



South China Normal University International Summer Session

04F03826: American History and Culture from 1865

Term: July 15th –August 9th, 2019

Instructor: Dr. Daniel Richter

Home Institution: Tulane University

Credit: 4

Course Description

In this course, we will explore American History from the Civil War until the presidential election of 2016. We will address how American culture has developed in the United States and in a broader global context. We will study American political, economic, and social history and examine selected examples of American culture from the late 19th century through the early 21st century. Through our efforts, the class will consider the importance of understanding American history and culture in a global context.

Course Goal

The goal is for students to learn about major events in American history while also developing reading and writing skills about history. The course also aims to have students develop a familiarity with major figures in American history from 1865 until the present.

Course Readings

John Kasson, *Amusing the Million* (ISBN 0809001330)

Required Films: *Coney Island*

Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson

Modern Times

Walt & El Grupo

Do The Right Thing

Man on a Wire



Grading Scale

Percentage	Grade
90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
< 60	F

Grading

Reading Responses: 20%

Midterm: 20%

Paper One: 15%

Paper Two: 20%

Final Exam: 25%

During the course, you will be responsible for writing 12 reading responses that will be due several times each week. These short responses of approximately three paragraphs will respond to online prompts that will be posted on the course website each week. These responses will require you to respond to the course readings and specific film viewings before we meet in class. The responses will be graded for their effectiveness in answering the question asked while drawing on course material, as well as grammar and spelling.

The course midterm will take place during at the end of Week Two. A study guide will distributed several days before. The midterm will include short identifications and an essay.

The first paper will be due during Week Three and explore the cultural significance of Coney Island and Disneyland drawing on Kasson, Burns, Watts, and the documentary films about Walt Disney and Disneyland. The paper needs to be 4 to 6 pages and double-spaced with footnotes. Both hard copies and electronic copies of the paper are required.

The second paper will be due Week Four and is a comparative film review of two of the films that overlap in exploring the course's principal themes. You are welcome to consult me about pairing the films, but it is your choice about pairings such as *Unforgivable Blackness* and *Do The Right Thing* or *Modern Times* and *Roger and Me*. Both hard copies and electronic copies of the paper are required.

We will have a final exam that will include short identifications and two essays. A study guide will be posted on the course website several days before the exam date.



Course Schedules

Week One

7/15 (Monday): INTRODUCTION/WALT WHITMAN, MATHEW BRADY, AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

Readings:

- Raymond Williams, "Culture is Ordinary," available on course website.
- Walt Whitman, "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45470/crossing-brooklyn-ferry>
- Abraham Lincoln, "The Gettysburg Address"

7/16 (Tuesday): THE CIVIL WAR IN 19TH CENTURY MEMORY/MARK TWAIN AND SOCIAL CRITIQUE IN POSTBELLUM AMERICA

Readings:

- Mark Twain, selection from *Life on the Mississippi*, <http://www.literatureproject.com/life-mississippi/index.htm> ("Body of the Nation and Chapters 6-10) AND promotional materials related to *Pudd'head Wilson*, <http://twain.lib.virginia.edu/wilson/pwadshp.html>
- Ambrose Bierce, "What I Saw of Shiloh," <http://www.ambrosebierce.org/shiloh.htm>
- David Blight, "The Lost Cause and Causes Not Lost," in Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), available under files.

7/17 (Wednesday): IMMIGRATION AND MASS CULTURE IN THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20 CENTURY

Readings:

- John F. Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (1978)
- Selection from Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890)

Viewing:

- *Coney Island*, directed by Ric Burns (1990)

7/18 (Thursday): POLITICS AND RACE IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Reading:



- Ida B. Wells, *The Memphis Diary of Ida B. Wells*, ix-xxiv, 1-46, 71-79.
- Edgar Rice Burroughs, Chapter 9 from *Tarzan of the Apes* (1912), available at: <https://archive.org/details/tarzanapes00compgoog> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

Viewing:

Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson, Part 1 and Part 2 (2004)

7/19 (Friday): THE GREAT DEPRESSION IN VISUAL CULTURE

Reading:

- Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," available on course website.
- Morris Dickstein, "John Steinbeck and the Great Depression," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 103, no. 1 (2004): 111-131

Viewing:

- *Modern Times* (1936), directed by and starring Charles Chaplin.

Week Two

7/22 (Monday) : THE NEW DEAL

Reading:

- Linda Gordon, "Dorothea Lange's Oregon Photography: Assumptions Challenged." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 110, no. 4 (2009): 570-97.

Listening:

- Franklin D. Roosevelt, Fireside Chat 1: "On the Banking Crisis," <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-speeches/march-12-1933-fireside-chat-1-banking-crisis>

7/23 (Tuesday) : THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND THE ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR

Readings:

- Japanese Internment – Korematsu v. United States, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5151>
- "Letters to Clara Breed," <http://www.janm.org/exhibitions/breed/title.htm>
- George Kennan, "The Long Telegram", <http://historyguide.org/Europe/kennan.html>
- Henry Wallace "Letter to President Truman," <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6906/>



7/24 (Wednesday) : WALT DISNEY AND MAGIC KINGDOMS

Readings:

- Steven Watts, "Walt Disney: Art and Politics in the American Century," *Journal of American History* 82 (June 1995), 84-110.
- Karal Ann Marling, "Disneyland, 1955: Just Take the Santa Ana Freeway to the American Dream," *American Art* Vol. 5, No. 1/2 (Winter-Spring, 1991), 169-207.
- Gladwill Hill, "The Never-Never Land Khrushchev Never Saw," *New York*

Times, October 4, 1959, on course website.

- Frank Rich, "Who Killed the Disneyland Dream?" *New York Times*, December 25, 2010.

Viewing:

- Robbins Barstow, *Disneyland Dream* (1956 with commentary added in 1990s), an

amateur film about the Barstows' trip to Disneyland from in July 1956. Available at:

http://www.archive.org/details/barstow_disneyland_dream_1956

AND

Walt and El Grupo (2008)

7/25 (Thursday) : GENDER, YOUTH, AND CULTURE IN THE 1960s

Reading:

- Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1964), chapter 1, "The Problem That Has No

Name" (on course web site).

- Elliot Tiber, "How Woodstock Happened" (1994), on web at:

<http://www.edjusticeonline.com/woodstock/history/index.htm>

7/26 (Friday) : Midterm



Week Three

7/29 Monday : CIVIL RIGHTS AND THE SIXTIES IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Reading:

- Martin Luther King, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"
- Mary Dudziak, "Preface and Introduction" in Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 1-17.
- Peniel Joseph, "Revolution in Babylon: Stokely Carmichael and America in the 1960s," *Souls* 9:4, 281-301

7/30 (Tuesday) : MUHAMMAD ALI AND AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE IN THE 1970s

- Peter Lev, "From Blaxploitation To African American Film" in Lev, *American Films of the 1970s: Conflicting Visions* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 127-141.
- David Remnick, "American Hunger,"
<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1998/10/12/american-hunger>

7/31 (Wednesday) : RACE AND SPACE POSTWAR AMERICA (11/14-11/17)

Readings:

- Introduction and Chapter One from *Beyond the Melting Pot* (1963) by Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan.
- George Wallace, "1963 Inaugural Address,"
<http://digital.archives.alabama.gov/cdm/ref/collection/voices/id/2952>
- Richard Nixon, "Silent Majority," available
online: <https://chnm.gmu.edu/hardhats/silent.html>
- Viewing: *Do the Right Thing* (1989), directed by Spike Lee AND classroom viewing of episode of *All in the Family*.

8/1 (Thursday): AMERICAN CULTURE AND MEMORY IN THE 1980s

Readings:

Ronald Reagan, "Acceptance of the Republican Nomination for President," July 17, 1980,
<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2004/reagan/stories/speech.archive/nomination.html>

8/2 (Friday) : DEINDUSTRIALIZATION AND AMERICAN CULTURE

Reading:

Jefferson Cowie, "Dead Man's Town" in *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (New York: New Press, 2010), 357-369.



Week Four

8/5 (Monday) : AMERICA IN THE 1990s

Reading:

Bill Clinton, "Inaugural Address," January 20, 1993.

8/6 (Tuesday) : VISUAL CULTURE AND MEMORY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Viewing:

Man On A Wire (2008)

8/7 (Wednesday) AMERICA IN THE BUSH AND OBAMA YEARS

Readings:

- Marvin Olasky, "Compassionate Conservatism," *Veritas: A Quarterly Journal of Public Policy in Texas* (Fall 2000), 6-11.
- Inauguration Speech of George W. Bush, January 20, 2001.
- Barack Obama, "A More Perfect Union"

8/8 (Thursday):THE ELECTION OF 2016 AND AMERICAN POLITICS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Readings:

- Inauguration Speech of Donald Trump, January 20, 2017.
- Selection from *Dreamland* by Sam Quinones.

8/9 (Friday) : FINAL EXAM