated a number? OK, 95% recall), and that it drops off precipitously the longer you wait. The moral of this story: “Take the exam while the information is fresh on your mind.”
- The object of the virtual assignments is to enlighten/inform/entertain. I do not want to spoil the moment by compelling you to take notes. Enjoy them! Any questions over these assignments will be so general in nature that if you watch/read/listen they should be...dare I say...“virtual gimmes.”
- Same goes for the LSRs. Simply read them, and you will probably be able to answer the questions correctly.

Exams

- My philosophy regarding exams has changed in recent years because of the way most youngsters have adapted to technology as well as the tendency of so many to wait until the last minute to prepare. For these reasons I will post exams almost weekly, rather than hold you responsible for two or three large blocks of information over the course of the semester.
- Each **Thursday at noon** (and often sooner) an online exam over the weekly unit material will be made available on **Bb**; they will close on **Sundays at 5pm**. Budget your time accordingly!
- You.
- In all, **13** exams will be made available to you.

- You will have 20 minutes to answer between 20 and 25 questions, composed of some variety of multiple-choice, matching, and true-false.
- Only your 10 best exam grades will count toward your course grade, but you have to make an earnest effort on the last three units. See next bullet...
- You may skip an occasional exam between units 1 and 10; however, you must take the exams for units 11, 12, and 13. If you have been doing well and suddenly bottom out, I will presume you are going through the motions and will roll those grades into your average...my call.
- IMPORTANT NOTE 1: Because the exams are online, I cannot expect the class to comply with a “no peeking” policy. At the same time, I want your grades to be a reflection of your reading and listening comprehension. Limiting the exam time means you might have the time to look up an answer here and there if you are well organized, but you will not have enough time to look up the answers in a leisurely manner.
- IMPORTANT NOTE 2: Do not freak out if you are running out of time, the exam will not close on you. If you see a popup box, read it carefully before you blindly click “OK.” It might not mean what you assume. If you exceed the time limit and cannot see your grade, shoot me a note, because I will have to input your grade manually. If occasionally you bleed over by a couple of minutes, no big deal. If you are taking a long time, you might have some ‘splaining to do.
- IMPORTANT NOTE 3: **I reserve the right to have any student re-take an exam under video supervision through the DELTA center if I suspect cheating is involved.**
- Numbers in my opinion are not always the best indication of what a student has learned. While I do not anticipate offering extra credit, I do expect there will be enough room to curve the final grade for worthy students who make a convincing case on their behalf.