

**HIST 365**  
**History of The U.S. South: an Atlantic World Approach**  
**University of Nebraska**  
**William G. Thomas**

Spring 2010

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**Course Description:**

This course covers the history and development of the U.S. South from colonial times to the 20th century. The South as a region has set the pace of economic growth in the late twentieth century U.S. and risen to political prominence recently as the proving ground of all presidential candidates. The South's grip on the economic, social, religious, political, and cultural character of the U.S. has been long and deep. This course will broadly survey the development of the South as a region and examine its context in the growth of the Atlantic World, the United States, and other regions and cultures.

The South has been shaped by various cultures and peoples in the Atlantic World, including Native American, British/European, African, Spanish, and Caribbean. The formation and consequences of racial and regional identities, first, are at the center of this study, and the course charts these processes along several axes. Second, this course explores the encounters of Southerners of all races with the changing, modernizing world economy and society. Third, the course examines the role of religion in the development of the region's social and political life. Chronological treatments include the following major subjects: the encounter of Indian, European, and African c. 1607, the development of slavery, the meaning and legacy of the Civil War, the development of segregation, the emergence of the Civil Rights movement, the persistence of sub-regions in the South, especially Appalachia, and the emergence of the "Sun Belt" South. This course will use a wide array of digital history projects for students to investigate primary sources--letters, diaries, news reel films, photographs, and maps from and about the region. Students of all backgrounds are welcome in this course to learn about the U.S. South and its history.

## Course Objectives:

- to give students the experience and opportunity to do history for themselves and participate in it through gathering evidence, communicating ideas, and engaging with historical scholarship.
- to improve fluency and proficiency in and historical thinking, essay writing, and critical analysis.
- to develop knowledge of the history of the American South as a region and the Atlantic World context of its development from 1570 to the present--the events, structures, ideas, and people that shaped the region and their relevance today.

## Course Readings:

### Books:

Karen Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project*

Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul*

Melvyn Patrick Ely, *Israel on the Appomattox*

Steven Ash, *1865: A Year in the South*

T. J. Stiles, *Jesse James*

Pete Daniel, *Lost Revolutions: The South in the 1950s*

Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*

Edward L. Ayers and Bradley Mittendorf, *The Oxford Book of the American South*

### Selected Essays on Reserve or on Online:

Barbara J. Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History," *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward*. Ed. J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson. New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982. (On Reserve)

James M. McPherson, "Antebellum Southern Exceptionalism: A New Look at an Old Question," *Civil War History*, 2004  
<http://www.southernhistory.net/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=9408&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>

"New Pasts: Historicizing Immigration, Race, and Place in the South," Jamie Winders and Barbara Ellen Smith, *Southern Spaces*

"Mountaintop Removal in Central Appalachia," Shirley Stewart Burns, *Southern Spaces*

## Required Electronic Archives:

Virginia Center for Digital History/UVA--[www.vcdh.virginia.edu](http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu)

- *Virtual Jamestown*--[www.virtualjamestown.org](http://www.virtualjamestown.org)
- *Geography of Slavery*
- *Papers of George Washington--Road to Revolution Letters*
- *Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War*
- *Civil Rights Television News Archive*

*Southern Spaces*, Emory University--[www.southernspaces.org](http://www.southernspaces.org)

*Railroads and the Making of Modern America*, University of Nebraska--  
<http://railroads.unl.edu>

### **Films:**

Thursday Night Feature Films:

*The New World* (released 2005)

*The Apostle* (released 1997)

Films shown in class:

*Rising Up*

*Wallace: Settin' the Woods on Fire*

*Gone with the Wind*

### **Grading:**

5 page Review Essay 1	20 % of Final Grade
Mid Term Exam	20 % of Final Grade
5 page Review Essay 2	20 % of Final Grade
Final Exam	20 % of Final Grade
Participation/Assignments (6)	20 % of Final Grade

### **Academic Policies:**

Attendance at all lectures and class periods is required. Essays will not be accepted in email format or as attachments, only as hard copy handed in at class session.

Assignments will not be accepted after the due dates except in cases where students can document an illness, family emergency, or university-related responsibility that prevented them from completing the assignment on time.

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Writing Center can provide you with meaningful support as you write for this class as well as for every course in which you enroll. Trained peer consultants are available to talk with you as you plan, draft, and revise your writing. Please check the Writing Center website for locations, hours, and information about scheduling appointments. (<http://www.unl.edu/writing/>)

Participation will be graded on completion of occasional in-class writing assignments and hand-ins (one-page typed lists for each of the website assignments). Please remember to bring these to class the day they are due for discussion.

#### Grading Scale

A+	97-100	C+	77-79
A	94-96	C	74-76
A-	90-93	C-	70-73
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	84-86	D	64-66
B-	80-83	D-	60-63
		F	below 60

#### Academic Honesty:

All students are expected to adhere to the University policies regarding academic honesty set forth in the Undergraduate Bulletin. Cases of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation) will be handled in strict accordance with the guidelines of the University.

#### Schedule of Assignments:

**(note: all assignments and due dates are subject to change as necessary in the semester)**

##### Week 1: Problems in Southern History

1/11 Introduction: *Oxford Book of the American South* (OBAS)--Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*

1/13 *Oxford Book of the American South* (OBAS)-- Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*; Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*; Peter Taylor, *The Decline and Fall of the Episcopal Church*

##### Week 2: Encounters

1/18 *Virtual Jamestown*-- what were the first encounters like between English, African, and Native Americans in the Chesapeake? Select critical passages to document and explain three (3) encounters. Submit post to Blackboard Discussion Thread and prepare to discuss in class.

<http://www.virtualjamestown.org>

1/20 Discussion: Karen Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project*

**Week 3: The Atlantic World**

1/25 *The Geography of Slavery*--why do slaves and indentured servants run? Find three (3) examples of runaways and briefly explain the evidence for their motivations. Submit post to Blackboard Discussion Thread and prepare to discuss in class.

<http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos.html>

1/27 Discussion: Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul*

Thursday Night Film: *The New World*, TBA

**Week 4: Revolution and New American Nation**

2/1 *Papers of George Washington--Road to Revolution Letters*--why do white planter Virginians participate in a revolution? Find three (3) reasons in Washington's correspondence and briefly explain. Submit post to Blackboard Discussion Thread and prepare to discuss in class.

<http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/documents/revolution/letters/index.html>

2/3 Melvyn Patrick Ely, *Israel on the Appomattox*

**Week 5: Slavery in the South**

2/8 OBAS--Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*; Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*; Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of*; Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

2/10 Discussion: Melvyn Patrick Ely, *Israel on the Appomattox*

**Week 6: Explaining Secession, Politics, and the South's Regions**

2/15 OBAS--(TBA)

2/17 Discussion: James McPherson, "Antebellum Southern Exceptionalism" (online)

2/18 First 5-page Review Essay Due: 2/18 5 p.m.

Review Essay--write a critical review of one of the books assigned for this course so far (Kupperman, Johnson, Ely) with reference to 3 other readings/documents in this course.

**Week 7: Civil War**

2/22 *Valley of the Shadow--Newspapers*--how did Northern and Southern editors characterize the conflict, what language and symbols did they use to describe their respective sectional positions in the war? Select 3 exemplary documents for discussion

and bring to class with list of key points. Submit post to Blackboard Discussion Thread and prepare to discuss in class.  
<http://valley.vcdh.virginia.edu>

2/24 Discussion: Stephen Ash, *A Year in the South, 1865*

**Week 8: Emancipation and Reconstruction**

3/1 OBAS--Black Citizens of Tennessee, *Letter to the Union Convention*;  
William Faulkner, *Wash*; Charles Chesnutt, *Dave's Neckliss*.

3/3 OBAS--Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind*; Robert Penn Warren, *The Legacy of the Civil War*

*Gone with the Wind* (in class)

**Week 9: Review**

3/8 Review for Exam

3/10 MID TERM EXAM

**Week 10: Race and Region**

3/15 OBAS--Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery*; W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*; Twelve Southerners, *I'll Take My Stand*; James Agee, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*.

3/17 Barbara J. Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History," *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward*. Ed. J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson. New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982. On reserve in Love Library.

SPRING BREAK

**Week 11: Old South/New South**

3/29 Guest Lecturer: Geitner Simmons, Editor, *Omaha World-Herald*

3/31 Discussion: T. J. Stiles, *Jesse James*

**Week 12: Segregation**

4/5 *Railroads and the Making of Modern America: Segregation Topic*. Select 3 documents and explain the origins of segregation. Submit post to Blackboard Discussion Thread and prepare to discuss in class.  
<http://railroads.unl.edu>

*Rising Up* Film (in class)

4/7 Discussion: Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*

**Week 13: Civil Rights Movement South**

4/12 *Television News of the Civil Rights Era*--select three (3) films that reveal the key components of the struggle for black freedom and equality, both resistance to change and pressure to change. Submit post to Blackboard Discussion Thread and prepare to discuss in class.

<http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/civilrightstv>

*Wallace: Settin' the Woods on Fire* (in class)

4/14 Pete Daniel, *Lost Revolutions: The South in the 1950s*

**Week 14: Post South**

4/19 "New Pasts: Historicizing Immigration, Race, and Place in the South," Jamie Winders and Barbara Ellen Smith, *Southern Spaces*

4/21 "Mountaintop Removal in Central Appalachia," Shirley Stewart Burns, *Southern Spaces*

Thursday Night Film: *The Apostle* (TBA)

**Week 15: New Directions for the South**

4/26 Political Realignment and the South

4/28 Culture, Heritage, and History in the South

Second 5-page Review Essay Due: 4/28 5 p.m.

Review of *Southern Spaces* ([www.southernspaces.org](http://www.southernspaces.org)) Presentations--pick one of the events/conferences/interviews/presentations and write an analytical review with reference to 3 other readings/documents in this course.

**Week 16: Exam Week--Final Exam**

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Brief Guidelines on Essay Writing:

- Do not use the 1st person
- Avoid generalizations and qualifiers (such as, very, pretty much, sort of)
- Use only the past tense

Essay Grading Guidelines:

What is an "A" paper?

Follows assignment criteria and addresses questions  
Contains a well-written, clearly presented thesis statement  
Contains clearly organized and fully developed arguments in every area of the paper--  
balanced with evidence for each major argument  
Includes a range and depth of sources and evidence to support arguments  
Ideas demonstrate thought beyond the obvious  
Very few or no grammar mistakes, superior style, polished prose  
"A+" grade: the paper demonstrates exceptional thought beyond the obvious  
"A-" grade: the paper demonstrates all of the criteria for an A grade, but with some  
deficiency in one area.

What is a "B" paper?

Follows assignment criteria and addresses questions  
Contains a thesis statement  
Contains clearly organized arguments  
Slightly underdeveloped arguments  
Includes necessary sources and evidence to support the argument, but without the range and  
breadth of an A paper  
Avoids summarizing and repetition  
Some grammar or spelling errors  
"B+" grade: the paper demonstrates all of the criteria for an "A" paper, but is deficient in  
two areas  
"B-" grade: the paper demonstrates all of the criteria for a "B" paper, but with some  
additional deficiency in one area.

What is a "C" paper?

Follows assignment criteria and attempts to address questions  
Thesis statement is unclear  
Arguments are identifiable, but not clearly organized  
Arguments are too brief and underdeveloped

Few (minimum required) sources and evidence to support the main points

Unnecessary summarization and repetition

Several grammar and spelling mistakes

"C+" grade: the paper demonstrates all of the criteria for a "B" paper, but is deficient in two areas

"C-" grade: the paper demonstrates all of the criteria for a "C" paper, but with some additional deficiency in one area.

What is a "D" paper?

Does not follow assignment criteria and does not address questions

Arguments are not identifiable

Arguments are not developed

Sources are few (at minimum or below) and/or improperly used

Several grammar and spelling mistakes

"D+" grade: the paper demonstrates all of the criteria for an "C" paper, but is deficient in two areas

"D-" grade: the paper demonstrates all of the criteria for a "D" paper, but with some additional deficiency in one area.

What is an "F" paper?

Does not follow assignment criteria and does not address questions

There are no arguments

Few or no sources identified

Severe grammar and spelling mistakes

Evidence of plagiarism is an automatic failing grade, regardless of paper quality