

**HIST 2112: United States History 1865-present**  
**Fall 2015**  
**University of West Georgia**  
**MW 2-3:20**  
**TLC 1305**

Instructor: Richard Primuth  
Office: TLC 3103  
Office Hours: MW 3:30-5:30; by appt.  
Email: rprimuth@westga.edu

What is it about history that makes some people dislike history classes so much? The answer probably has a lot to do with misconceptions people have about what “history” is. The British historian Arthur Toynbee said, history is “just one damn thing after another.” The famous Supreme Court justice Oliver Wendell Holmes apparently agreed, saying “the literature of the past is a bore.” But any professional historian will tell you that history is about far more than “the facts.” Names and dates are only the beginning. Any fool can tell you *what* happened in the past; the trick is to understand *why*. Look around you. Why is the United States of 2014 the way it is? Why does it have the social, cultural and political structures it does? How did it get that way? Why do you and I and our fellow citizens speak, act and believe as we do? The goal of HIST 2112 is to think about some possible answers. (Dr. Brian A. Doyle, UGA)

**Course Description:** This course is a broad survey of the growth and change within the United States from the end of the Civil War to the present. Through lectures, readings, discussions and other activities we will examine political, cultural, and social themes in this nation’s recent history. We will study not only such events as wars and presidential assassinations, but social issues such as immigration and women’s rights, as well. We begin with emancipation and reconstruction, move through Progressivism, two world wars, the Civil Rights Movement, the nation’s shift to the right, and end with the administration of America’s first African-American president. The course is fairly light in reading, but emphasizes development of writing skills. Critical thinking and good analytical skills are essential in today’s workplace, and sharpening those skills will be a centerpiece of this course.

**Course Objectives:** In addition to gaining a basic understanding of themes, issues and events in American history since 1865, students will develop critical reading, writing, and thinking skills. Students will come out of the course with a broader understanding of the United States’ place within a global context, the nations’ diversity and the significance to their own lives.

**Required Texts:**

Online; no cost: [www.americanyawp.com](http://www.americanyawp.com) (this is the course’s main textbook)

"The Rise of Conservatism in America, 1945-2000: A Brief History with Documents," by Ronald Story and Bruce Laurie

## **Course Requirements:**

**Movie Review:** You will need to write a 1 and ½ to 2 page review of a movie dealing with any topic in American history since 1865. After a short introduction (3 sentences or less) and summary of the movie, the paper should concentrate on the film's strengths or weaknesses. Was it accurate? Why or why not? The paper needs an introduction, argument with supporting evidence and a conclusion. Movie suggestions include (but are certainly not limited to): *Fruitvale Station, Birth of a Nation, The Miracle Worker, Argo, Zero Dark Thirty, Inherit the Wind, Longtime Companion, The Butler, 54, Kill Your Darlings, The Monuments Men, Matewan, Tora!Tora!Tora!, Malcolm X, Ghosts of Mississippi, Silkwood, The People vs. Larry Flynt, Friday Night Lights, Sid & Nancy, Sweet Dreams, Moneyball, Fruitvale Station, Stonewall, Norma Rae, All the President's Men, Wonderland, Milk, Apollo 13, Taking Woodstock, Dallas Buyers Club, CBGB, or W.* Movies off-limits: *Pearl Harbor, Titanic, Finding Private Ryan.* (Due Sept. 16)

**Book Essay:** A short 2-3 page paper will be due towards the end of semester that will focus on the rise of conservatism book. More details to follow. (Due Nov. 18)

**Exams:** There will be three non-cumulative exams given in the course. These exams will be a mix of short identifications and essay questions. **You will need to bring your own blue books** which can be purchased throughout campus. (Sept. 30, Oct. 28 and the final exam)

**Class Participation and Attendance:** This will determine a substantial portion of your grade and includes both attendance and participation in class discussions.

**Extra Credit:** You may write a short (1 ½-2 pages) review of a visit during the semester to a history museum, exhibit or site for extra credit. This needs to be a critical essay. Did the site or exhibit seem to have an overall theme or message? Were there historical inaccuracies? What was done well and what was done poorly? Please include a copy of your ticket or pass if possible with a date attached to this paper. Suggested sites include the Atlanta History Center, Historic Banning Mills (in Whitesburg, Ga.), Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, Margaret Mitchell House and Museum, Pickett's Mill, Douglas County Museum of History and Art and Roosevelt's Little White House Historic Site. (Due anytime through end of semester)

### **Grading:**

Movie Review: 15%

Second Essay: 25%

Exam 1: 15%

Exam 2: 15%

Final Exam 20%

Participation: 10%

Extra Credit: up to 5%

### **Grading Scale:**

90% + A

80% + B

70% + C

60% + D

59% - F

**Writing Assistance:** This course has several writing assignments constituting 40% of your possible grade. If you are struggling (writing does not come easily to most people) seek help sooner rather than later. Suggestions include:

- The UWG Library website ( includes citation and style guides, as well as important history databases such as America: History & Life)

- The Writing Center (TLC 1201)
- Peers (having another pair of eyes proof your work is always a good idea)
- Class Instructor ( I am happy to give any help that I can)

**Class Rules:**

- Turn cell phones off during class; this is common courtesy
- No food in class, beverages are fine
- Attendance is expected, and please be on time
- This is an academic environment, show respect for others
- Academic honesty is expected. Do not submit the work of others as your own. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and is not tolerated at this university. For details see the Student Handbook, appendix A and the history department statement on plagiarism: <http://www.westga.edu/~history/statementonplagiarism.pdf>

**Tentative Course Outline:**

Week 1 (August 24/26): Course Introduction/Reconstruction

Read: chapter 15 and online essay (posted on CourseDen)

Week 2 (Aug. 31/ Sept. 2): The West/ Industrialization

Read: chapters 16 & 17

Week 3 (Sept. 9): Urbanization/Gilded Age politics

Read: chapters 18 & 19

Week 4 (Sept. 14/16): Progressivism

Read: chapter 20; online documents, Booker T. Washington & W.E.B. DuBois

Due: Movie Review (Sept. 16)

Week 5 (Sept. 21/23): American Empire/ World War One

Read: chapters 21

Week 6 (Sept. 28/30): Modernity and the Great Depression

Read: chapter 22; Exam 1 (Sept. 30)

Week 7 (Oct. 5/7): Roosevelt and the New Deal

Read: chapter 23

Listen: "Strange Fruit," by Billie Holiday

Week 8 (Oct. 12/14): World War Two

Read: chapter 24; online document, "Executive Order 9066"

Week 9 (Oct. 19/21): The Cold War/American affluence

Read: chapters 25 and 26

Listen: "All Shook Up," by Elvis Presley; "I Fall to Pieces," by Patsy Cline; and "Blueberry Hill," by Fats Domino

Week 10 (Oct 26/28): “catch up” week; Exam 2, Oct 28

Week 11 (Nov. 2/4): Civil Rights

Read: Online documents, Chapter 27

Listen: “What’s Going On,” by Marvin Gaye and “Give Peace a Chance” by John Lennon and the Plastic Ono Band

Week 12 (Nov. 9/11): Civil Rights and the Sixties

Read: Online documents, Chapter 28

Listen: “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds,” by the Beatles and “The End,” by the Doors

Week 13 (Nov. 16/18): The 1970s and Rise of Right

Read: chapter 29,

Listen to: “Rapper’s Delight” by Sugarhill Gang; “Fight the Power” by Public Enemy;

“Kill the Poor,” by the Dead Kennedys; “Bodies,” by Sex Pistols;

“Good Times,” by Chic ; “You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real),” by Sylvester and “Don’t Stop ‘Til You Get Enough,” by Michael Jackson

Week 14: Fall Break!

Week 15 (Nov. 30/Dec. 2): From Bush to Obama

Read: chapter 30

Listen: “Rock Lobster,” by the B-52s; “Smells Like Teen Spirit,” by Nirvana and “Everybody Hurts,” by R.E.M.

Final Exam: TBA

Additional information on:

Americans with Disabilities Act

UWG Email Policy

University of West Georgia Honor Code

Credit Hour Policy

[http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common\\_Language\\_for\\_Course\\_Syllabi.pdf](http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf)