HIST 2112: United States History 1865-present  
Spring 2020 (Sec. 03)  
University of West Georgia  
MW 5:30-6:45  
TLC 1200

Instructor: Richard Primuth  
Office: TLC 3103  
Office Hours: MW1:00-2:00pm; MW4:45-5:30; by appt.  
Email: rprimuth@westga.edu (best way to reach me)

**Course Description:** This course is a broad survey of the growth and change within the United States from the end of the Civil War to the present. Through lectures, readings, discussions and other activities we will examine political, cultural, and social themes in this nation’s recent history. We will study not only such events as wars and presidential assassinations, but social issues such as immigration and women’s rights, as well. We begin with emancipation and Reconstruction, move through Progressivism, two world wars, the Civil Rights Movement, the nation’s shift to the right, and end with the administration of America’s first African American president. The course is fairly light in reading but emphasizes development of writing skills. Critical thinking and good analytical skills are essential in today’s workplace and sharpening those skills will be a centerpiece of this course.

**Course Objectives:** In addition to gaining a basic understanding of themes, issues and events in American history since 1865, students will develop critical reading, writing, and thinking skills. Students will come out of the course with a broader understanding of the United States’ place within a global context, the nations’ diversity and the significance to their own lives.

**Required Texts:**  
Online; no cost:  [www.americanyawp.com](http://www.americanyawp.com) (this is the course’s main textbook) Also available as a hard copy if preferred.

“The Triangle Fire: A Brief History with Documents,” By Jo Ann Argersinger (available at school bookstore) OR “Freedom Summer: A Brief History with Documents,” By John Dittmer, Jeff Kolnick, and Leslie-Burl McLemore (only available by ordering online). Buy only one of these short readers, according to your own interests.

**Course Requirements:**  
**Movie Analysis:** You will need to write a 1 and ½ to 2-page analysis of a movie dealing with any topic in American history since 1865. After a short introduction (3 sentences or less) and summary of the movie, the paper should concentrate on the film’s strengths or weaknesses. Was it accurate? Why or why not? The paper needs an introduction, argument with supporting evidence and a conclusion. Movie suggestions include (but are certainly not limited to): Fruitvale Station, A Night to Remember, The Miracle Worker, Argo, Moonlight, Detroit, Zero Dark Thirty, Inherit the Wind, Boogie Nights, Longtime Companion, The Butler, 54, Kill Your Darlings, The Monuments Men, Matewan, Tora!Tora!Tora!, Malcolm X, Ghosts of Mississippi, Silkwood, The People vs. Larry Flynt, Friday Night Lights, Sid & Nancy, Sweet
Dreams, Moneyball, Fruitvale Station, Stonewall, Norma Rae, All the President’s Men, Wonderland, Milk, Apollo 13, Taking Woodstock, Dallas Buyers Club, CBGB, or W. Movies off-limits: Pearl Harbor, Titanic, Saving Private Ryan. You do not need to do any outside research besides the film you pick. (Due Jan 22, in class)

**Book Essay:** A short 2-3-page paper will be due at end of semester that will focus on whichever short documents reader (Triangle Fire or Freedom Summer) that you chose. “As part of the general education of every UWG student, this course aims to teach students to understand the political, social, economic, or cultural dimensions of world or American history. The purpose of this assignment, in part, is to measure the extent to which students in all sections of this course have learned what we have been trying to teach. We will collect and analyze essays from all sections in order to find ways to help future students learn this material more fully.” More details to follow. (Due in class April 1).

**Exams:** There will be three non-cumulative exams given in the course. These exams will be a mix of short identifications and essay questions. **You will need to bring your own blue books** which can be purchased throughout campus. Write exam in PEN ONLY. (Exams scheduled for Feb. 12, March 11, and a final on Mon. May 4 from 5-7pm).

**Class Participation and Attendance:** This will determine a substantial portion of your grade and includes both attendance and participation in class discussions. More than 5 unexcused absences will result in a 0 for this portion of your grade.

**Extra Credit:** You may write a short (1 ½-2 pages) review of a visit during the semester to a history museum, exhibit or site for extra credit. This needs to be a critical essay. Did the site or exhibit seem to have an overall theme or message? Were there historical inaccuracies? What was done well and what was done poorly? Suggested sites include the Atlanta History Center, Historic Banning Mills (in Whitesburg, Ga.), Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum, Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, Margaret Mitchell House and Museum, Pickett’s Mill, Douglas County Museum of History and Art and Roosevelt’s Little White House Historic Site, and the Thomas B. Murphy office museum installation (ground floor of UWG's Ingram Library; this exhibit is viewable any hours that the library is open). Due anytime through end of semester.

**Grading:**

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<td>Movie Review</td>
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<td>Second Essay</td>
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<td>Exam 1</td>
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<td>Exam 2</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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<td>Extra Credit</td>
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**Grading Scale:**

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**Writing Assistance:** This course has several writing assignments constituting 40% of your possible grade. If you are struggling (writing does not come easily to most people) seek help sooner rather than later. Suggestions include:

- The UWG Library website (includes citation and style guides, as well as important history databases such as America: History & Life)
- The Writing Center (TLC 1201)
- Peers (having another pair of eyes proof your work is always a good idea)
- Class Instructor (I am happy to give any help that I can)
**Class Rules:**
- Turn cell phones off during class; this is common courtesy
- No food in class, beverages are fine
- Attendance is expected, and please be on time
- This is an academic environment, show respect for others
- **Academic honesty is expected.** Do not submit the work of others as your own. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and is not tolerated at this university. For details see the Student Handbook, appendix A and the history department statement on plagiarism: [http://www.westga.edu/~history/statementonplagiarism.pdf](http://www.westga.edu/~history/statementonplagiarism.pdf)

**Tentative Course Outline:**

Week 1 (Jan. 6–9): Course Introduction; Reconstruction
Read: Chapter 15

Week 2 (Jan. 13–16): Reconstruction; The West
Read: chapter 17

Week 3 (Jan. 21–23; no class 20th): Industrialization
Read: chapter 16
(1st paper due Jan. 22 in class)

Week 4 (Jan. 27–30): Urbanization/Gilded Age
Read: chapter 18

Week 5 (Feb. 3–6): Progressivism
Read: chapter 20; two documents on CourseDen (Washington & DuBois)

Week 6 (Feb. 10–13): American Empire/WWI
Read: chapters 19, 21
Exam 1: Feb. 13

Week 7 (Feb. 17–20): Modernization & the Great Depression/ Roosevelt and the New Deal
Read: chapters 22, 23

Week 8 (Feb. 24–27): World War II
Read: chapter 24

Week 9 (March 2–5): World War Two/Cold War
Read: chapter 25; Online document “Executive Order 9066.”

Week 10 (March 9–12): Cold War/ American Affluence
Read: Chapter 26
Exam 2: March 12
Week 11 (March 16-19): SPRING BREAK!

Week 12 (March 23-26): The Sixties/Civil Rights
   Read: chapter 27

Week 13 (March 30-April 2): Civil Rights
   Read: chapter 28; Documents posted on CourseDen
   (2nd paper due in class April 2)

Week 14 (April 6-9) The 1970s and Rise of the Right
   Read: chapter 29 (Sections I-V only)

Week 15 (April 13-16): From Reagan to Obama
   Read: chapters 29 (Only sections VI-X), 30

Week 16: (April 20-23): From Reagan to Obama, cont.

Week 17 (April 27): “Catch-up” day

Final Exam: Monday May 4, from 5-7pm (TLC 1200)

Additional information on:

   Americans with Disabilities Act
   UWG Email Policy
   University of West Georgia Honor Code
   Credit Hour Policy

http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf