History 630 Graduate Seminar in U.S. History
Instructor: Jeffery C. Livingston
Spring 2010

COURSE DESCRIPTION
University Catalog description for History 630: “Intensive reading in selected periods of United States history. Written and oral presentations of reading and research required.”

This semester you will read, intensively and extensively (on average 150 pages per week), in 20th century U.S. history. I have assigned important works examining the modern history of U.S. foreign relations; politics, in a broad sense (race, class, nationalism and their interactions, conspiracism, conservatism and the Reagan era); women and feminism; evangelical Christianity; and the intersections of race, popular culture, and cultural dissent. Obviously, there are important topics that we will not cover. I hope, however, that the reading list will offer you a useful foundation for understanding some of the broad contours of modern American history.

REQUIRED BOOKS (all available in campus bookstore)
Gary Gerstle, American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century (Princeton, 2000)
Kathryn Olmsted, Real Enemies: Conspiracy Theories and American Democracy, World War I to 9/11 (Oxford, 2009)

ONLINE ARTICLES
Thomas Bartlett, “Some Evangelicals Find the Campus Climate Chilly—but Is That about Faith, or Politics?” Chronicle of Higher Education 54 (Sept. 28, 2007): B6-B8, access at http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail?vid=4&hid=112&sid=e8f9a7cf-edaf-408b-b0da-6f07c518a041%40sessionmgr104&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=aph&AN=26951500#d=aph&AN=26951500

COURSE STRUCTURE AND ASSIGNMENTS
Class discussion (75 points)
In a seminar, the instructor is a coordinator, not a lecturer. The success of the course largely depends upon the students, who are required to read assignments, write papers, and come to class prepared to share their knowledge and engage in constructive conversation. At each class meeting every thoughtful student—which repeating what another student has just said, without merely stating the obvious or the trivial—should have something substantive to offer in the form of a comment, question, or criticism.
Class discussion co-leaders (20 points)

In a number of class sessions, two students will co-lead class discussion on assigned reading. Discussion leaders should develop a list of seven to ten questions or "talking points" to help generate and guide class conversations. They will email their lists to me by 8 a.m. on the day on which they will co-lead discussion. I will look over the talking points, then meet with the co-leaders in the afternoon, prior to class, to suggest changes if needed.

Book reviews (105 points total)

Every student will write a 2-3 page book review of each work assigned (see below for book review guidelines). The papers will be scored on a scale of one to fifteen, with 11-12 indicating an acceptable effort and 13-15 reflecting outstanding effort. **Graduate-level spelling, punctuation, mechanics, and style are expected, as is graduate-level analysis and critical thinking.** Unless cleared with me ahead of time, late papers will not be accepted.

Peer evaluation (20 points)

Twice during the semester you will grade a book review written by a classmate. You will mark the paper, correct mechanical and factual errors, and make narrative comments regarding form and content. I will then grade your evaluation, utilizing as criteria the accuracy, thoroughness, and utility of your corrections and comments. Each peer evaluation will be worth 10 points. (I'll furnish more detail at the appropriate time.)

Course reflection paper (30 points)

At the end of the semester, you will submit a 5-6 page paper in which you reflect on the reading you have done throughout the term. Drawing on the readings collectively, what major historical themes do you identify? Which books did you find to be the most informative? Why? What most surprised you and why? What topic(s) not covered by the class reading do you wish we had covered?

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

In a graduate seminar such as History 630, **perfect attendance is a given.** Barring lengthy illness or highly extenuating circumstances (either of which must documented in written form), anyone who misses more than one class will automatically receive an F for the course.

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE**

Week of:

1. Jan. 25  Course Introduction


3. Feb. 8   Book review for Hixson due

4. Feb. 15  NO CLASS: campus-wide furlough day

5. Feb. 22  Book review due for Olmsted, *Real Enemies*  
As well, be prepared to discuss Hofstadter, “The Paranoid Style in American Politics”


7. Mar. 8   Book review due for Gerstle, *American Crucible*  
No office hours on Wednesday, Mar. 10, due to instructor’s mandatory unpaid furlough day

   Mar. 15  NO CLASS: Spring Break

1st peer review due
9. Mar. 29 Be prepared to discuss Hart, *That Old-Time Religion in Modern America*, Introduction, Part One, and Bartlett, “Some Evangelicals Find the Campus Climate Chilly--but Is That About Faith, or Politics?”

10. Apr. 5 Book review due for Hart, *That Old-Time Religion in Modern America*


   No office hours, Tues., Apr. 20, due to instructor’s mandatory unpaid furlough day


14. May 3 Be prepared to discuss Wilentz, *Age of Reagan*, chapters 5-10

15. May 10 Book review due for Wilentz, *Age of Reagan*

   2nd peer review due

16. May 17 Course wrap-up

   Course reflection paper due

**GRADES** 250 total points

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>7 book reviews</td>
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<td>2 peer evaluations</td>
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<td>Course reflection paper</td>
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<td>class discussion</td>
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**BOOK REVIEWS**

Book reviews should be 2-3 pages in length, typed, 12 point font, double-spaced, one-inch margins.

There is no single formula for writing a book review, but a good one should include the following:

1) Basic bibliographical information in proper format: author, full title, where and when published, publisher, number of pages. This should be at the beginning of the review and it should be “stand-alone” at the top of the first page.

   For example:


   Then skip one line and begin your review.

2) Early in the review say something about the author. Where does (s)he work or teach? Is the author a historian, journalist, etc.? What other important publications has the author written?

**3) Hone in on the author’s argument or thesis. You should state the thesis early in your review, in the first paragraph. Then critique the author’s argument. What are the most important sources that (s)he has used? Is the author persuasive? How could the argument be improved? If the book’s title is misleading, you should note that.

4) Is the book well written? Is it an interesting read? Would you recommend this book? Why or why not? What audience is it written for—specialists, undergrads, general public?

6) Clear economical writing, with proper grammar, spelling, syntax, and punctuation.

   a) Use present tense when referring to what the author writes in the book. For example: “Hall argues that popular religious belief differed greatly from clerical theology in Puritan New England. He demonstrates this by referencing at least 300 diaries written by lay members of Puritan churches in Connecticut and Massachusetts. Even ordinary New Englanders
commonly kept a diary, and Hall makes good use of them.” Above all, be consistent with verb tense. Don’t write “Hall contends” (present tense) in one paragraph and then “Hall argued” (past tense) in the next.

b) If you quote from the book give the page number in parentheses immediately following the quote.

c) Be aware that many professors and editors dislike the book reviewer using the first person (Example: “I find Hall’s argument compelling”). It doesn’t bother me but it might hurt your grade in other courses. You may want to get in the habit of not writing in the first person.

d) Write as economically as possible. Never use 10 words when 7 will suffice. For example: “The town of New Harmony, located in Indiana, was founded as a utopian community.” Stay alert to repetition.

e) Be careful with sentences containing multiple clauses; more often than not you’re better off writing several short sentences rather than one of near-paragraph length.

f) When employing verbs, avoid passive voice because it lacks vigor. With passive voice the subject receives the action instead of doing it and the writing is less interesting. Simple example: Instead of “The coolant pumps were destroyed by a surge of power,” write “A surge of power destroyed the coolant pumps.” Long ago, Mark Twain wrote that passive voice should be avoided, and his advice still holds up.

When writing, do not hesitate to consult a good style manual like *The Chicago Manual of Style* or Kate Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers*, which is a shorter version of *The Chicago Manual*. Others that are always within reach when I write are Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual*, and Andrea Lunsford and Robert Connors, *Easy Writer: A Pocket Guide*. Style manuals are indispensable to even the most gifted of writers, so if you don’t already own any you should buy at least one. There are also some pretty good style manuals located online that I have consulted in the past; you may want to look at the list of grammar and style guides found at http://www.libraryspot.com/grammarstyle.htm.

**N.B.** The type of book review that I am asking you to write is based on the reviews found in *The Journal of American History* and *The American Historical Review*. I strongly urge you to peruse the book review sections of these journals. There are copies of each in Trinity 220 (commonly referred to as “the conference room” by the denizens of the History Dept.) and in Meriam Library.