

MWF 10:30-11:20
History 5b/ US Since 1877
Office 211 Trotter
W 2-4 pm

Fall, 2014
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History Department
Swarthmore College

This course is a survey of American history since the Civil War, mostly since 1877, but including some of the post-war, Reconstruction issues. We start with the famous D.W. Griffiths portrait of the war in *Birth of a Nation*. Examining documents, *NYT* newspaper reports and monographs we will seek to gain an understanding of society and culture. The course goes only to the 1990's as your professor teaches the later period in another course. (US Since 1945)

The course focuses on the struggle for equality and the cultural formations produced in that struggle. Working people built the nation, but their voices are often overlooked in the national scheme of things. We will look to the world of entertainment to see the manifestations of racism, segregation and the anti-immigrant attitudes expressed in the emerging nation. Our purpose is to dig into the issues of criminalization and citizenship as it intersects with the theory of a "colorblind" national state.

Requirements:

Speakers: September 11 and 30th (required) Professors Lani Guinier and Kenneth Mack, both of Harvard Law School. The Second Lecture is about Swarthmore College in 1969.

Exams: Two exams are required, a Mid-term and final exam. Both exams consist of essays and short identifications from the lectures. Students must plan to take the exam on exam day. (50%)

Essays: First two-three paragraphs based on the readings, a short (1-3 pages) essay based on the *NYT* historical newspapers. (15%); a research paper based on documentary sources (35%) We will have discussion sessions in preparation for each paper and each exam.

Movies: *Birth of a Nation*; *Eyes on the Prize*; *Brown v. Board*, *Emmet Til*, *"Watts Then and Now, 1965-1991"* (We will watch some portion of these.)

Attendance is regularly required for this course. The History Department Policy

is as follows: *Students are required to attend all classes for successful completion of the course. Unexcused absences will result in a lower grade.* Reading is also a requirement, the books are on reserve in the Library. Laptops are for notes only, if I find you are checking your email I will revoke the privilege.

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Leslie Hempling in the Office of Student Disability Services (Parrish 113) or email lhempli1@swarthmore.edu to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs.

Syllabus: Please note that not everything is covered in this syllabus, for example we look at the Jim Crow system in the South in the context of building the nation but we do not cover everything in the Gilded Age. Also in order to provide enough time for you to prepare your research paper we delve into the Rodney King Riot way before we have finished the narrative of the Post War Era. While much of this is social history, political history is central to the themes; we cover, for example, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, Richard Nixon and Nelson Rockefeller. Cultural history is an important dimension in the course from Minstrelsy to the movies including Rock and Roll and Rap. We will try to have lively discussions based on what you have read so as to reinforce the readings and lectures.

Books Ordered:

American Social History Project, *Who Built America? Vol 2.*
Douglas Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name*
Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the 20th Century.*
David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusement*
Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns*
Dan Carter, *Scotsboro: A Tragedy of the American South*
Gilbert King, *Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, The Groveland Boys and the Dawn of a New America*

Additional Readings on Moodle:

Karen Shapiro, *A New South Rebellion* ch. 4-7.
Robin Kelley, *Race Rebels*, ch. 4-5
David A. Cook, *Lost Illusions: A History of American Cinema, 1970's*, ch.6
Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, intro, ch 1-2.
Also we will have about 400 pages of Rodney King documents.

Schedule of Classes

Week 1

September 1-3-5

M Introductions, Reconstruction and the Nation

Movie: Birth of a Nation

W Interpretation and History: Forty Acres and Mule

Reading for Friday: American Social History Project, *Who Built America?*

Vol 2., Prologue on Reconstruction, Ch. 1-2. Reading Assignment:

Douglas Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name*

Part 1, complete study questions for Friday's discussion.

F Discussion: What was Reconstruction? How big was the war? Who decided the post war era? What plans were in place, do you need a plan after war? What happened to the newly freed slaves? What happened in the twenty years after the war, how did it change for African Americans in the South?

Reading for Monday: David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusement*, Ch. 1-5.

Week 2

September 8-10-12

M Slavery by Another Name: The Jim Crow South

Movie: Birth of a Nation

Using the Historical *NYT* under Data Bases and the list of Years in Review pick a topic and follow it. Write a short 3-5 page paper based on your readings and attach it to copies of your articles. Due on Wednesday

W Popular Culture, Minstrelsey and Vaudeville

Movie: Birth of a Nation

Reading for Friday: Douglas Blackmon, *Slavery by Another Name*, Part 2 to chapter 12; Prepare a paragraph for discussion time on Friday.

F Discussion: The Wages of Whiteness. Library Sources, Primary and Secondary texts; Vaudeville and Caricature in Popular Culture; also discussion of Blackmon, Part 2.

Reading for Monday:

American Social History Project, *Who Built America?* Vol 2. Ch. 3.

Also chapter 12 of Blackmon and all of Part III, complete study questions.
David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusement*, Ch. 1-5.

Week 3

September 15-17-19

M Lecture: Populism: Rural and Urban Discontent

Reading for Friday Discussion: Read: Karen Shapiro, *A New South Rebellion* ch. 4-7.

W Lecture: Knights of Labor, Anarchism, Socialism and Convict Labor

Reading for Friday: Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible*, Intro, Chapter 1.

F Discussion: The Wages of Whiteness and the Division of Labor.
Here we put together the reading of Blackmon and Shapiro to consider the question of Black and White labor in the United States. Also consider the role of the President, Theodore Roosevelt.

Reading for Monday:

David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusement*, Ch. 9-10. American Social History Project, *Who Built America?* Vol 2. Ch. 4.; Gerstle, *American Crucible*, Ch. 2

Week 4

September 22-24-26

M Lecture: Teddy Roosevelt and the "Square Deal"
Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the 20th Century*. Ch. 3; David Nasaw, *Going Out*, ch 15; American Social History Project, *Who Built America?* Vol 2. Ch. 6

W Lynching and the Politics of Fear: Finish *Birth of a Nation*

F Discussion: How shall we say American Nationalism was formed? What delusions continue to haunt the unity of the nation? *Waving the Flag; Did the War for Democracy change race relations at Home?*
Read for Next Week: Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns* pp 1-94;
Dan C. Carter, *Scottsboro: A Tragedy of the American South*, intro & ch. 1-

4.

Week 5

September 29-October 1-3

M Lecture: The Chicago Race Riot of 1919
David Nasaw, *Going Out*, ch. 16; American Social History Project, *Who Built America?* Vol 2. Ch. 7

W Immigrants: Al Jolson and the Talkies Discussion: Midterm questions.

F Lecture Ford Motor Company, KuKluxKlan and the DAR

Reading Assignment for Monday; Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the 20th Century*.Ch. 4-5; Dan C. Carter, *Scottsboro: A Tragedy of the American South, intro & ch. 1-4*; ; Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns* pp 95-221.

Week 6

October 6-8-10

M Lecture: The Great Depression
Reading Assignment: American Social History Project, *Who Built America?* Vol 2. Ch. 7; ; Dan C. Carter, *Scottsboro: A Tragedy of the American South, ch. 5-6*.

W Lecture: The Golden Age of Hollywood

F Midterm Examinations

Week 7

Fall Break October 11-20

Week 8

October 20-22-24

M Lecture: The Spotlight on Lynching

Reading Assignment: Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible*,ch 4-5
Reading Assignment: American Social History Project, *Who Built America?*

Vol 2. Ch.8- 9; Robin Kelley, *Race Rebels*, ch. 2-3

W Lecture: The Rise of the CIO and the Communist Party

F Discussion: Did we have an apartheid nation? What were the implications for industrial labor? What is the role of culture in defining the limits of social change? If all of the iconography of the New Deal was Nordic, then how could the progressives or radicals change the agenda of Civic Nationalism to be more inclusive?

Reading Assignment: Robin Kelley, *Race Rebels*, ch. 4-5; Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns*, Part 4 “The Kinder Mistress.”

Week 9

October 27-29-31

M Lecture: World War II and the FEPC

Read for Wednesday: Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the 20th Century*. Ch. 4-5

W Lecture: Facsim, Democracy and the Post War Blues

Reading Assignment: American Social History Project, *Who Built America?* Vol 2. Ch. 10; Robin Kelley, *Race Rebels*, ch. 7

F Lecture: the Cold War and the Origins of Civil Rights

Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the 20th Century*. Ch. 6; Gilbert King, *Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, The Groveland Boys and the Dawn of a New America*, Prologue to chapter 10.

Week 10

November 3-5-7

M Lecture: The History of Rock and Roll

Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the 20th Century*. Ch. 7; Robin Kelley, *Race Rebels*, ch. 8; Gilbert King, *Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, The Groveland Boys and the Dawn of a New America* Ch. 11-20

W Documentary: “Eyes on the Prize” *Brown Versus Board of*

Education

F Discussion: The Civil Rights Movement and the Groveland Boys.

Assignment: Read the Rodney King Documents; finish Gilbert King, *Devil in the Grove: Thurgood Marshall, The Groveland Boys and the Dawn of a New America*

Week 11

November 10-12-14

M Documentary: "Eyes on the Prize" Emmet Til
Assignment: Scott Saul, "Gridlock of Rage: The Watts and Rodney King Riots." William Deverell, Greg Hise, *A Companion to Los Angeles*, an ebook in the Library.

W Lecture: Riots or Uprisings
Assignment: "Watts Then and Now, 1965-1991" *Watts, Then and Now: 1965-1991*. Films Media Group, 1998. *Films On Demand*. Web. 13 June 2012. <<http://digital.films.com/PortalPlaylists.aspx?aid=7672&xtid=9208>>.

F Discussion: The LA Riot: (1) What is the relationship between the beating of Rodney King and the workings of racism in America? How was it possible for defense attorneys to convince a jury that the videotape it saw did not depict an excessive or unjustified use of violence? (2) In the burning of Koreatown, what role did racial stereotypes of African Americans and Korean Americans play, and what role did various economic factors play? (3) What, moreover, is the significance of the fact that the L.A. police department, when it responded to the uprising, sent its officers to Westwood but not Koreatown? How, are we to understand the fact that not all of Los Angeles' various Latino communities took part in the uprising? (4) What happened to Watts after the LA riots? What does businessman Brice say about the problems of Watts in 1991? What is the relationship between Black youth and Police? How did the beating of Rodney King change the neighborhood? Were these the apocalyptic events in that they revealed the truth of the city (Saul) and what was that truth?

Read for Next Week: Reading Assignment: American Social History Project, *Who Built America?* Vol 2. Ch. 12

Week 12

November 17-19-21

M The Military Industrial Complex and MLK
Read for Wednesday: Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the 20th Century.Ch. 8 Vietnam*;

W Documentary: "Vietnam A Television History"

F Discussion: What was MLK's position on the Vietnam War? What difference did it make that soldiers in the war were drafted? How many troops fought in Vietnam compared with Iraq? What were the casualties? How did the movie industry respond to the post riot, post Vietnam period? Was this a period of lost illusions as Cook argues? What was more unusual, the enormous hope before the war, or the disillusionment that followed?

Read for Next Week:: American Social History Project, *Who Built America?* Vol 2. Ch. 13.

Week 13

November 24-26

M Lecture: Nixon and the Law and Order Campaign
Read for Wednesday, Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the 20th Century. epilogue*

W Movie: *Death and Politics in Attica*
Reading Assignment ; : Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns* Part 5, "Epilogue"; Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow, intro, ch 1-2.*

Off on Friday for **Thanksgiving.**

Week 14

December 1-3-5

M Discussion: How was Attica a reflection of the times? How did Watergate and the end of the Vietnam war contribute to the tensions in American society? How was giving in to Attica a reflection of the fears about US standing after Vietnam and Watergate? How were the negotiations over hostages conducted? How did the government negotiators frame the issue of the rebellion and the meaning of the nation? How did the shooting begin? Lecture: The End of the Cold War and the Drug War
Reading Assignment: American Social History Project, *Who Built America?* Vol 2. Ch. 14

W Lecture: From the Cold War to War on Drugs

F Lecture: The Age of Colorblindness, Mass Incarceration and the American Crucible.

Week 15

December 8

Review for Finals