

History 233.01 – The United States in the 20th Century

Dr. Charles W. McKinney

Spring 2005, 302 Clough Hall
MWF 9.00 – 9.50
Office Hours: MT 2.30 – 4.00
and by appointment

e: mckinneyc@rhodes.edu
o: 901/843-3525
c: 901/270-9003
318 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.

Course Requirements:

Books:

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

Reaction papers/short papers – 30% of final grade:

Five of these 3-4 page papers will be due on designated class periods. To complete the assignment, you may select any **primary source document(s)** listed on the syllabus up to the due date of the reaction paper. In the papers, you will discuss and evaluate the major themes that arise in the readings, and assess them accordingly. Why do you think this document was written? What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? What does the document tell you about life in the United States at the time it was written? What questions did the document leave unanswered? Feel free to quote from the document to support your conclusions. While a (very) short synopsis of the reading can make its way into the papers, you will ultimately be graded based on the *conclusions* you draw about the readings themselves, and the ways in which they help/do not help us understand a given topic or theme. Please remember: *it is not enough to simply answer the questions posed above. It will be essential to vigorously analyze the documents you choose for your reaction papers.* For certain papers, there will be a specific writing assignment that I will give you. We’ll talk more about these during the semester. One final note: when I say the papers should be 3-4 pages long I mean it. *Papers that do not have at least three full pages of text will not be graded.*

Examinations – 25% each of final grade:

There will be two in-class examinations, a mid term and a final. Both of these will consist of short answer questions and essay questions. The final exam will be held on **Tuesday December 12 at 1.00PM**

In-class discussion/participation – 20% of final grade:

On most days, I will lecture, give a general overview of the period being discussed for the week, field questions and engage you all in a discussion of the main points of the reading. However, students should come prepared to actively engage in an extended discussion of the primary source

documents that are assigned each week. Come prepared to give your initial critical observations about the readings, and to react to questions, comments and insights generated by your classmates. 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 on in our efforts to bring some clarity to the issues that we are discussing. If you have an epiphany, by all means, please share it with us! On the other hand, if you are stumped and confused by the week’s documents, don’t be afraid to share that as well—you probably will not be alone. Failure to participate in class discussion on a consistent basis will result in a *very* poor class participation grade.

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:

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 class participation 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.

Late Papers:

Papers are due at the beginning of class. Papers that are one day late will be penalized one letter grade. “My computer crashed the night before the paper was due” is not an excuse for a late paper; rather, it is a testament to poor time management on your part. *Papers over one day late will receive an F. However, you must turn in all of the assigned work in order to pass the class.*

Missed Tests:

Make-up exams are available for students who miss class 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

August 23, 25

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

August 28, 30, September 1: Imperial America

CE: chapter 18; *VAP*, chapter 20; 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

September 4:

Labor Day – no class

September 6, 8: The Progressive Era

The Jungle (all) *CE*, chapter 19; *VAP*, chapter 21; 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>

September 11, 13, 15: Woodrow Wilson and the Great War

Reaction Paper #1 Due September 11

CE, chapter 20; *VAP*, chapter 22; *Film*: "The Great War"

- *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>

September 18, 20, 22: The 1920's

CE, chapter 21; *VAP*, chapter 23

- *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>

September 25, 27: Depression and New Deal

Reaction Paper #2 Due September 27

CE, chapter 22; *VAP*, chapter 24;

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)

September 29

No class

October 2, 4, 6: World War Two: Multiple Fronts

CE, chapter 23; *VAP*, chapter 25; 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

October 9, 11: Cold War Culture

South of Freedom, chapters 1 – 9; *CE*, chapter 24; *VAP*, chapter 26; 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/>

October 13

Midterm

October 13-17: Fall Break

October 18, 20, 23: The Civil Rights Movement

Reaction paper #3 Due October 23

South of Freedom, chapters 10 – 15; *CE*, chapter 25, section on "The Civil Rights Movement"; *VAP*, chapter 27, documents 206, 207.

- 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)

October 25, 27

No class

October 30, November 1, 3: A Great and Changing Society

CE, chapter 26, section one: "Lyndon Johnson and the Apex of American Liberalism"; *VAP* chapter 27, document 208.

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

November 6, 8: Vietnam and the Rebellion of the Sixties

CE, chapter 26, section two-“Into War with Vietnam”; *VAP*, chapter 27, documents 209-211.

- 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/>

November 10

Film: “Two Days in October.”

November 13

Finish watching “Two days in October”

Reaction paper #4 Due November 13

November 15, 17

No class

November 20: The Women's Movement and the 1970's

CE, chapter 27; *VAP*, chapter 27, documents 203-205; chapter 28, document 212; 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>

November 22, 24

Thanksgiving Break

November 27: The Women's Movement, Part two

Reaction paper #5 Due November 27

November 29, December 1: The Rising Conservative Tide

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

- 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>

December 4, 6: Post Cold-War America

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

- 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>

December 12, 1.00PM

Final exam