

History 233.01 – The United States in the 20th Century

Dr. Charles W. McKinney

Spring 2008, 214 Buckman Hall
TR 9.30 – 10.45
Office Hours: TR 2.30 – 4.00
and by appointment

e: mckinneyc@rhodes.edu
o: 901/843-3525
303 Clough Hall

Course Overview:

This course will survey American history from 1900 to the present time. Using both secondary and primary source documentation, students will come to an understanding of the myriad forces that worked to shape what many call “The American Century.” In addition to using traditional political and economic viewpoints for historical interpretation, students will also assess the impact of social and cultural forces on our collective past. This comprehensive perspective will enable students to come to an understanding as to how and why history is constructed and to answer fundamental questions about history and the historical process: Who writes it? Who reads it? What are its purposes? To this end, students will be required to analyze critique and interpret primary source materials as they offer their own view of historical events and construct some historical documentation of their own. Given the central nature of primary texts and our reactions to them, active participation during class will form an *essential element of the course*. Of course, students are expected to complete all reading and written assignments.

Books:

- Hyser and Arndt, *Voices of the American Past (VAP)*
- Jones, Wood, et al., *Created Equal (CE)*
- Rowan, *South of Freedom*

Course Requirements:

Two essays – 25% of final grade:

- *Essay one (5 – 7 pages) due March 13 – 15%*
- *Essay two (3 – 5 pages) due April 17 - 10%*

Examinations – 55% of final grade:

- *Midterm: 25%*
- *Final: 30%*

Both the midterm and the final will consist of short answer questions and essay questions. The midterm will be given in class on **February 28**. The final exam is scheduled for **Saturday May 5 at 9:30AM**. *These dates are fixed. Please inform your travel agent/mother or whoever is in charge of making your travel plans that these test dates will not be moved.*

Class Participation – 20% of final grade:

Class participation will be comprised of two very important, complementary parts:

1. As part of your class participation grade, students will respond to the readings by posting on **Moodle** a question or series of questions to the class at least TEN (10) times over the course of the semester. These responses should be in the form of a question or questions that struck you as you read the material for class. The best responses will refer specifically to the readings being discussed. You may also, if you like, offer a brief answer to the questions you pose, but this is not required. ***Please note that the deadline for submitting your weekly responses is Monday evening at 8:00PM. Your class participation grade will decrease by 10% for every reaction you fail to turn in.*** Lastly,

keep in mind that there are roughly fourteen (14) weeks of class; govern yourself accordingly!

2. The completion of weekly responses will facilitate your involvement in **actual class participation**. In class, you should be prepared to actively discuss the readings and respond to the lecture. You can certainly use your paragraphs as an entry point into the discussion. Remember though, that while class participation is crucial, it is not a contest. The people who talk the most do not necessarily “win.” What really counts is your ability and willingness to bring something valuable to the discussion that your colleagues and I can build upon in our efforts to bring some clarity to the issues presented in the class. Also, coming to the office to discuss material covered in the class, or engaging in a substantive electronic conversation also count (broadly) as class participation.

Honor Code:

All work turned in for this course is to be completed in accordance with the Rhodes College Honor Code. To demonstrate your commitment to the Code, each student must write “pledged” and sign his/her name on every assignment. If you have questions about plagiarism you should talk to me directly.

Policies:

Note on written work:

All written work must be composed on a computer, be double-spaced and in 10 or 12 point font. Have your name, the assignment name (and number if necessary), date, course name and email address on each document you turn in. Students who feel that they need assistance with written assignments should feel free to contact me so that we can discuss whatever challenges you may be facing.

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Students will be allowed three unexcused absences. *All other absences after the third one must be excused. Each unexcused absence after the third one will cost you 5% of your final grade. If you miss three weeks worth of classes, you can be dropped from the class or flunked.* Valid excuses for missing class include but are not limited to religious observances, college-sanctioned academic or athletic travel, personal illness or injury, family illness or injury or bereavement. Needless to say, infrequent class attendance will negatively impact your final grade.

Paper/test grades:

As a general rule, grades are not negotiable. However, I will gladly discuss the grade on any assignment 24 hours after the work is turned in.

Paper Policies:

Papers are due at the beginning of class and I define “beginning” as the first fifteen (15) minutes. On the 16th minute, your paper is late, and ***I do not accept late papers.*** “My computer crashed” or “the printer jammed a few minutes ago” are not reasons to excuse/accept a late paper; rather, they are a testament to poor time management on your part. *However, please keep in mind that, while I do not accept late papers, you must turn in all of the assigned work in order to pass the class.* Of course, I will accept a late paper with an acceptable, college-sanctioned excuse.

Citation:

Papers should be written using the Chicago citation style. This style may be viewed at http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html. If you have any questions about proper citation, please refer to this site, *and then* contact me.

Missed Tests:

Make-up exams are available for students who miss an exam for an excusable reason (see above). Students should contact me and arrange a mutually convenient time within a week of the student’s return.

Learning Differences:

I am strongly committed to accommodating students with disabilities, and ask your cooperation in making sure that I'm aware of any such accommodation you might need. For more information, please contact Student Disability Services to alert them of any needs you may have.

Additional Information:

- Please turn off all cell phones, pagers, games, and any other object that can beep, buzz, ring or vibrate. These devices are extremely disruptive when they go off in the middle of class
- ***I reserve the right to amend this syllabus as necessary***

Course Schedule

January 10

Introduction, go over syllabus. Musings on late 19th century America.

January 15, 17: Imperial America

CE: chapter 18; "Imperial America" (public folder); Rudyard Kipling's "The White Man's Burden" @ <http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5478>

- *Additional source*: America 1900 @ <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/1900/index.html>
- Touring Turn of the Century America @ www.memory.loc.gov/ammem/detroit/dethome.html

January 22, 24: The Progressive Era

CE, chapter 19; *VAP*, chapter 18; read or listen to Booker T. Washington's 1895 speech @ <http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu/d/88>

- *Additional sources*: Explore Hull House @ <http://www.uic.edu/jaddams/hull/urbanexp/index.htm>
- W.E.B. DuBois, "Of Mr. Washington and others" @ <http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu/d/40>

January 29, 31: Woodrow Wilson and the Great War

CE, chapter 20; *VAP*, chapter 19

- *Additional sources*: A multimedia history of World War One @ <http://www.firstworldwar.com/index.htm>
- The Great War @ <http://www.pbs.org/greatwar/>
- Carl Sandburg on the Chicago Riot of 1919 @ <http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4974>

February 5, 7: The 1920's

CE, chapter 21; *VAP*, chapter 20

- *Additional Sources*: Elsie Johnson McDougald on "The Double Task: The Struggle of Negro Women for Sex and Race Emancipation" @ <http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5126>
- "A Fundamental Klan Doctrine" ("The message of the Klan is love"!) @ <http://digital.lib.msu.edu/collections/display.cfm?TitleID=140&Format=gif&PageNum=3>

February 12, 14: Depression and New Deal

CE, chapter 22; *VAP*, chapter 21

Photographs from the Depression @ <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsahtml/fahome.html>

(Note: you can also view pictures by location);

Listen to at least three (3) oral interviews from Studs Terkel's *Hard Times* @ <http://www.studsterkel.org/htimes.php> (Note: be sure to browse; Terkel interviewed a wide variety of people)

February 19, 21: World War Two: Multiple Fronts

CE, chapter 23; *VAP*, chapter 22; Three interviews from Studs Terkel's *The Good War* @ <http://www.studsterkel.org/gwar.php> (Be sure to get a variety of perspectives); Tim Tyson, "Wars for Democracy" (public folder)

- *Additional Sources:* United States Holocaust Memorial Museum @ www.ushmm.org/index.html

February 26: Cold War Culture

South of Freedom, chapters 1 – 9; *CE*, chapter 2324; *VAP*, chapter 23; Browse 1950's images and advertisements at Ad* Access Project of Duke University @ <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/adaccess/browse.html>; "The Ordeal of Bobby Cain" @ <http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6254> (Tennessee confronts racial segregation)

- *Additional source:* The National Security Archive @ <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/>

February 28 Midterm

February 29 – March 10: Spring Break

March 11, 13: The Civil Rights Movement

South of Freedom, chapters 10 – 15; *CE*, chapter 25, section on "The Civil Rights Movement"; *VAP*, chapter 24, documents 199, 200.

Essay #1 due March 13

- *Additional sources:* Aaron Henry interview (part one) @ <http://www.sohp.org/archives/index.html>
- Frontiers in Civil Rights: School Desegregation in the South @ http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/davis_case/davis_case.html
- "Mr. Local Custom must Die": The Racial Situation in the South in 1960 @ <http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6252> (Observations of a white Tennessee reporter)

March 18: A Great and Changing Society

CE, chapter 26, section one: "Lyndon Johnson and the Apex of American Liberalism"; *VAP* chapter 24, document 201.

- *Additional sources:* Film: *America's War on Poverty*

March 20: Easter Break

March 25: Vietnam and the Rebellion of the Sixties

CE, chapter 26, section two-"Into War with Vietnam"; *VAP*, chapter 24, documents 202-205.

- *Additional sources:* The War in Vietnam: A Story in Photographs @ http://www.archives.gov/digital_classroom/lessons/vietnam_photographs/vietnam_photos.html
- The Vietnam War Declassification Project @ <http://www.ford.utexas.edu/library/exhibits/vietnam/vietnam.htm>
- Battlefield: Vietnam @ <http://www.pbs.org/battlefieldvietnam/history/index.html>

- Vietnam online @ <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/vietnam/>

March 27: Film Night

“Two Days in October.”

April 1, 3: The Women’s Movement and the 1970’s

CE, chapter 27; *VAP*, chapter 23, document 197; chapter 25, document 209; Jo Freeman, “The Women’s Liberation Movement” @ <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wlm/womlib/>

- *Additional sources:* Documents from the Women’s Liberation Movement at <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wlm/>
- Jo Freeman, “Women’s Liberation and its impact on the campus” @ <http://www.jofreeman.com/academicwomen/womencampus.htm>

April 8, 10: The Rising Conservative Tide

CE, chapter 26, “The Conservative Response”; chapter 28; *VAP*, chapter 25

- *Additional sources:* Ronald Wilson Reagan Presidential documents @ www.ipl.org/ref/POTUS/rwreagan.html/
- Ronald Reagan campaign ads @ <http://www.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/1996/candidates/ad.archive/> (“The Bear” is one of the all-time great political ads!)
- The Reagan Administration and the growing AIDS Epidemic @ <http://www.thebody.com/atn/401/reagan.html>

April 15, 17: Post Cold-War America

CE, chapter 29, 30; *VAP*, chapter 26

Essay #2 due April 17

- *Additional sources:* History of Rap and Hip Hop @ <http://rap.about.com/od/hiphophistory/>
- “AIDS is an illness of people of color” @ <http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6895>

April 22: American Goes Global...Again

CE, chapter 30; *VAP*, chapter 27

April 24: Final Thoughts/Evaluations

May 5: Final Exam at 9.30AM