

# **HIST 5374 (CRN 23830): Seminar in the History of the American South (Online)**

3 Credit Hours, Sam Houston State University, Spring 2018

Instructor: Dr. Wesley Phelps

Office: Academic Building IV 461

Physical Office Hours: Mondays/Wednesdays 9-11, 2-3

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*"Because I was born in the South, I'm a Southerner. If I had been born in the North, the West or the Central Plains, I would be just a human being."*

*-Novelist Clyde Edgerton*

*"I was not leaving the South to forget the South, but so that some day I might understand it."*

*-Novelist and Memoirist Richard Wright*

## **Course Description**

This course examines the social, political, and cultural history of the South as a distinct region of the United States. This semester, this course will focus on the concept of southern identity. How have southerners constructed an identity for themselves and their region of the country? In what ways have southerners differentiated themselves from those who lived in other parts of the United States? We will attempt to answer these questions by looking at a variety of southern autobiographies and memoirs. The course will function as a hybrid readings course and research seminar. We will read and write about several common assignments during the first half of the semester and spend the second half of the semester writing a brief research paper using additional materials of your own choosing.

## **First Half: Race, Identity, and Autobiography in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

During the first half of the semester we will focus on how race has contributed to the development of southern identity in the twentieth century. After reading some introductory material, we will read six autobiographies/memoirs in an attempt to understand southern identity through the eyes of individuals who lived it.

## **Second Half: Research Project**

During the second half of the semester, you will select a minimum of four additional autobiographies and/or memoirs pertaining to some aspect of historical southern identity. You may choose to continue to read materials related to race and identity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, or you may opt to select a different focus or time period. These sources, in addition to any you find helpful from the first half of the course, will serve as the basis for a conference-length research paper (approx. 10-12 pages) on some component of southern identity.

## **Course Objectives**

- 1) Analyze the South's major historical events relating to the concept of southern identity
- 2) Evaluate a variety of primary and secondary sources relating to the concept of southern identity
- 3) Develop skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professional historians
- 4) Develop critical reading and writing skills
- 5) Produce a quality research paper that can be presented at an academic conference

## Required Texts

James C. Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (Oxford, 2007)

Richard Wright, *Black Boy: A Record of Childhood and Youth* (Harper, 2007)

Anne Braden, *The Wall Between* (U. of Tennessee, 1999)

Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (Delta, 2004)

Diane McWhorter, *Carry Me Home: Birmingham, Alabama: The Climactic Battle of the Civil Rights Revolution* (Simon and Schuster, 2013)

Timothy B. Tyson, *Blood Done Sign My Name: A True Story* (Broadway, 2005)

Abraham Verghese, *My Own Country: A Doctor's Story* (Vintage, 1995)

## Recommended Texts

John B. Boles, *The South Through Time: A History of an American Region*, Volumes 1 and 2 (Prentice Hall, 2003) – this is an excellent overview of the history of the American South

## Requirements

	% of Final Grade
Analytical Essay 1: Southern Identity	10%
Analytical Essay 2: Southern Autobiography	10%
Response Paper 1: Wright, <i>Black Boy</i>	5%
Response Paper 2: Braden, <i>The Wall Between</i>	5%
Response Paper 3: Moody, <i>Coming of Age in Mississippi</i>	5%
Response Paper 4: McWhorter, <i>Carry Me Home</i>	5%
Response Paper 5: Tyson, <i>Blood Done Sign My Name</i>	5%
Response Paper 6: Verghese, <i>My Own Country</i>	5%
Research Paper Proposal	5%
Research Paper Rough Draft	5%
Critique of Research Paper Rough Draft of a Classmate	5%
Final Research Paper	20%
Discussion Board Participation	15%

NOTE: All assignments will be graded on a 100-point scale.

## Grading Scale

A = 90 – 100%

B = 80 – 89%

C = 70 – 79%

F = 69% or below

## Assignments

### Analytical Essay 1 (Due Jan 28 by 11:59 PM)

You will write a 1000-word (approx. 3-4 pages) essay that analyzes the concept of southern identity as presented in James C. Cobb's book, *Away Down South*. In your analysis, answer the following questions: 1) According to Cobb, what have been the most important factors contributing to the development of southern identity throughout the region's history?; and 2) Do you find Cobb's

argument about southern identity to be persuasive, i.e. did he use enough evidence to support his claims?

#### Analytical Essay 2 (Due Feb 4 by 11:59 PM)

You will write a 1000-word (approx. 3-4 pages) essay that analyzes the usefulness of autobiographies and memoirs in understanding southern history as presented in the selected chapters of John C. Inscoe's book, *Writing the South Through the Self*. In your analysis, answer the following questions: 1) According to Inscoe, what value do autobiographies and memoirs possess in revealing the history of the American South?; 2) How can autobiographies and memoirs help us understand the role race has played in the development of southern identity?; and 3) What are the most significant obstacles in trying to understand race and southern identity through autobiographies and memoirs?

#### Response Papers (Various Due Dates Indicated on Schedule)

For each autobiography or memoir we read together, you will write a 500-word (approx. 2 pages) response paper in which you will answer the following question: What are the most important ways this particular book illuminates the role of race in the development of southern identity in the twentieth century?

#### Research Paper Proposal (Due Apr 9 by 11:59 PM)

You will write a proposal for your research project that includes a 300-500-word (approx. 1-2 pages) abstract of your project and a bibliography with at least four additional autobiographies and memoirs you will use as sources for your final research paper.

#### Research Paper Rough Draft (Due Apr 23 by 11:59 PM)

You will submit a rough draft of your research paper that is at least 1500 words (approx. 5-6 pages) in length.

#### Critique of Research Paper Rough Draft of a Classmate (Due Apr 30 by 11:59 PM)

You will read and critique the research paper rough draft of one of your classmates. Your critique should be constructive, professional, and designed to be helpful in the editing and revision process.

#### Final Research Paper (Due May 7 by 11:59 PM)

You will submit a final research paper that is 2500-3000 words (approx. 10-12 pages) in length on some component of southern identity.

Note: A folder titled "Resources for Writing" on Blackboard contains important and helpful information about writing your research paper, including a link to the Chicago Manual of Style.

#### Discussion Board Participation (Initial Entry due Wednesdays / Comments due Fridays by 11:59 PM)

Your first discussion board assignment is to introduce yourself to me and the rest of the class in the "Introductions" forum. Tell us where you are from, what your interests in life are, why you are pursuing a graduate degree, what you hope to achieve in life, and at least one interesting thing about you as a person. Post your introduction by Friday, January 19<sup>th</sup>, at 11:59 PM.

After posting your introduction, you will be required to participate in an online discussion focused on each of the assigned readings during the first half of the semester. For each reading, you will post 1 initial entry of approximately 250 words about the assigned reading material. You may use part of your analytical essay or response paper in your initial entry. Following the posting of your initial entry, you will then offer responses (minimum 150 words each) to at least 2 of your classmates' entries. For each assigned reading, your initial entry will be due Wednesday by 11:59 PM and your 2 comments will be due Friday by 11:59 PM. See the schedule at the end of this syllabus for specific due dates.

The general guidelines for earning your discussion board participation grade are as follows:

- A** – you participate regularly, with a minimum of 1 entry and 2 comments for each assigned reading, and your comments move the discussion forward with insights from the reading
- B** – you participate somewhat regularly, usually with a minimum of 1 entry and 2 comments for each assigned reading, and your comments are based on the reading most of the time
- C** – you participate somewhat irregularly, often not meeting the minimum of 1 entry and 2 comments for each assigned reading, and your comments are based on the reading only occasionally
- D** – you rarely participate and/or your comments are not based on the reading material
- F** – you do not participate in the discussion boards

## Course Policies

### Email Policy

The SHSU email system is the official system for this class. I will use your @shsu.edu address to communicate with you throughout the semester. Please check your email regularly.

### Late Assignment Penalties

All assignments must be submitted by the due date indicated on the schedule. After that time, a late penalty of 10% will be assessed. An additional late penalty of 10% will be assessed each day that it is late until a 50% penalty is reached. Assignments will not be accepted for credit one week after the assignment is due. If there is a conflict with sports, extracurricular activities, or other approved absences or issues, it is the student's responsibility to turn in the assignment early or make other arrangements with me BEFORE the due date.

### Citations

You must cite the source of your information if you quote directly, paraphrase, or use in any way someone else's ideas. If you do not cite your sources, it is considered plagiarism. All students must follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*. The Newton Gresham Library website has an online guide to the *Chicago Manual of Style* available at <http://library.shsu.edu> > Research Guides > Browse by Subject (History, U.S.) > Citing Your Sources > Chicago

### Academic Honesty

Section 5.3 of the SHSU Code of Student Conduct and Discipline state: "Academic Honesty: The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. The University 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, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials."

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

- Cheating on an examination or test, for example by copying from another's paper or by using unauthorized material before or during the test
- Plagiarism, which one represents as one's own the work of another, whether published or not, without acknowledging the precise source

All academic dishonesty cases may first be reviewed by the instructor, who can assign a penalty. Students have the right to appeal. Please see the Student Guidelines handbook for the proper procedures.

Penalty: The penalty for an incident of academic dishonesty is a grade of zero for the work in question. A second incident of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of F for the course.

#### Religious Holidays

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. 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.

#### Visitors in the Classroom

Only registered students may participate in this online course. 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. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

#### ADA Accommodations

Any student with a disability that affects his/her academic functioning should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at the SHSU Counseling Center (Lee Drain North Annex, telephone 936-294-1720, TDD 936-294-3786) to apply for accommodations. In the event that accommodations are approved by the SSD, the student is advised to schedule an appointment with the course instructor in order to present his/her accommodation forms and discuss the arrangements for the accommodations.

## Grading Rubric (Research Paper)

Essay Components	0-13	14-17	18-20	Points Earned
<b>Historical Question and Thesis Statement</b>	Missing question and thesis. Very weak argument. No introduction. Inaccuracies. No awareness of historiography.	A question and thesis statement are present, but the argument may be weak or incomplete. Limited awareness of broader historiography.	The research paper addresses a significant historical question. A thesis statement is made in the introduction and the argument is carried throughout the paper. Question and thesis are placed in context of historiography.	
<b>Evidence</b>	Examples are missing. Thesis is not supported.	Some examples are used as evidence, but may be weak, ineffective, or irrelevant.	Relevant and appropriate examples are used to support the thesis. Student employs a broad range of sources.	
<b>Analysis, Clarity, and Organization</b>	No topic sentences. Writing is unclear. Argument is confused. No apparent use of primary sources.	Some topic sentences are missing. Paragraphs are choppy or too long. Unclear writing. Argument does not flow logically. Some evidence does not support argument.	Topic sentences identify key points. Paragraphs connect and flow. Argument flows logically from beginning to end. Primary sources are analyzed to support argument.	
<b>Conclusion</b>	No concluding paragraph or conclusions drawn.	Concluding paragraph is included, but the connection between the thesis, argument, and evidence is incomplete.	Thesis is restated with references to the argument and evidence. Everything summarized in concluding paragraph.	
<b>Mechanics</b>	Many errors in grammar and spelling. Sources are not cited.	Occasional errors in grammar and spelling. Minor citation problems.	Correct grammar and spelling throughout. Sources are cited.	
<b>Late Penalty</b>				
<b>Grade</b>				

## Schedule

### WEEK 1-2 (Jan 17-Jan 28)

Assigned Reading: James Cobb, *Away Down South*

Due Dates:

Wednesday 1/24: Discussion Board Initial Entry Due

Friday 1/26: Discussion Board Comments Due

Sunday 1/28: Analytical Essay 1 Due

### WEEK 3 (Jan 29-Feb 4)

Assigned Reading: John C. Inscoe, *Writing the South Through the Self: Explorations in Southern Autobiography* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), Introduction, Chapter 1, and Afterword (available on Blackboard)

Due Dates:

Wednesday 1/31: Discussion Board Initial Entry Due

Friday 2/2: Discussion Board Comments Due

Sunday 2/4: Analytical Essay 2 Due

### WEEK 4 (Feb 5-11)

Assigned Reading: Richard Wright, *Black Boy*

Due Dates:

Wednesday 2/7: Discussion Board Initial Entry Due

Friday 2/9: Discussion Board Comments Due

Sunday 2/11: Response Paper 1 Due

### WEEK 5 (Feb 12-18)

Assigned Reading: Anne Braden, *The Wall Between*

Due Dates:

Wednesday 2/14: Discussion Board Initial Entry Due

Friday 2/16: Discussion Board Comments Due

Sunday 2/18: Response Paper 2 Due

### WEEK 6 (Feb 19-25)

Assigned Reading: Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*

Due Dates:

Wednesday 2/21: Discussion Board Initial Entry Due

Friday 2/23: Discussion Board Comments Due

Sunday 2/25: Response Paper 3 Due

### WEEK 7-8 (Feb 26-Mar 11)

Assigned Reading: Diane McWhorter, *Carry Me Home*

Due Dates:

Wednesday 3/7: Discussion Board Initial Entry Due

Friday 3/9: Discussion Board Comments Due

Sunday 3/11: Response Paper 4 Due

### WEEK 9 (Mar 12-18 - SPRING BREAK)

WEEK 10 (Mar 19-25)

Assigned Reading: Timothy Tyson, *Blood Done Sign My Name*

Due Dates:

Wednesday 3/21: Discussion Board Initial Entry Due

Friday 3/23: Discussion Board Comments Due

Sunday 3/25: Response Paper 5 Due

WEEK 11 (Mar 26-Apr 1)

Assigned Reading: Abraham Verghese, *My Own Country*

Due Dates:

Wednesday 3/28: Discussion Board Initial Entry Due

Friday 3/30: Discussion Board Comments Due

Sunday 4/1: Response Paper 6 Due

WEEK 12 (Apr 2-8)

Assigned Reading: Contents of "Resources for Writing" (available on Blackboard)  
Sources for Research Paper

WEEK 13 (APR 9-15)

Assigned Reading: Sources for Research Paper

Due Dates:

Monday 4/9: Research Paper Proposal Due

WEEK 14 (Apr 16-22)

Assigned Reading: Sources for Research Paper

WEEK 15 (APR 23-29)

Assigned Reading: Sources for Research Paper

Due Dates:

Monday 4/23: Research Paper Rough Draft Due

WEEK 16 (APR 30-May 6)

Assigned Reading: Research Paper Rough Draft of a Classmate

Due Dates:

Monday 4/30: Critique of Research Paper Rough Draft of a Classmate Due

**Final Research Paper Due Monday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, by 11:59 PM**