

History 1302: United States History 1865 to present

Barbara Welke

This is a writing intensive survey course open to both history majors and those outside history. Our goals this semester are not only to get a feeling of what life was like and how it changed (or didn't change) in the period from the end of the Civil War through the 20th century, but also to understand why; to understand the relationship between forces in the larger world and change at home; to highlight America's triumphs and accomplishments, as well as to grapple with its shortcomings. We will talk about national politics and everyday life, about popular culture and technological innovation, about corporate power and government regulation, about international affairs and economic development. I want to convey both something of the sweeping nature of the changes in American life and America's place in the world, along with the stubborn persistence of racial, gender, and economic inequities. It is a challenge of the highest order to attempt to grapple with a century and a half of history in 15 weeks. There will be many important issues that receive only cursory coverage, others that we will miss altogether. That said, you should nevertheless leave the course with a broad narrative timeline, a strong grasp of the issues that defined this period, and many questions that you would like to explore further on your own and in more focused history courses.

Most important of all, you should leave this course with the understanding that we can only understand the past by questioning it. With that goal in mind, much of our reading will be in primary sources—speeches, interviews, letters, articles, photographs, films, advertisements, and more—the actual “stuff” of history and from which history is written. Ask questions of the sources we read, of yourself, and each other, participate, have fun, be troubled. It is by engaging the past that we develop a sense of who we are today.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are responsible for all assigned readings and regular attendance at lectures and discussions. You should always bring your assigned readings to class because we will be referring to them.

CLASSROOM DECORUM

This is a big class requiring everyone to use their best public manners. Following a few guidelines will assure that everyone can get the most out of the class. First, please turn off cellular phones and beepers during lectures and discussion sections. Second, be on time, remain in your seat throughout the class, and do not start packing up your notes until after lecture/discussion has ended. Third, limit computer use to note-taking (in other words, no web-surfing, e-mail, etc.). Finally, please no unrelated reading (e.g., the newspaper) in class.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The following texts are required reading. They are available at the H. B. Smith Bookstore on the West Bank.

1. Nelson Lichtenstein, Susan Strasser, Roy Rosenzweig, *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's Economy, Politics, Culture, and Society, vol. 2, 1877 to the Present* (New York: Worth Publishers, 2000)(American Social History Project).
2. Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (1968, New York: Dell Publishing, 1976).
3. John David Smith, *When Did Southern Segregation Begin?* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2001)(Historians' at Work Series).

INTERNET LINKED READINGS

The bulk of our readings this semester will be primary sources drawn from the internet resources link to the course webpage. You should familiarize yourself with the course Web site:

- <http://www.hist.umn.edu/~bywelke/H1302>

The syllabus and schedule are on-line. In addition, as much as possible, I will include links on the "lecture" page to primary written and visual sources I refer to in lecture. You can then go to these links and read documents in full, as well as review images we have viewed in class. You also, of course, can make full use of the internet links page and the recommended books at the end of each chapter in the survey text to explore issues more fully on your own.

For the hours and locations of all University computer labs, please contact Academic & Distributed Computing Services.

GRADES

Your grade will be based on the following formula: class participation 30% (including attendance, participation in discussions, short writing assignments relating to readings and quizzes); historians at work paper 10%; midterm exam #1 20%; midterm exam #2 20%; history of a day paper 20%. Each of these elements is described in greater detail below.

PARTICIPATION IN SECTIONS

The small group discussions are key sites of learning in this course. There you will prepare to write papers, practice using specific evidence to support large generalizations and become acquainted with your T.A., who grades your performance in the course. Sections also provide opportunities to clear up questions about the lectures. (You should feel welcome to also raise

questions during or after lecture or with me in office hours.) Participation in discussion (including attendance, informed participation in discussion, and completion of short papers or quizzes) makes up 30% of your final grade. Attendance at discussion is mandatory; failure to attend discussion will result in a grade of "F" for the course.

Your T.A. will distribute a syllabus for the discussion section the first day of discussion. The syllabus will note office hours, discussion section expectations, and other details. Students in all sections will be reading the same materials and will have comparable workloads, but the timing of assignments from one section to another will vary. In other words, if you have a friend in another section, you may find that your schedules differ somewhat.

HISTORIANS AT WORK PAPER

Due: W/Th. 1/30 or 1/31 in discussion sections.

This assignment has two parts intended to introduce you to (1) making a historical argument supported by evidence; and (2) evaluating the strength of one argument versus another where historians differ in their interpretation.

From grade school through high school most students learn history as a set of facts. History is taught as though it exists outside of interpretation, as though its' sequence and meaning are givens. One goal of this course is to begin to unsettle that received wisdom.

On questions large and small historians often disagree as to what exactly happened, why it happened, what it meant at the time and later, how significant it was vis-a-vis other questions, indeed, they often disagree on whether it is worth thinking about at all. Moreover, even long settled understandings are often challenged and toppled by later historians bringing to bear new questions, evidence, or perspective. A historian's interpretation of a given historical question takes the form of an argument supported by evidence.

Part I: Making a Historical Argument

Using either the Ayers, Rabinowitz, or Welke excerpt (your TA may assign a particular excerpt for all students in the section to do), outline the argument, including (1) stating the author's argument; (2) noting its' major points; (3) noting the evidence supporting the argument. You should include here the type of evidence rather than the specifics, e.g. newspaper rather than *Montgomery Advertiser*, or legal opinion rather than *Hall v. Dequir*, etc. The finished product for Part I should look something like an outline, beginning with Thesis (argument), key subpoints, and evidence filled in between.

You should put things in your own words rather than simply quoting from the author. There is no set minimum or maximum page limit here. Your outline should be complete whether it takes 1 page or 3 pages.

Part II: Evaluating History

Considering the book as a whole, write a two-page commentary noting which arguments you found most persuasive and why and which arguments you found least persuasive. Is it possible that more than one of these authors is right? Having read this book, how would you answer the questions "When did Southern segregation begin?" and why does it matter?

Late Papers will be marked down 1 letter grade for each day they are late.

EXAMS

1. There are two midterm exams (one fairly late in the term) and no final exam. The format for both exams will be essay and/or short answer identifications.

2. I will distribute a list of potential questions one week in advance of each exam from which I will draw the exam.

2. On both exams we will be using blind-grading.

3. Exam Dates:

Midterm Exam #1: Monday, March 4 (in class).

Midterm Exam #2: Wednesday, April 24 (in class).

Our second midterm will be as close to a final exam as we will get. In place of a final exam, there will be a short written assignment due the final day of class relating to the material covered in the last part of the course. No late papers accepted.

Make-up exams will take place at the regularly scheduled make-up time for the Spring Semester. Permission to take the make-up exam must come from Professor Welke. I will only grant permission where a student has a documented University conflict; medical emergency; or family tragedy.

HISTORY OF A DAY PAPER

In a paper of 6-7 pages you will write the history of one day in a year assigned to you by your T.A. The date, within that year, will be your birthday.

Sources: You will use at least two newspapers as primary sources. The best starting place is the *New York Times* which is on microfilm in the basement of Wilson Library. Start by looking up your date. That will tell you the news people read about when they got up on your day. It will not, however, tell you what happened that day. For that you have to look at the day after (and

perhaps several more after that if you happen onto an unfolding story). If you find yourself in the middle of some event (for example, a scandal of some sort or a foreign negotiation or a battle) you can use the Index of the *NYT* to find other stories on that topic around the same time. You should also use a more local paper (Minneapolis or St. Paul -- or if you wish a paper from a place of your choosing) or a paper directed at a more particular audience (e.g., *The Chicago Defender*, *The Revolution*) to get at least one more perspective on what happened and how people in different places or from different perspectives learned about the event or didn't. Pay attention not only to "big news" -- the stuff on the front page -- but also to editorials, letters to the editor, feature articles, fashions and advertisements. These will give you insight into the history of everyday life at the time, what people did in their free time, what newspaper editors thought women or men were interested in, what problems advice columnists were asked about, what humor was like.

Guidelines for drafts (your T.A. will give you additional instructions as well):

1. CITE YOUR SOURCES. Throughout your paper a reader should be able to tell where you are getting your information. Do this with footnotes using the form suggested in the University of Chicago Manual of Style. It is better to have too many than too few citations. For newspaper articles the following examples will usually work:

Jane Smith, "Technology Changes Work Patterns," *New York Press*, January 3, 1955, Section C, p. 4.

"Earthquake Shakes Cleveland," *Cleveland Tribune*, July 18, 1903, p. 1.

2. ANALYSIS IS AS IMPORTANT AS EVIDENCE. You will be tempted to give lots of information from the papers you read without stopping to ask what it means. You need to be asking yourself questions about what you read. Ask yourself if there were evident biases in the ways news was written and presented. Could you tell much about what cultural or political attitudes seemed dominant? Why do you think certain issues were prominent and others less so? Don't take what you read at face value. Someone wrote those stories -- highlighting some facts and ignoring others, perhaps even getting it wrong. Some editor decided what went on which page and wrote the headlines. Ad agencies designed ads with specific markets in mind, etc.

3. THINK ABOUT LINKAGES, THEMES. One of the difficult things about this assignment is the range of information in a newspaper. In most cases, you will need to narrow the number of things you discuss in order to avoid jumping from one to another ("and then, . . . and then"). Difficulty with transitions can signal you that you need to think about how these issues are linked. In most cases you can move beyond recognizing coincidence (it all happened on the same day) to think about what it means that these things were simultaneous. It helps to know something about the broader context (from your textbook, lecture, or discussion). Sometimes juxtaposition is very effective (the dramatic and the mundane, the international and the local), but it does not mean much without analysis. Evidence does not speak for itself!

4. VERBS: Be consistent with verb tense. In a history paper, past tense is usually most appropriate. Also avoid passive verbs whenever possible. They obscure the actor(s).

First Draft Due: Week V (in section. Your T.A. will assign the specific date.

Final Draft Due: Week X in section. Your T.A. will assign the specific date.

Late Papers: Late papers will be marked down 1 letter grade for each day they are late.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

GRADES AND GRADING POLICIES

University-wide grading standards are as follows:

- A - achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements
- B - achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements
- C - achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect
- D - achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements
- S - achievement that is satisfactory, which is equivalent to a C- or better
- F(or N) - Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I (see also I)
- I - (Incomplete) Assigned at the discretion of the instructor when, due to extraordinary circumstances, e.g., hospitalization, a student is prevented from completing the work of the course on time. Requires a written agreement between instructor and student
- Academic dishonesty in any portion of the academic work for a course shall be grounds for awarding a grade of F or N for the entire course.

SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

Scholastic Dishonesty is broadly defined as “any act that violated the right of another student with respect to academic work or that involves misrepresentation of a student's own work. Scholastic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) cheating on assignments or examinations, plagiarizing, inventing or falsifying research and other findings with an intent to deceive, submitting the same or substantially similar papers (or creative work) for more than one course without consent of all instructors concerned, depriving another of necessary course materials, and sabotaging another's work.” It is your responsibility to know what scholastic misconduct is

and to avoid it. I will report all instances of scholastic dishonesty to the Student Scholastic Conduct Committee.

What is Plagiarism? Plagiarism is the use of written material (such as quotations) and/or ideas from the work of other scholars or writers without acknowledgement. While I reserve the right to treat cases of unintentional plagiarism, you should be aware that the College of Liberal Arts recommends a failing grade for any plagiarized assignments. A second offense would result in a failing course grade.

For more information on academic conduct, contact the Student Dispute Resolution Center, 107 Eddy Hall (625-5900).

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, religion, color, sex, national origin, handicap, age, veteran status, or sexual orientation. For further information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action in 419 Morrill Hall (624-9547).

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is defined as “Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature when (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic advancement, (2) submission to, or rejection of, such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions or academic decisions affecting the individual, or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment.” All faculty, supervisors, and administrators are legally and ethically obligated to take appropriate action to prevent sexual harassment. For further information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action in 419 Morrill Hall (624-9547).

DISABILITIES

The University will provide accommodation for students with special needs. Please inform me if this may apply to you. For further information, contact Disability Services, 180 Gateway Center (626-1333).

Welke, Barbara. Syllabus, History 1302: United States History, 1865 to Present. History Department, University of Minnesota. 22 Jan. 2003.