

HIST 3396
The American South
College of Humanities and Sciences

Contact:

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Office Hours: TuTh 11:00AM to 12:15PM, and by appointment

Class Time: ONLINE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed as a reading-intensive seminar in the history of the American South. Our exploration will center on the study of four major figures of Southern History and the eras, events, and context of their lives. We will explore the Antebellum South, slavery, and the Cotton Kingdom through the life of infamous plantation master, Governor, and Senator of South Carolina, James Henry Hammond. We will then explore the eruption of post-Civil War agrarian populism through the career of William Jennings Bryan. A biography of Ella Baker will bring us into the world of twentieth-century activism and the African-American Civil Rights Movement. Finally, we will approach the topic of modern Southern politics through the life of Strom Thurmond.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to develop students in the following skill areas

- To **interpret** and **apply** historical data and sources
- To **analyze** and **critique** arguments and interpretations of the past
- To **formulate** a clear understanding of the historical, geographic, and cultural factors that build American regional identities
- To **evaluate** the impact of the past upon the present, and **assess** the forces that shape the South, its identity, its politics, and its culture.

CLASS DIRECTIVES

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. A copy of the University policy is available on the Sam Houston State University website. If you need clarification about what constitutes plagiarism, do not hesitate to ask or see me during office hours.

STUDENT ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS POLICY:

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a

religious holy day as: “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20...” A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY:

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center.

VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM:

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

CLASS STRUCTURE

Considering the online format, this course is designed to be an interactive directed readings seminar rather than a wholly traditional lecture course. The class will be broken into four units – one centered on each book. Along with the reading, there will be weekly tasks that need to be completed, all designed to help you contextualize and understand the readings, while encouraging students to engage with one another and the instructor on the material. In addition to weekly tasks, each unit will culminate with a book review assignment, which will always be due before midnight, on the final Friday of each unit. Grades for the course will be figured according to the following criterion: participation (completion of mini-lectures and note sessions), discussion boards, and book reviews.

Weekly Tasks:

Each week of the course will have supplementary material that will need to be completed by the end of that week, in addition to staying on top of the reading. NO DISCUSSION BOARDS WILL BE ASSIGNED FOR WEEKS WHERE REVIEWS ARE DUE.

These will include: recorded lectures (generally 10-15 minutes in length), downloadable PowerPoint presentations (these will complement and expand upon recorded lectures), other multimedia as deemed appropriate.

Discussion boards:

In weeks (as identified in the course schedule) where there is a discussion question every student will need to contribute. At a bare minimum, each student is required to produce their own response to the question(s) for the week and respond to at least two (2) other student responses. This is obviously purely the minimum, and students are encouraged to engage in the discussion boards as much as possible.

Discussion board format: Student answers to the main, instructor provided question are expected to be about 150 words in length. Replies to student contributions should be at least about 50 words in length. These are minimum thresholds, and – of course – responses may exceed that limit within reason. During discussion board weeks, initial posts will always be due by Wednesday, by 10 pm, unless indicated otherwise. Responses will always be due by Sunday, by 10 pm, unless indicated otherwise.

Discussion board decorum: This is a format for cooperative learning and debate. Disagreement over the material and how it is interpreted is not only welcome, but it is encouraged. That being said, this is an online class, not a Youtube comment section, debate must follow a set of rules. They are pretty simple. (1) Disagreement must be civil, and concerned only with course material. Injurious comments of a personal nature, insults, threats, etc. will **ABSOLUTELY NOT BE TOLERATED**. (2) Respect is the name of the game. Expect to receive it and make sure you give it.

Book Reviews:

This is the “meat and potatoes,” if you will, of the course. Each book review assignment will need to follow a format (provided below) and meet certain criteria (also provided below). All reviews will be graded according to how closely they meet format and criterion.

Book review format:

- All reviews need to be typed with one of the following word processor programs: MSWord, Word Perfect, WordPad, Google Docs (DO NOT USE NOTEPAD)
- All reviews must be submitted according to one of the following formats: MSWord File (.doc or .docx), Rich Text Format (.rtf), or PDF. If you use Google Docs, make sure to save your file as one of the aforementioned formats.
- All reviews must be typed in a 12 point font (Times New Roman, Cambria, Calibri, and Arial are all acceptable). Make sure all margins are 1 inch, and text should be double spaced. Indent paragraphs and do not insert an extra space between paragraphs.
- Reviews should be 3 to 5 pages in length. They may exceed that length, within reason, but should not fall below the minimum threshold of 3.
- Do not create extra headings to inflate the length of your papers. Simply provide your name at the top line of the first page.

Book review criterion:

- Book reviews should be thoroughly proofread and edited, and all typos, spelling errors, grammatical errors, and punctuation errors should be expunged.
- Book reviews 2 through 4 should respond to the stylistic notes provided in comments by the instructor. As the course moves on you should work to eradicate issues such as passive voice, tense agreement, verb agreement, pronoun agreement, word choices, and other stylistic issues out of your writing.
- Each book review must cover the following three areas (in your reviews you may use subheadings, if necessary, to indicate where you address each area): (1) Summary of the book, this should not exceed one page. (2) Tying the book into the historical context: this means integrating information from the book with material from lectures and notes. (3) Reflection: for this part you will draw on discussion boards. It is also more freeform, opening up for personal thoughts and opinions on the significance of the figure in question or that unit to a particular era of Southern History, or to Southern History as a whole.
- Citations: for information drawn from each biography you will need to provide a page number citation at the end of the sentence in parentheses. You may use outside sources to help you contextualize books, or if it is pertinent to the direction of your review. Full citations, however, of any outside source must be provided in either Turabian/Chicago Manual, MLA, or APA formats.

Midterm Journal:

This assignment will ask you reflect upon and evaluate the first half of the course. In this journal you will need to assess the value of the material presented, measure your progress in skills such as critical reading and analytical writing, and appraise each element of the course. What course components do you find the most helpful? What could be changed or tailored to improve your learning experience? Completion of your midterm journal will be figured as part of your participation grade.

DIGITAL OFFICE HOURS

Of course, I can always be reached by email; however, for those of you who would like to be able to have a more in depth discussion, and either live remotely or are unable to be on campus, I am more than happy to “hold office hours” by Skype. Contact me via email to arrange and schedule a skype session, and I will provide you with my skype address.

GRADES

All assignments and exams will be assessed according to the standard grading scale used by the College of Humanities and Sciences.

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	<60

Final Grades in the course will be figured according to the following weights:

Book Reviews will be grading in ascending weight as the semester goes on. This is designed to reward your improvement over the course of the semester.

Book Review 1	10%
Book Review 2	15%
Book Review 3	20%
Book Review 4	25%
Discussion Boards	20%
Class Participation	10%

REQUIRED BOOKS

Drew Gilpin Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery*

ISBN-10: 0807112488

ISBN-13: 978-0807112489

Michael Kazin, *A Godly Hero: The Life of William Jennings Bryan*

ISBN-10: 0385720564

ISBN-13: 978-0385720564

Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*

ISBN-10: 0807856169

ISBN-13: 978-0807856161

Joseph Crespino, *Strom Thurmond's America*

ISBN-10: 0809084341

ISBN-13: 978-0809084340

COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note that the course schedule is subject to change, if necessary. Any amendments to the schedule of courses will be announced and distributed with ample notice.

UNIT 1: THE ANTEBELLUM SOUTH (JAMES HENRY HAMMOND)

Week 1 (Aug. 23-27)

Weekly Tasks: Course Orientation

Reading Assignment: Begin Reading Drew Gilpin Faust (DGF).

Week 2 (Aug. 28 – Sept. 3)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – Regionalism and Defining What Southern History Is

Discussion Board: 1st Tutorial – On Southern History

Reading Assignment: Read DGF Introduction, Part I, Part II, Part III

Week 3 (Sept. 4-10)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – The Economy and Politics of Slavery

Discussion Board: DGF Question

Reading Assignment: Finish DGF, including Parts IV, V, and Epilogue

Week 4 (Sept. 11-17)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – Slavery and Secession

BOOK REVIEW #1 DUE

UNIT 2: THE NEW SOUTH (WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN)

Week 5 (Sept. 18-24)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – Rebuilding the South

Reading Assignment: Read Michael Kazin (MK), Introduction through Chapter 3

Week 6 (Sept. 25 – Oct. 1)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – From the Farmer's Alliances to Populism

Discussion Board: MK Question (Intro to Ch. 3)

Reading Assignment: MK, Chapter 4 through 7

Week 7 (Oct. 2-8)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – Populism and the Major Parties

Discussion Board: MK Question (Ch. 4-7)

Reading Assignment: MK, Chapter 8 through Epilogue

Week 8 (Oct. 9-15)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – Progressivism in the American South

BOOK REVIEW #2 DUE

UNIT 3: JIM CROW AND CIVIL RIGHTS (ELLA BAKER)

Week 9 (Oct. 16-22)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – The Long Civil Rights Movement

Reading Assignment: Read Barbara Ransby (BR) Introduction through Chapter 6

Week 10 (Oct. 23-29)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – From WWII to the Voting Rights Act

Discussion Board: BR Question (Intro-Ch. 6)

Reading Assignment: BR, Chapters 7 - 9

Week 11 (Oct. 30 – Nov. 5)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – Civil Rights and the Question of Equality

Discussion Board: BR Question (Ch. 7-9)

Reading Assignment: BR, Ch. 10 through 12

Week 12 (Nov. 6-12)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – From Birmingham to Black Power

BOOK REVIEW #3 DUE

Week 13 (Nov. 13-19)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – To Be White Living Under Jim Crow

Reading Assignment: Read Joseph Crespino (JC), Introduction through Part 2

UNIT 4: DIXIECRATS AND THE SOLID SOUTH (STROM THURMOND)

Week 14 (Nov. 20-26)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – Redefining Southern Democrats

Discussion Board: JC Question (Intro – Part 2)

Reading Assignment: JC, Part 3

Week 15 (Nov. 27 – Dec. 3)

Weekly Tasks: Lecture and Notes – The End of the Southern History?

Discussion Board: JC Question (Part 3)

Reading Assignment: JC, Part 4

Week 16 (Dec. 4-10)

BOOK REVIEW #4 DUE