HIST 2112: U.S. History since 1877, Summer 2016

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What is HIST 2112? (Course Information)

First, let me tell you about this document. A syllabus, according to Webster’s 1913 dictionary is “A compendium containing the heads of a discourse, and the like; an abstract.” This document, in other words, is the course in a nutshell. I expect you to read it at the start and refer to it throughout the semester.

Let’s start with the basics.

Who is my professor?

I’m Tom Okie, assistant professor of history and history education. (You can call me Professor Okie, or Dr. Okie.) This is my fourth year at Kennesaw State, where I teach American history, food history, and various methods courses for middle and high school teachers. I earned my Ph.D. from the University of Georgia, and my expertise is in American environmental and agricultural history: my first book, The Georgia Peach: Culture, Agriculture, and Environment in the American South, is a history of the Georgia peach industry since the 1850s, and should be out this fall. This should be a little embarrassing to admit in an era obsessed with the future, but I love history. I love the way learning the history of a place or a people or a time period changes the way I think about life, the way I see the landscape, the way I interact with others.

How do I get in touch with my professor?

- Office: 4093 Social Sciences Building
Office Phone: 470–578–7731
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:30 am to 1:30 pm
Email: wokie1@kennesaw.edu

The best way to communicate with me is via KSU’s email system, phone, or by dropping by my office. Please allow me 24 hours to respond during the week, and 48 hours on the weekend. I will be on campus on Mondays and Wednesdays, and often Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday as well – don’t hesitate to stop by and chat if you have questions or concerns, but of course outside of office hours it’s always best to set up an appointment.

Please note: The University provides all KSU students with an “official” email account with the address netID@students.kennesaw.edu. As a result of federal laws protecting educational information and other data, this is the sole email account you should use to communicate with your instructor or other University officials.

Where and when will we meet?

We’ll meet in the English Building, Room 241, on Mondays and Wednesdays, from 8:00–10:45 am.

That seems like a really long time.

You should try a Maymester sometime – it’s four and a half hours per day. But yes, 2 hours and 45 minutes is quite a stretch. We’ll take at least one break about halfway through.

So what am I going to learn about this semester?

According to the KSU catalog, “This course examines the major themes in the social, cultural, political, and economic history of the United States since 1877, the multicultural nature of contemporary U.S. civilization, and the nation’s role in the global arena.”

My hope is that you’ll finish the course not only more knowledgable about the American past, but also more flexible and reflective in your thinking, more effective in your speaking and writing, and more attentive and empathetic in your reading and listening. To put it in the language of learning outcomes, you should be able to:

1. identify the historical, political, social, or institutional developments of the United States.
2. set people, events, documents, and artifacts in historical context
3. analyze and interpret texts and artifacts (historical traces)
4. summarize, evaluate, and create arguments and narratives (historical accounts)

What materials do I need to have? (Required Materials)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman was an early twentieth century writer, feminist, and social reformer who is most famous for her short story “The Yellow Wallpaper” about a housewife slowly going crazy. *Herland* is her offbeat novel about an all-female utopia in the middle of nowhere, and tells us a lot about life in the early twentieth century and the ideals of the women’s movement and progressivism more broadly at that time. *Herland* is a fictional account, of course, but it’s an excellent primary source.

This book is in the public domain and available in a variety of formats — including audio! see https://librivox.org/herland-by-charlotte-perkins-gilman/ and I don’t mind if you also use these formats for reading or listening. But for class discussion, please purchase or borrow the Signet books version — the physical book, not the e-book — so that we can (literally) be on the same page.


Mark Schultz is a contemporary historian of African American history currently teaching at Lewis University near Chicago. He is a specialist in oral history, and his non-fiction monograph *The Rural Face of White Supremacy* uses dozens of interviews of black and white residents of Hancock County, Georgia, to reconstruct what life was like during the era of Jim Crow segregation. This unusual evidence base, as you’ll see, leads him to some counterintuitive conclusions about the South during this era.

3. DIY Primary Documents Reader

In addition to the two books, we will be reading primary source documents — *traces* of the past from the time period under study — for each class meeting. I would like you to print out these readings in advance and use a notebook or filing system to keep them in order.

Some possibilities:

- a 2 inch binder with at least 7 dividers (one for each week). Use a three-hole punch or plastic sheet protectors to organize the readings.
- have the readings spiral-bound at an office store
- a 3–5 inch accordion file with at least 7 dividers or manila folders

4. Recommended: U.S. History Textbook (for reference only)

I have not assigned a textbook for this course. For background information and additional content, I recommend that you check out from the library or purchase a used copy of a US history textbook. I like Roark, et al, *The American Promise*, but there are many other good ones. You may also follow along at one of the following digital textbooks:
5. Other supplies:

- 3–4 blue or green books for the midterm and final exam
- pens, pencils, paper
- internet ready device such as a laptop or tablet for in-class work sessions
- reliable access to the internet.

How will I be assessed? (Grades and Assignments)

I will give you your final grade based on the following scale:

- A = 900+
- B = 800–899
- C = 700–799
- D = 600–699
- F = 600 and below
- I = Indicates an incomplete grade for the course, and will be awarded only when you have done satisfactory work up to the last two weeks of the semester, but for nonacademic reasons beyond your control are unable to meet the full requirements of the course. Incomplete grades are only valid after submission of the Incomplete Grade form (signed by both the instructor and student) to the Department Chair’s office.

The 1000 point total comprises 4 grade categories, as follows:

- Attendance: 120
- Family Project: 180
- Reading Responses: 220
- Midterm and Final Exams: 480

This grading scheme should make it pretty easy to calculate how you’re doing in the course. Now, let’s unpack the composite parts of your overall grade.

- There’s a grade for Attendance?
- What is the Family Project?
- Ok, what about Reading Responses?
- And the Midterm and Final Exams?
- [Is there a penalty for late work? What is your makeup policy?]
- [Do you care if I use my laptop/tablet/cell phone in class?]
There’s a grade for Attendance?

Yes. There’s an aphorism often attributed to Woody Allen that “Eighty percent of success is just showing up.” As in life, so in this class: if you want to do well on the exams and writing assignments, showing up is the first step. As a kind of incentive, just showing up is worth 12% of your grade: there are 14 class meetings, not counting the final exam, and you have 2 “free” misses, leaving 12 class meetings at ten points each. For each of those, your attendance will be recorded according to the following scheme:

- 10 points: present and engaged
- 7 points: present
- 5 points: tardy / leaving early (10 minutes or less, breaks included)
- 0 points: absent

In other words, if you are present and engaged for at least 12 meetings, you will receive all 120 points possible for attendance.

If you have perfect attendance (present and engaged at all 14 meetings) you’ll receive a 5 point bonus. (125/120 points).

If you miss more than 6 classes (i.e. half the course or more), you will fail the course.

What does it mean to be engaged?

Engagement is that period in a relationship between friendship and lifelong partnership, usually denoted by a diamond ring …

Wait. What?

Sorry, wrong context. (As you’ll learn in this course, context is very, very important.)

Being engaged means:

- wakefulness
- showing with eye contact and body language that you are listening to your instructor and your classmates.
- contributing to the conversation with questions and comments
- taking notes
- not using your phone/tablet/laptop unless instructed to do so

What is the Family Project?

One of the big takeaways of this course is that history is also your story. No matter how long you’ve been in this country, the events and people of the last century and a half shapes your life, whether or not you recognize it to be so. And by the same token, the stories we tell about American history depend a great deal on the individual and communal
perspectives we take into account. (Imagine, for example, an American history from the perspective of Native Americans.) I hope you leave the course recognizing more of the ways that history has shaped you, and more of the ways your own people have participated in the events of the past.

In order to explore some concrete ways that this is true, you will do some family research over the course of the semester. For each week of the semester, you will write a short post that describes what was happening in your family during the time period under study. For example, during week 1, you will write about something that happened in your family in the 1870s and 1880s.

But I don’t know anything about my family that long ago!

Of course you don’t – very few of us do. But there are some resources available to all of us that may help us to find out. The first is simple oral history. Start by trace out your family tree as far back as you can by talking to parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles. The second method is to use Kennesaw State’s access to Ancestry.com to research your family members. I’ll go over both of these in more detail in class.

By Friday of each week, you will write a 3 paragraph, 5–7 sentence post. The first paragraph will describe what was happening in your family, the second how it connects to the American history we discussed that week, and the third how you found out the information (the source). If it’s oral history, briefly describe who you talked to and when/where. If it’s ancestry.com, include a link to and/or screenshot of the page.

Some weeks, you will not be able to find out for sure anything that was happening in your family. You will have to speculate on what, based on what you know about your family and what you’re learning about American history, what might have been happening. This speculation is useful too, because as we’ll discover this semester, history is not just what happened in the past – there’s too much about the past that we simply don’t know. Absence in the historical record is sometimes just as important as presence.

That’s it? Just weekly discussion board posts?

Not quite. At the end of the term, you will compose a narrative of American history, based on your family’s history.

- What my readers think about U.S. history before reading my narrative
- What my readers will think about U.S. history after reading my narrative
- A thematic statement about what your family’s history illuminates American history.
- 2–4 episodes to focus on in your family that support your thematic statement. (In other words, you won’t use every post that you created this semester. Choose the best ones, and the ones that best support your chosen theme.)

Ok, what about Reading Responses?

“Thought does emerge from writing,” the historian Lynn Hunt wrote in 2010. “Something ineffable happens when you write down a thought. You think something you did not know you could or would think and it leads you to another thought almost unbidden.”
You might be in college for any number of reasons – my friends are doing it! KSU has a football team! I need to make more money! – but at least one of those reasons is (or ought to be) to improve your ability to reason through problems and communicate effectively. Which means … writing papers. Unfortunately – or perhaps, from your perspective, fortunately – I can’t grade your writing for every class meeting. So I have placed you into 1 of 6 groups. Twice this term, according to the schedule posted below, you will write two-page reading responses that, to quote a historian friend of mine, Andrew C. Baker – from whom I’ve adapted this assignment – do two things: “show me that you’ve read; show me that you’ve thought.”

Here are some guidelines for reading the documents.

**Before you read**

- Look up the author (textbook index, American National Biography, Wikipedia)
- Think about who audience might be (there may be multiple audiences, especially for politicians)
- Consider the reading’s geographical and chronological context.

**While you read**

- Avoid highlighters: everytime you are tempted to highlight something, think: why does this line/paragraph seem important? And write a note to yourself instead.
- Underline and annotate the most important sentence of each paragraph as you read it.
- Pay attention to tone. Circle particularly revealing word choices that suggest the author’s perspective and/or goals.
- Note connections to other course content (lectures, textbook, other documents)

**After you read**

- Reread the underlined sentences.
- Sketch out the basic outline of the argument on a different piece of paper or digital document
- Think about and answer these questions
  - What was the central issue being addressed?
  - Why now? What inspired the writing of this document? How is it a product of its times?
  - How does this document reflect the author’s position, experience, culture, etc.?
  - How would someone from a different position, experience, culture, etc. respond?

**Writing your response**

For your scheduled readings, you will post to the discussion group for that reading a 500-word reading response by Friday at 8am the week prior to the discussion. After reviewing submissions, I will open the discussion board for the rest of the class to see so as to orient in-class discussions.

Every reading response should:

- Show you read
  - Using your notes and underlines, briefly summarize the argument in your own words. Summary is harder than
it looks. Going line by line (First he says … then he says … ) can be excellent when note-taking, but not when writing. You have to determine what is most important and write accordingly.

- One or two well-chosen quotations can help, but do NOT large sections of text (no block quotes).
- Show you thought (analyze, interpret and otherwise look beyond the document).

i. Compare the document to at least one other document we read (required if we read multiple documents)

ii. Pick at least one of these:
   - Demonstrate how the document deepens your understanding of major themes from either the lectures or the textbook readings
   - Use this particular document to generalize about the perspective of a larger group of people

Other guidelines:

- Please title your response (“thread”) with the readings and/or authors you address
- Keep your response to 500 words or less
- Use paragraphs to separate your summary and your analysis/interpretation.
- Use proper punctuation, spelling, and grammar
- First person pronouns (I, me, my) are fine
- Cite quotations parenthetically (author, page # if appropriate)

**Reading Response Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fails to meet (C)</th>
<th>meets (B)</th>
<th>exceeds (A)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>summarizes the reading(s) fairly and succinctly (shows us that you read)</td>
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<tr>
<td>provides a sound interpretation or analysis of the reading(s) (shows us that you thought)</td>
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<tr>
<td>compares the reading(s) thoughtfully to other course content (other readings, lectures, discussions, textbook)</td>
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<tr>
<td>uses well-integrated and cited quotations from the readings and/or outside sources as evidence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>is free of major errors (grammar, spelling, formatting, length)</td>
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**Panel Discussant Preparation**

Each group will have 2 chances to serve as *panel discussants* for the day’s readings. You will come to class on your group’s day prepared to summarize the readings (based on your reading response) and to pose questions for classroom discussion. You should use the readings discussion board to strategize with your group for the day’s
discussion. Your participation on the discussion board and in class will be worth 10 points each time you lead discussion.

And the Midterm and Final Exams?

The midterm and the final exams will test your ability to perform the skills we practice in class and in other assignments. They will include both so-called “objective” items (multiple choice, true false, matching) and short essays.

Is there a penalty for late work? (Late Work and Makeup Policy)

Work is due on the day and time listed in the syllabus/instructions/D2L. Late work will be eligible for 10% fewer points for each 24 hour period it is late. For example, if an assignment is due at 11:00 am, it will be eligible for 90% of the points at 11:01 am, and 80% percent of the points the following day at 11:01 am, and so on.

As noted above, I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. If you have a legitimate excuse (serious illness, death in the family, etc.), you may be allowed to make up a missed midterm or final exam. If you anticipate missing a midterm exam or the final exam, you must contact me prior to the scheduled date and time of this assignment (e-mail is preferable in this case). Failure to do so will result in an automatic grade of zero for that assignment. Make-up exams will only be given to those students who can document a serious medical emergency or personal crisis.

Do you care if I use my laptop/tablet/cell phone in class? (Technology Policy)

Yes, I do. I love my devices as much as the next person, but there is an increasing amount of evidence that they are debilitatingly distracting. See, for example:


So during the class meetings, this will be a low-tech course. You’ll need paper, pen or pencil, the readings for the day, and a willingness to interact with others face to face. Unless otherwise noted, you will not need laptops, tablets, smartphones, cameras, etc. Please keep them turned off and put away – you can think of it as your three-hour digital detox, if you wish.

If you’re using your device during class, I may ask you to leave, in which case you will be counted absent.
What should I be doing to keep up with the course? (Course Schedule)

I’m glad you asked. I’ve outlined the first three meetings of the course below and will finish the schedule by the end of this week. Please note that this schedule will likely change somewhat as we go through the term. I will post changes to D2L.

1. Wednesday, June 1

- Topics:
  - Introduction to the Course
  - Civil War and Reconstruction
- Discussants: None
- Read: In-class only
  - General William T. Sherman’s Special Field Order No. 15 (1865)
  - Edisto Island Freedmen’s Petition (1865)
- Do:
  - **By Friday, June 3, 8am**: Group 1 and 2 Post Reading Responses to Discussion Board
  - **By Monday, June 6, 8am**: Create DIY Reader
  - Purchase/borrow *Herland* and *The Rural Face*
  - Start doing some initial family tree research for next week (your first post will be due Friday, June 10, at 8am)

2. Monday, June 6

- Topics:
  - Reconstruction
  - The Return of White Supremacy
- Read:
  - Booker T. Washington, Speech at the Atlanta Exposition (1895) [http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/39](http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/39)
  - Sen. Benjamin R. Tillman on African Americans in the South (1900) [http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/55](http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/55)
- Discussants: Group 1
- Do:
  - **By Monday, June 6, 8am**: Print out the first week of DIY Reader
  - **By Friday, June 10, 8am**: Groups 3 and 4: Post Reading Responses to Discussion Board
  - **By Friday, June 10, 8am**: Post Family Project Update 1
  - Purchase/borrow *Herland* and *The Rural Face*
  - Start doing some initial family tree research for next week (your first post will be due Friday, June 10, at 8am)

3. Wednesday, June 8
Topics:
  - The Second Industrial Revolution
  - Populism
Discussants: Group 2
Read:
  - Andrew Carnegie, “Wealth” (1889) http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5767
  - Mary Lease, “A Woman’s Work” (1890) http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5303/

Do:
  - By Friday, June 10, 8am: Group 3 and 4 Post Reading Responses to Discussion Board
  - By Friday, June 10, 8am: Post Family Project Update 1
  - By Monday, June 13, 8am: Print out remaining pages of the DIY Reader
  - Purchase/borrow Herland and The Rural Face
  - Review notes and readings from the week. What questions do you still have? What important themes emerge?

Are there any other policies that affect my success in the course? (Policies)

Yes, yes, yes. There are.

As a student at Kennesaw State University, you are first of all under the jurisdiction of the Student Handbook: http://catalog.kennesaw.edu/content.php?navoid=2247&catoid=27

Especially pertinent to this course are Academic Integrity and ADA Compliance.

Academic Integrity

Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Section 5. C of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the university’s policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to university materials, misrepresentation/ falsification of university records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious/intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards. Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the Department of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (SCAI), which includes either an “informal” resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct’s minimum one semester suspension requirement. See also https://web.kennesaw.edu/scai/content/ksu-student-code-conduct.

Please note:
  - Students who violate any provision of this code will receive zero points on the assignment.
  - Students with two violations will receive a final grade of F.
If you have any questions about plagiarism, please ask before turning in the assignment. You may also wish to consult the following websites.

- http://plagiarism.org/
- http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml
- http://www.library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html

**ADA Compliance**

Students with qualifying disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act who require “reasonable accommodation(s)” to complete the course may request those from Department of Student Success Services. Students requiring such accommodations are required to work with the University’s Department of Student Success Services rather than engaging in this discussion with individual faculty members or academic departments. If, after reviewing the course syllabus, a student anticipates or should have anticipated a need for accommodation, he or she must submit documentation requesting an accommodation and permitting time for a determination prior to submitting assignments or taking course quizzes or exams. Students may not request retroactive accommodation for needs that were or should have been foreseeable. Students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Student Disability Services is located in the Carmichael Student Center in Suite 267. Please visit the Student Disabilities Services website at http://www.kennesaw.edu/stu_dev/sds for more information, or call the office at (470)578–6443, or email them at sds@kennesaw.edu