

HIST 2312-02

U.S. HISTORY SINCE 1877

Dr. Barclay Key (btkey@ualr.edu) Spring 2018	407 Stabler Hall MWF, 10.00-10.50
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“I THINK THAT A MAN AT ANY MOMENT OF ACTION IS THE LIVING SUM OF HIS PAST... THAT MAN AT THE VERY MOMENT AT WHICH HE IS DOING SOMETHING, HE DID THAT PARTICULAR THING EXACTLY IN THAT WAY BECAUSE OF THE HUNDRED YEARS BEFORE HIM... BECAUSE HE IS THE SUM OF HIS ANCESTORS AND HIS CONDITION, HIS TIMES.” —WILLIAM FAULKNER (1957)

WELCOME!

Regardless of your background, major, or career plans, I am pleased to have you in this course and believe that you will benefit from this study of U.S. history. My goal is to make this course one of your favorites at UALR. We have much to learn!

To that end, we must cultivate our interest in people’s stories. Everyone has a story to tell. Today, our lives are defined by the stories that we create daily. Perhaps you have stories to share, both joyful and painful, about your family and friends, about your beliefs, about your travels or hobbies, or about your experiences at work or in college. In a sense, our identities are defined by the stories we live and create for ourselves. The same is true for history. Our subjects, the people we study, have stories to tell about themselves and their times. Historians tease these stories out of available sources, explain why they are important, and debate their meaning and significance. Such activities broadly define my goal for us: learning stories from the past and discussing their significance for understanding U.S. history.

Historical narratives involve groups of people and individuals. The same will be true of this course. At times, we will discuss numbers—the percentage of the electorate who voted for a presidential candidate, for example—but we will also give attention to individual stories and what they might mean for understanding U.S. history. When we generalize with statistics, we encourage you to consider the individuals who comprise those statistics and what stories they might share, if given the opportunity. When we consider individuals, we will want to experience their lives with them, as best we can, and engage their worlds, imagining the options that were before them and discussing why they made the choices that they did. At the same time, we will want to ask critical questions of their narratives and the specific contexts from which they spoke to determine the degree to which their stories are indicative of larger historical trends.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Description, analysis, and explanation of the political, social, economic, and diplomatic events to the present time. Special attention is devoted to the forces of modernity and the impact of cultural pluralism on traditional institutions. Major topics for study include industrialization; agrarianism; labor; immigration; reform movements; total and limited war; economic theory and practice; and the U.S.’s role in world affairs. Three credit hours.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND FORMAT

Please know that I have high expectations of myself as your instructor, as the one who bears the responsibility of helping you learn and think about the past. Likewise, I have high expectations of you, especially with regard to reading, thinking, and writing. I have no interest in telling you what to think, but I insist that you think logically, read closely, and write well. I will be pleased to assist you in these tasks. By maintaining these high expectations of each other, I am confident that we will learn much about history and perhaps about ourselves.

Reading assignments, discussions, lectures, and audiovisual materials will facilitate our exploration of U.S. history from the 1870s to the present. I am particularly interested in asking a lot of questions and proposing answers with you, so most every class meeting will include time devoted to inquiries of texts and each other.

Due to the constraints of a survey course and the immense amount of material that we could potentially analyze, we will give special attention to several themes that resonate throughout this period. Namely, we will contemplate the idea of “race” and its pertinence to U.S. history; the evolution of government bureaucracies in responding to the needs and wishes of the governed; the evolution and globalization of the U.S. economy; conceptions of nationhood and citizenship; competing constructions of femininity and masculinity in society; relationships between humans and the environment; the pervasive influence of technological innovations on society; and international relations.

As you might imagine, history can be contentious, and there will be occasions in this course when we will have disagreements among ourselves. Of course, I expect everyone to listen closely and carefully consider other opinions as your own ideas take shape. If you disagree with someone, you will have an opportunity to explain why. Together, we will sharpen our historical understanding and improve our critical thinking skills.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will

- develop empathy. \ 'em-pə-thē\ : “the action of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings, thoughts, and experience of another of either the past or present without having the feelings, thoughts, and experience fully communicated in an objectively explicit manner”
- analyze the continuing interpretation and application of the U.S. Constitution.
- learn about the key incidents and concepts that define the history of the U.S. since 1877.
- demonstrate understanding of the diversity and complexity of events, and intercultural interactions in U.S. history from 1877 to the present.
- be able to communicate historical knowledge in written and oral forms.
- use critical thinking and analytical skills to examine primary and secondary source documents.
- connect and compare primary and secondary source documents from multiple perspectives.
- use evidence from written and visual sources to draw conclusions and support an argument.
- learn to locate and distinguish between primary and secondary sources.
- evaluate sources to determine if they are appropriate, scholarly sources.
- understand the principles of academic integrity, including how to cite sources.
- recognize the effects of civility, and its absence, in shaping the decisions of democratic government in U.S. history since 1877.
- study the continuing development and function of the U.S. government since 1877 and investigate the ongoing quest for justice in American society since the Reconstruction era.
- learn about the development of the rights and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship and the role of citizens and non-citizens in shaping the American past.
- evaluate constructions of femininity and masculinity in U.S. history.
- assess the relationships between the U.S. and other nations.
- critique elements of popular culture (including religion, music, television, and film) in U.S. history.
- analyze how historical narratives are created and evolve over time.

REQUIRED READING

You must acquire these books to successfully complete all assignments. They are available from the usual outlets, including online stores, but please understand that you need the first two immediately.

- Eric Foner, ed., *Voices of Freedom: A Documentary History*, vol. II, 5th edition (ISBN 9780393614503). Available as an e-book and on two-hour reserve in the library.
 - Why was it assigned? I prefer to avoid traditional textbooks because they are too expensive. Instead we will be guided this semester by documents from the past, composed by the people who actually lived in the eras that we will study.
- Mia Bay, *To Tell the Truth Freely: The Life of Ida B. Wells* (ISBN 9780809016464). Available as an e-book and on two-hour reserve in the library.
 - Why was it assigned? Ida Wells was one of the most important journalists at the dawn of the twentieth century. She was born in Mississippi, lived for a time in Memphis, spent most of her adult life in Chicago, and visited Arkansas on a few occasions. This biography will captivate your imagination.
- Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (ISBN 9781595586438). Available as an audiobook, e-book, and on two-hour reserve in the library.
 - Why was it assigned? I suspect this book will be discussed for decades to come. It aims to address how and why the U.S. leads the world in incarceration rates, focusing primarily on the “war on drugs.”

OPTIONAL READING

- Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty!: An American History*, Vol. 2 (ISBN 9780393920314). This book is a traditional textbook that accompanies *Voices of Freedom*. It is overpriced but if you think that you might become a social studies teacher or if you feel more comfortable following course topics with a traditional textbook, then you should purchase it from an online store. Better yet, ask me for a textbook, and I may have one to give you.
- Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (ISBN 9780812993547). I normally don’t provide extra credit opportunities, but if you want to read this book and write something, let’s talk.

REQUIRED VIEWING

You must view the films listed in the schedule and complete the accompanying quizzes that are explained below. The films are available online for free. If you do not have adequate Internet access at home, then you may use one of the computers in the library or History Department. Just bring your own headphones. If one film becomes unavailable during the semester, then we will find a suitable replacement. I will e-mail each film and quiz approximately one week before the due date.

ASSIGNMENTS

- Read actively: You must complete the required readings! Reading will provide the means for us to “hear” people’s stories, and I have chosen books that will captivate your imaginations. Reading actively will require you to engage authors, ask questions of texts, and immerse yourself in the worlds they describe.
- Regularly attend class: I expect you to be here! How will we know what you think, if you’re not present? Indeed, your absence may prevent a classmate from learning something new or looking at a topic in a different perspective. Meanwhile, your participation grade depends on your attendance.
- Actively participate in discussions: Not only do we want you here, but we also want you to speak! You should remain actively engaged in class discussions, sharing your thoughts about the people and places we explore. You should also come to class prepared to ASK QUESTIONS about the reading assignments. I might call on you whether or not your hand is raised! [Insert evil laugh here.]

- Complete book tests: Simple tests over *To Tell the Truth Freely* (**Wednesday, February 14**) and *The New Jim Crow* (**Wednesday, April 18**) will show that you read carefully. You may anticipate multiple-choice and true-false questions.
- Complete reading quizzes: Six **unannounced** quizzes will assess your reading of *Voices of Freedom*. You may anticipate multiple-choice questions. **Regardless of the circumstances, missed quizzes may not be made up**, but I will drop your lowest reading quiz grade at the end of the semester.
- Complete film quizzes: Although we are scheduled to meet on MWF, we will not always meet in the classroom on Fridays. You will occasionally view a documentary film and submit a quiz instead of meeting for class. The schedule in this syllabus indicates when you will view films and complete brief quizzes about them. I will e-mail a link to the film and attach each quiz about one week before it is due, and you may simply e-mail your answers back to me. You should anticipate fill-in-the-blank and short answer questions. **Late quizzes will not be accepted. Missed quizzes may not be made up**, but I will drop your lowest film quiz at the end of the semester.
- Compose two letters to dead people based on the primary sources in *Voices of Freedom*. Carefully follow the instructions for each letter.
 - **Letter 1** (250-300 words): First, choose a document from Chapters 15-21 of *Voices of Freedom*. Then pretend that you are **an adult living at the time that the document was created**. Write a letter to the author and explain why you agree or disagree with the document. (For example, a student might choose DOC 100, an 1869 speech by Frederick Douglass. That student would compose a letter to Douglass written from the perspective of someone living in 1869.) Remember that you are restricted to what the general public would know in the year that the document was produced. Compose your letter in Word, and send it to btkey@ualr.edu as an attachment **by noon on Friday, February 23**.
 - **Letter 2** (250-300 words): First, choose a document from Chapters 22-28 of *Voices of Freedom*. Identify the author and, if possible, determine when that person died. Carefully read the document, giving attention to the author's original audience and arguments about freedom. Then compose a letter to the author that explains what happened after the document was created. (For example, a student might choose DOC 147, a 1941 speech by President Franklin Roosevelt. That student would write a letter to Roosevelt on the subject of DOC 147 after April 12, 1945, the date that he died.) You must focus on the subject that the author addressed in the document. Compose your letter in Word, and send it to btkey@ualr.edu as an attachment **by noon on Wednesday, March 28**.
- Complete final exam: You will have a comprehensive final exam that poses broad questions, enabling you to show off your new understanding of U.S. history. The exam will consist of essay questions, so each student should bring a blue book. The final exam will be **Wednesday, May 2, at 10:30 a.m.**

A NOTE ON WRITING

Please understand that I have the highest expectations for your writing assignments. Poor grammar, misspelled words, and the like are unacceptable in a college class. I will be glad to assist you in writing good papers, but I also urge you to utilize the University Writing Center. See <http://ualr.edu/writingcenter/> for details.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Your success in this class is important to me, and it is the policy and practice of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to create inclusive learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have a documented disability (or need to document a disability) and need an accommodation, please contact me privately as soon as possible so that we can discuss with the

Disability Resource Center (DRC) how to meet your specific needs and the requirements of the course. The DRC offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process among you, your instructor(s) and the DRC. Thus, if you have a disability, please contact me and/or the DRC, at 501-569-3143 (V/TTY) or 501-683-7629 (VP). For more information, please visit the DRC website at ualr.edu/disability. (UA Little Rock Policy 404.9)

RULES THAT I FEEL COMPELLED TO INCLUDE EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE ADULTS

- Class will begin promptly at 10 a.m. Compulsive tardiness is annoying and rude. Be on time.
- Except for emergencies or answering historical questions, I prefer that you not use laptops or phones during class. Among other reasons, see Susan Dynarski, "Laptops Are Great. But Not During a Lecture or a Meeting," *New York Times*, November 22, 2017, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/22/business/laptops-not-during-lecture-or-meeting.html>.
- I will not accept late papers or quizzes, so please carefully note due dates and times.
- Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Please consult with me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, as excuses (especially ignorance) will not be accepted. You may also wish to consult the university's policies on academic integrity, available at <http://ualr.edu/deanofstudents/index.php/home/academic-integrity/>.

CONTACT INFORMATION

E-mail is the best way to contact me. You may expect a quick reply if you send one during regular business hours. If you send one after regular business hours, I will reply the next morning. You are also welcome to visit my office with or without an appointment.

E-mail: btkey@ualr.edu

Office: 604N Stabler Hall

Hours: MW, 11 a.m.-12 p.m. or by appointment

GRADING

Attendance/Participation	100 points (3 pts/class)	A	900-1000 points
Film quizzes	100 points (20 pts/quiz)	B	800-899 points
Book tests	150 points (75 pts/test)	C	700-799 points
Reading quizzes	200 points (40 pts/quiz)	D	600-699 points
Letters to dead/old people	200 points (100 pts/letter)	F	0-599 points
Final exam	250 points		

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

DATE	READING/VIEWING ASSIGNMENT	WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT
W, Jan 17	Syllabus	
F, Jan 19	Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution	
M, Jan 22	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #95-98	
W, Jan 24	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #100-101	
F, Jan 26	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #99, 102, 113	
M, Jan 29	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #103-105	
W, Jan 31	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #106-108	
F, Feb 2	FILM — <i>Slavery by Another Name</i>	Film quiz due at noon
M, Feb 5	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #110-112	
W, Feb 7	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #109, 114-115	
F, Feb 9	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #116-117, 120-121	

M, Feb 12	<i>To Tell the Truth Freely</i>	
W, Feb 14	<i>To Tell the Truth Freely</i>	Book test
F, Feb 16	FILM — <i>Panama Canal</i>	Film quiz due at noon
M, Feb 19	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #118-119, 123	
W, Feb 21	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #122, 124-126	
F, Feb 23	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #128, 131-133	First letter due at noon
M, Feb 26	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #127, 129-130, 137-138	
W, Feb 28	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #134-136	
F, Mar 2	FILM — <i>Triangle Fire</i>	Film quiz due at noon
M, Mar 5	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #139-141, 144	
W, Mar 7	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #142-143	
F, Mar 9	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #145-146	
M, Mar 12	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #147-151	
W, Mar 14	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #152-154	
F, Mar 16	FILM — <i>FDR</i>	Film quiz due at noon
M, Mar 19	SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS	
W, Mar 21	SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS	
F, Mar 23	SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS	
M, Mar 26	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #155-159	
W, Mar 28	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #160-164	Second letter due at noon
F, Mar 30	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #167-169	
M, Apr 2	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #165-166, 170-172	
W, Apr 4	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #173-176, 178-179	
F, Apr 6	FILM — <i>Freedom Riders</i>	Film quiz due at noon
M, Apr 9	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #177, 180, 185	
W, Apr 11	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #181-182, 186	
F, Apr 13	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #183-184, 187	
M, Apr 16	<i>The New Jim Crow</i>	
W, Apr 18	<i>The New Jim Crow</i>	Book test
F, Apr 20	FILM — <i>Reagan</i>	Film quiz due at noon
M, Apr 23	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #188-192	
W, Apr 25	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #193-195, 198	
F, Apr 27	<i>Voices of Freedom</i> , DOC #196-197, 199	
M, Apr 30		
W, May 2	FINAL EXAM AT 10:30 A.M.	