

George Mason University
Department of History and Art History

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Spring 2021
Wednesdays, 7:20-10 p.m.
Online synchronous

History 622, Section 001: The South Since 1865

"What is southern history? More to the point, what is 'the South'?" So begins Laura Edwards's essay, "Southern History as U.S. History," written to mark the 75th anniversary of *The Journal of Southern History* in 2009. This course examines the history of the American South from the end of the Civil War to the end of the 20th century, starting with such fundamental questions as whether and in what ways "the South" was distinctive in the history of the United States. We will begin by exploring the nature of southern society at the point of emancipation, then examine how white southerners reestablished their political, economic, and cultural dominance. Diverse readings on the late nineteenth and early twentieth century will bring us to the period when the (supposedly) "solid South" began to crack: namely, the New Deal. Recent scholarship on "the long civil rights movement" and the "long backlash" will frame our study of the South in the second half of the twentieth century, culminating in reflections on recent historical and historiographical trends.

Throughout the course, we will employ gender as a category of analysis along with region, race, and class. We will also study historiography in addition to history and work to improve students' analytical, writing, and oral communication skills.

Learning objectives:

By the end of this course, students will be able to demonstrate extensive knowledge of the history of the U.S. South from 1865 through the end of the 20th century. They will grasp how white racial dominance was established and maintained through political, economic and cultural means and how race, class, and gender hierarchies and discourses were inextricably intertwined. They will know a great deal about black southerners' efforts to resist and overcome racial oppression using a variety of strategies that shifted over time from Reconstruction through the long civil rights movement. They will also grasp social and economic changes in the South, including the development of cities and suburbs in the once overwhelmingly agricultural region.

While gaining knowledge and understanding of the southern past, students will also develop their critical reading, writing, and thinking skills through written assignments and in-class discussions. They will also develop an understanding of how and why academically trained historians emphasize historiography in their study of the past.

Required books (ordered to campus store; Mason Libraries has e-books of those with an *)

Glenda Gilmore, *Gender & Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (1996).

Stephen Prince, *Stories of the South: Race and the Reconstruction of Southern Identity, 1865-1915* (2014).

- Danielle McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance* (2010).
 Marjorie Spruill, *Divided We Stand: The Battle Over Women's Rights and Family Values That Polarized American Politics* (2017). (Possibly available on Hathi Trust)
- *Gregory P. Downs, *After Appomattox: Military Occupation and the Ends of War* (2015).
 - *Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration* (2003).
 - *Jennifer Ritterhouse, *Discovering the South: One Man's Travels Through a Changing America in the 1930s* (2017). (Not ordered to campus store; if you want to buy a copy, ask me about getting one at my author's discount price).
 - *Robert Korstad, *Civil Rights Unionism: Tobacco Workers and the Struggle for Democracy in the Mid-Twentieth-Century South* (2003).
 - *Jason Morgan Ward, *Defending White Democracy: The Making of a Segregationist Movement and the Remaking of Racial Politics, 1936-1965* (2011).

Course requirements and grading:

- Active, informed, & thoughtful participation including once as discussion leader (30%)
- Seven reading summaries with discussion questions, due by NOON on class days (20%)
- Essay, 5-6 pages (1500-1800 words), due on March 10 (20%)
- Final essay, 10-12 pages (3000-3600 words) due on May 5 (30%)

Participation: I expect students to read each week's reading assignment thoroughly and come to class prepared to ask questions, raise issues, and engage in a thought-provoking conversation. I will do my best to evaluate participation more on the intellectual quality than on the sheer quantity of a student's comments, but quantity is also important: students who are eager to talk demonstrate familiarity with the readings and provide intellectual stimulation for the whole group.

Each student is responsible for leading the discussion once per semester. Often, this will mean being a co-leader, and I encourage co-leaders to coordinate in advance. A sign-up sheet with contact information will be posted on Blackboard. By noon on their chosen day, discussion leaders must submit a page of notes outlining discussion topics and specific questions they want the group to discuss. Discussion leaders are also responsible for keeping the conversation going and jumping in if it lags.

Reading summaries: Over the course of the semester, students must submit SEVEN reading summaries of 300-400 words each. Summaries are due by NOON on class days, and it is up to you to decide which weeks' readings you want to write about. Although I'm calling these short papers "summaries," I want them to include an analytical response. **Write one paragraph that summarizes the work's arguments and scholarly contributions and a second paragraph that evaluates the work for its sources, methods, and interpretations. Include at least 2-3 substantive questions you'd like to make sure we discuss in class.**

First essay assignment: By March 3, I will provide 2-3 essay prompts designed to help you synthesize our first several weeks of readings. I expect your essays to be 5-6 double-spaced pages (1500-1800 words) in length, with Chicago-style footnotes and bibliography. (For a brief guide, see http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html and make

sure to choose Notes and Bibliography Style). Essays are due via Blackboard by the start of class on March 10.

Final essay: The final essay needs to demonstrate familiarity with the readings from the second half of the course plus **three additional scholarly books** (or the equivalent in books and articles) that will allow you to write a focused historiographical discussion. Some suggested topics are the impact of the Great Depression and/or WWII in the South, civil rights historiography, or scholarship on the rise of conservatism since the New Deal. However, the direction you choose is up to you. A Chicago-style bibliography of the readings you plan to discuss is due on April 7 and should be included with the final essay.

Course schedule and readings:

- Jan. 27** **Course introduction**
 Laura F. Edwards, "Southern History as U.S. History," *Journal of Southern History* 75 (August 2009), 533-64 (e-journal via Mason Libraries)
- Feb. 3** **The End of the Civil War**
 Downs, *After Appomattox*
- Feb. 10** **Reconstruction**
 Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet*, pp. 1-10; 163-476
- Feb. 17** **Race, Region, and Southern Identity**
 Prince, *Stories of the South*
- Feb. 24** **The Progressive Era, Southern-style**
 Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*
- March 3** **Jim Crow Beyond Black and White**
 See readings posted on Blackboard
- March 10** **No class meeting; first essay due**
- March 17** **The New Deal and the Start of the Long Civil Rights Movement**
 Ritterhouse, *Discovering the South*
 Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal of American History* 91 (March 2005), 1233-1263 (e-journal via Mason Libraries)
- March 24** **Labor and Civil Rights**
 Korstad, *Civil Rights Unionism*
- March 31** **The Civil Rights Movement**
 McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street* and *Eyes on the Prize* episodes linked on Blackboard

- April 7** **The Long Backlash and the Rise of the Sunbelt**
Ward, *Defending White Democracy* and additional readings on Blackboard
- April 14** **The 1970s**
Spruill, *Divided We Stand*
- April 21** **Continuing Contests over Southern Identity**
Readings on Blackboard
- April 28** **Charlottesville and Beyond**
Readings on Blackboard

Final essay due by 11:59 p.m. on May 5

Class policies and additional information:

Academic Integrity: I expect students in this course to live up to George Mason University's Honor Code, which states: "Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work." I will pursue any concerns about academic dishonesty and will report suspected students to the University's Honor Board for disciplinary action, including a failing grade in the course.

Email addresses: Students must use their GMU email addresses to send and receive messages about this class. I am not supposed to reply to emails sent from non-GMU addresses.

Attendance and late paper policy: Students may miss a single class without penalty; however, even one absence is strongly discouraged and any additional absences will significantly affect the course grade. Please contact me well in advance of any necessary absence.

I will accept late papers with the penalty of half a letter grade for every 24-hour period past the deadline.

Accommodations: Students who require academic accommodations should email me as soon as possible and must make arrangements through Disability Services: <https://ds.gmu.edu/> or 703-993-2474.

Resources and other useful information:

Writing Center: <https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/> or 703-993-1200

Learning Services: <https://learningservices.gmu.edu/> or 703-993-2380

Counseling and Psychological Services: <https://caps.gmu.edu/> or 703-993-2380

Last day to drop without tuition penalty: February 6

Last day to drop with tuition penalty: February 16