**Marsha Weisiger – Hist 203 Syllabus- p. 1 –**

CRN33475 Spring 2013

HISTORY 203
INTRODUCTION TO RECENT AMERICAN HISTORY
Progressivism-Present

**Lecturer:** Professor Marsha Weisiger  
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**Office hours:** MW 3-4:00, or by appointment

**Teaching Assistants:** John Bedan  
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**Class Schedule:**  
MW 12:00-1:20 p.m., 282 Lillis

**TIP:** Read this syllabus carefully and refer to it often. It offers a “road map” to this course, explaining grading policies, providing weekly reading assignments, and alerting you to in-class activities and lectures that require advance preparation. Adjustments to the lecture schedule, however, may occur at my discretion and will be announced in class.

**Introduction**  
This course surveys the history of the United States from roughly the 1880s through 1980 and beyond, with a focus on social, cultural, and political history. We will approach our understanding of American history by following three major themes that weave their way throughout the modern era: (1) progressivism in American political and social thought, (2) the history of social movements, such as the labor, civil rights, feminist, environmental, and conservative movements, and (3) the rise of the United States as a world power. Throughout we will pay special attention to the roles of race, class, gender, ethnicity, and environment in the American experience. Moreover, we will emphasize the ways that people have changed history through individual and collective action. No single lecture will provide a complete understanding of any course theme. Rather, I will trace each of these strands of history through several lectures extending throughout the term, and the readings will provide further insight.

The study of history involves more than the simple mastery of facts. Historians interpret facts and give them meaning, and those interpretations change over time as society and its concerns
change and as new facts come to light. I will emphasize the interpretative nature of history and encourage you to ‘think historically,’ to try to see the past through the eyes of those who lived it.

Course Objectives:
By the end of the semester, you should be able to:
● Trace the historical development of the major course themes
● Recognize and articulate the diversity of the American experience
● Analyze and interpret “primary” sources of historical information
● Identify an author’s argument or thesis
● Write an essay and develop your own argument

Readings
Required Books (available at the Duck Store):
Victoria Bissell Brown and Timothy J. Shannon, Going to the Source
Ann Moody, Coming of Age in Mississippi

The textbook, U.S.: A Narrative History, will provide a broader context for my lectures, and Going to the Source provides primary sources, the evidence that historians use to reconstruct and understand the past. They will provide an opportunity to analyze and interpret a variety of sources and get a feel for the ways in which historians “make history.” Ann Moody’s Coming of Age in Mississippi, an autobiography, is another type of primary source. I will post additional readings on Blackboard. Expect to read 50-75 pages per week.

Please note that the reading assignments are listed at the end of each week in the syllabus, but they are due by the date of your discussion section.

Grading
Short analytical papers on primary source readings 100 pts.
Short analytical/reflection paper on Coming of Age in Mississippi 50 pts.
Mid-Term Exam 100 pts.
Final Exam 100 pts.
Discussion Section participation 100 pts.

Total 450 pts.

Grading Scale
441-450 = A+ 423-440 = A 405-422 = A-
396-404 = B+ 378-395 = B 360-377 = B-
351-359 = C+ 333-350 = C 315-332 = C-
270-314 = D <270 = F

Failure to complete any component of the course may result in failure of the entire course.
Grading Rubric
The following rubric provides guidance to the GTFs when grading your essays.

A (Superior essay) – Your thesis is clear and insightful. Your argument is identifiable, reasonable, and sound, and all of the ideas in the paper flow logically. You have selected appropriate evidence and/or quotations and analyzed them well. You support every point with more than one example. You anticipate and successfully defuse counter-arguments. You recognize different points of view, as shown in your analysis. You make insightful connections between the past and the present, when appropriate. Each paragraph has a solid topic sentence, and your conclusion is persuasive. Your sentence structure, grammar, and spelling are excellent. You are not over-wordy. You have cited all quotations and evidence.

B (Good essay) – Your thesis is clear, but it may not be particularly insightful or original. Or it may not be easily identified, except by the end of the essay. Or it may be implicit, not explicit. You do a solid job of synthesizing material, but you do not develop your own insights. Your argument usually flows logically and makes sense, but gaps in logic exist. You give evidence to support your argument, but perhaps it’s not the best evidence you could have chosen or is skimpy. Your writing style is clear, but you overuse passive voice or are wordy or redundant. Your sentence structure, grammar, and spelling are generally clear, but there are occasional lapses. You have cited all quotations and evidence.

C (Fair essay) – Your thesis is unclear, vague, or difficult or impossible to identify and provides little structure for the paper. Or it is a statement of an obvious point. Your understanding of the topic seems simplistic. Your paper is a loose collection of statements, rather than a cohesive argument. It wanders from one thing to the next without logic. You have few or no topic sentences, and you have not organized your paragraphs into a coherent framework. Your examples are few, weak, vague, inappropriate, or inaccurate, so that you fail to support your argument. You offer quotations but do not analyze their meaning or show how they support your argument. Your writing is unclear, padded, and riddled with problems in sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, or spelling. Nonetheless, it’s clear you made a good-faith effort.

D (Poor essay) – Your paper shows a lack of effort or minimal comprehension of the subject. It’s not absolutely clear that you have read the material you’re writing about. Your paper is simply a rant about an issue. Your argument is extremely difficult to understand and confusing, owing to major problems in structure and analysis.

F (Failure) – You clearly did not read the material you’re writing about, or you plagiarized part or all of your paper.

This grading rubric is based on standards adopted by the history department. For the department’s official standards, see: http://history.uoregon.edu/undergraduate/index.php.

Examinations (200 total points)
There will be two exams (a mid-term and a final). Both will have three sections: a matching section (20%), a short answer section over the textbook and readings (20%), and an essay section (60%). In the matching section, you will match a name, place, or term to the statement best identifying it. In the short answer section, you will provide brief description of the significance of a term or person. In the essay section, I will give you a choice of questions to answer, drawing on the lectures and readings for the class. In the final exam, there will be two essays, one of which will be comprehensive over the entire term. Each essay will be graded on the basis of the argument you make, the evidence you use to support your argument, your demonstrated understanding of the information and historical interpretations provided both in class and in the readings, and the essay’s overall coherence. We will discuss the exam format in more detail during a review session before each exam. To help you focus your studying, I will
give you a list of possible essay questions and identification and short answer terms from which the actual exam questions will be chosen.

**Short Analytical Papers** (100 points)
For four of the *Going to the Source* chapters, as specified in the weekly schedule, you will write a 500-word analytical paper. Each of these papers is due at the beginning of your discussion section, as indicated in the syllabus. I will provide a set of questions on Blackboard, and you will respond to one of those questions as you analyze the sources. Using your best English, write an essay that states a thesis and makes a well-focused argument to support the thesis by presenting and analyzing evidence from the chapter. You must upload your essay through SafeAssign (on Blackboard) by the time your discussion section begins and bring a hard copy to your section.

**Short Essay on Coming of Age in Mississippi** (50 points)
For this book, you will write a 750-word analytical/reflection paper. I will provide a set of questions on Blackboard, and you will choose one of those questions to answer. Again, using your best English, write an essay that states a thesis and make a well-focused argument to support that thesis by presenting and analyzing evidence from the book. But this time, I also want to see that you’ve thought deeply about the book and reflected on Ann Moody’s experiences. You must upload your essay through SafeAssign (on Blackboard) by the time your discussion section begins and bring a hard copy to your section. You will also select two passages from the book to discuss in section.

**Formatting Your Papers**
All papers must be typed using a Times New Roman 12 pt. font and double-spaced, with 1-inch margins. Please staple your work; do not use covers, binders, or separate title pages.

Citations: If you’re identifying a quotation within an assigned book, you should simply cite the page number in parentheses at the end of the sentence. If you need to cite a source that comes from outside the assigned reading, please cite with a footnote, according to Turabian or the Chicago Manual of Style (there’s a link on Blackboard).

**Discussion Sections**
You must attend the discussion section for which you’ve enrolled. Attendance is required. After your first absence, 5 points will be deducted from your participation grade for each absence. Exceptions will be made only in the event of a documented university-sponsored activity.

You must do the assigned reading before your discussion section and come prepared to discuss the sources and your analysis in class. There are four ground rules: (1) Come prepared for each class by critically reading all the assigned materials. Always bring each week’s readings to class. (2) You must participate each week with thoughtful discussion. (3) Don’t try to lead the conversation astray in an effort to cover your lack of preparedness. (4) Show respect for your classmates’ ideas, even (or especially) when they’re different from your own. Your participation in class each week will count toward your final grade. Expect quizzes, in-class writing assignments, or other activities, which may vary from one discussion section to another at the discretion of your GTF, during weeks when no writing assignment is due.
CLASSROOM POLICIES
Attendance/Tardiness: Attending the lectures is mandatory. We take attendance through quick quizzes on the textbook and the lectures. Be sure to bring your color-coded index cards to class each day, and make sure you turn your card in. Failure to do so will count as an absence.

After your first two absences, 5 points will be deducted for each absence from your total grade. Exceptions will be made only in the event of a documented university-sponsored activity or a protracted illness, at my discretion. On the other hand, if you have the flu or another contagious illness, we would all appreciate it if you would stay home. Email your GTF and count those days among your two absences. We do not want documentation except when there’s been a prolonged absence due to a protracted or contagious illness or another calamity that you can document. Leaving early or arriving after the lecture has begun will count as an absence.

Make-Up Policy: We do not accept graded course work after the class period for which the assignment is due. **We do not accept emailed assignments** (NO EXCEPTIONS); please plan ahead so that you successfully print your work before class. “Make up” exams and late essays will be accepted, at my discretion, only for a documented illness, death or severe illness in your family, unavoidable calamity that you could not have anticipated, or school-sponsored activity in which you are officially representing UO. If you anticipate an absence that does not fall within this make-up policy, we always accept assignments early.

I TAKE PLAGIARISM VERY SERIOUSLY. All work that you turn in must be your own. Any work submitted for credit that includes the words or ideas of anyone else must fully and accurately identify your source with a citation. (By the way, submitting the same paper to more than one class for credit is also academic misconduct.) If you are confused about this or do not understand the consequences of academic dishonesty at the UO—or the ethical issues behind these university policies—please read these guidelines: [http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/](http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/)

In the event of an act of plagiarism, I will impose sanctions, as provided in: [http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx#Academic_Misconduct](http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx#Academic_Misconduct). The minimum sanction will be an F on the assignment, but plagiarism can also merit an F in the course, even for a first offense.

Classroom Etiquette: Please turn off all electronic devices (including computers, except for a documented disability) while in class. Ringing cell phones are my pet peeve; they disturb your classmates and me. Please do not text-message in class. Repeated failure to turn off your electronic devices may result in dismissal from the classroom.

Accommodations: If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please arrange to see me soon. Request a letter from Disability Services that verifies your disability.
WEEKLY LECTURES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1: The Gilded Age
M ● (April 1): How to Think Like a Historian
M ● (April 3): The Gilded Age
Reading Assignment:
- Davidson, U.S.: A Narrative History, Ch. 19-Ch. 20
- Brown and Shannon, Going to the Source, Ch. 2

Discussion section: How to Write an Essay/How to Analyze Sources

Week 2: Progressive Reform
M ● (April 8): The Progressive Response
W ● (April 10): Women, Jim Crow, and the Irony of Progressivism
Reading Assignment:
- Davidson, U.S.: A Narrative History, Ch. 21-Ch. 22
- Brown and Shannon, Going to the Source, Ch. 3

Discussion section: What Can Newspaper Articles Tell Us?
Short essay analyzing the Pullman Strike due

Week 3: Power
M ● (April 15): Empire and the Spanish American War
W ● (April 17): South of the Border
Reading Assignment:
- Davidson, U.S.: A Narrative History, Ch. 23
- (B) Brewer, “Crusade for Democracy: Over There in the Great War” from Why America Fights: Patriotism and War Propaganda from the Philippines to Iraq

Discussion section: How do historians interpret propaganda? (“Crusade for Democracy”)

Week 4: The New Era
M ● (April 22): Great Migrations
W ● (April 24): The New Normalcy and All that Jazz
Reading Assignment:
- Davidson, U.S.: A Narrative History, Ch. 24
- Brown and Shannon, Going to the Source, Ch. 5

Discussion section: What Can Advertisements Tell Us?
Short essay analyzing advertisements in The Crisis due
Week 5: Midterm
M ● (April 29): Consuming America/Review
W ● (May 1): Midterm exam
Assignment:
   Brown and Shannon, *Going to the Source*, Ch. 7

Discussion section: What can folk music tell us?

Week 6: Fear and Hope
M ● (May 6): Busted
W ● (May 8): The New Deal
Reading Assignment:
   Davidson, *U.S.: A Narrative History*, Ch. 25
   Brown and Shannon, *Going to the Source*, Ch. 8

Discussion section: What can public art tell us?

Week 7: The Good War
M ● (May 13): The War at Home
W ● (May 15): It's Bombs!
Reading Assignment:
   Davidson, *U.S.: A Narrative History*, Ch. 26
   Brown and Shannon, *Going to the Source*, Ch. 9

Discussion section: What can court records tell us?
   Short essay analyzing Korematsu v. United States due

Week 8: Cold War
M ● (May 20): Cold War and Alienation
W ● (May 22): Vietnam
Reading Assignment:
   Davidson, *U.S.: A Narrative History*, Ch. 27-28
   Brown and Shannon, *Going to the Source*, Ch. 10
   Begin reading Coming of Age in Mississippi

Discussion section: What can presidential tapes tell us?
   Short essay analyzing Cuban Missile Crisis tapes due
Week 9: Rebellion
M ● (May 27): Memorial Day – No Class
W ● (May 29): Civil Rights Movements
Reading Assignment:
   Davidson, U.S.: A Narrative History, Ch. 29-30
   Moody, Coming of Age in Mississippi (entire)

Discussion Section: Coming of Age in Mississippi
   Longer essay analyzing and reflecting on Coming of Age in Mississippi due

Week 10: Revolutions
M ● (June 3): You Say You Want a Revolution?
W ● (June 5): Conservative Counterrevolution/Review
Reading Assignment:
   Davidson, U.S.: A Narrative History, Ch. 31-32
   (B) Fiege, “It's a Gas: The United States and the Oil Shock of 1973-74,” from The Republic of Nature

Discussion Section: How does the environment shape history? (“It’s a Gas”)

Finals Week
F ● (June 14) Final Exam (10:15-12:15)