

University of Florida
Department of History

AMH 3931: American Lives: Diversity in American History
Section 083C

Keene-Flint 111- Tuesday 7th period- Thursday 7th & 8th Periods

Final Exam- 28D Thursday April 28th 3-5 PM in our classroom (final paper turn-in)

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Office hours: Office Hours- Keene-Flint Hall 217- M 1-2 PM & T & Th 4:00-4:30 PM

Course Content

In this course, we will examine the diversity of the American people and its changes over time from first European contact to the present. In a course that spans over five hundred years, thousands of miles, and millions of lives, we have to be selective in our topics. Thus, although we will move chronologically through these time periods, we will concentrate on some particular themes and topics:

- The interaction between different ethnic groups in American history
- How race and the changing notions of how it is determined helped shape the contours of American history
- The understated importance of disability in American history
- The changing gender roles in American history
- Immigration patterns and their relationship to American history

Classroom Policies

Due to the increasingly technological nature of our society, I find it necessary to address the issues of cell phones in class. Please turn off all of these electronic devices before coming to class, as they are disruptive to the learning environment and distracting to other students. Thank You.

I also need to address tardiness to class in a more formalized manner. Lateness is disruptive and distracting to a positive learning experience. Constant carping on this issue both demeans the class and takes away from learning time. Therefore, I urge you, as responsible adults, to arrive to class on time ready to learn, having done the reading assignments beforehand.

Class attendance is an important component of your learning experience. Since students are adults, a mandatory attendance policy will not be in effect for this course. But it is important to understand that you cannot achieve a good grade in this course without coming to class. The success of this course depends on interaction between me as professor and you as student- therefore preparation and attendance are important for a positive learning experience. Since much of the course is based on in-class discussions and 20% of your final grade is based upon class participation, it is certainly in your best interest to go to class. Class participation is a difficult concept to assess. First, one needs to come to class. Secondly, one needs to come to class prepared- having done the reading & ready to discuss it. Thirdly, one needs to actively engage with the material & the discussion (this does not mean that quiet shy students will be penalized or that students who talk a lot will automatically get a higher participation

grade). Students need to show interest, excitement, & involvement in the class to get a high participation grade.

Students requesting classroom accommodations for disability issues must first register with the Office of the Dean of Students. This office will provide documentation to the student who then must provide this documentation to me. I am more than willing to do whatever is necessary to ensure an optimum learning environment for all students. The e-mail address of UF's Disability Resource Center (DRC) is:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Be aware of the University's policy on plagiarism. Plagiarism is the failure to properly cite and give credit when you use the ideas, words, phrases, or arguments of other people in your writing assignments. The Internet has made this situation more problematic but understand that plagiarists will be caught. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask. All plagiarism offenses will be reported on a Faculty Adjudication Form and forwarded to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. You may get more information on UF's Judicial Affairs process at:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php>

Academic Honesty: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

Grading

Your grade for this course will be determined in the following manner:

Reading Journals	20%	(2 of them at 10% apiece)
Short Papers	20%	(2 of them at 10% apiece)
Quizzes	20%	(2 of them at 10% apiece)
Class Participation	20%	
Final Paper	20%	

**Improvement made over the semester will be taken into consideration in assessing final grades.

Grades will be assigned according to the following scale. There will be extra credit available- the assignment will be given after the midterm.

	A	93-100	A-	90-92	
B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
D+	68-69	D	66-67	D-	64-65
F	<64				

Note: A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution

credit. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx#hgrades>
<http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

You will turn in reading journals twice during the semester. In those journals, you will summarize & comment on the readings you have done for the course. The two short papers (2-4 pages) will focus on the use of the Internet as a research tool. You will be evaluating websites for their content, validity, objectivity, and ease of use. You will be getting specific information about these assignments as the semester progresses. The quizzes are designed to keep you up to speed on class material- They will be composed of multiple choice questions and identifications. The final paper will be a critical reading of a book dealing with the topics discussed in class. You may choose one book from a list that will be given out early in the semester.

Objectives

An underlying assumption of this course is that the analytical skills that you practice here will continue to be useful to you whether or not you ever take another history course. This course will provide practical advice on how students can steadily improve over the course of the semester, in particular in the skills of:

- Reading critically- the ability to read carefully and efficiently to understand the author's main points (and point of view) and to remember important information
- Writing clearly and logically- so as to convince readers of the validity of your interpretation

General Education Objectives for Diversity (D)

This course emphasizes the diversity of cultures and historical experiences of Americans from the beginnings of European contact to the present. Throughout the semester, we will focus primarily on the perspectives of people who have come to be labeled as Americans and how that image of the melting pot fits into visions of American society. The course is fundamentally comparative in examining the diverse histories of particular groups in America as they sought to simultaneously control their own destinies and acculturate into the broader fabric of American life. It looks at racial, gender, and disability formation in the United States in order to understand how these groups have attempted to maintain separate identities while also participating in that melting pot that creates a supposedly unified American culture. Students will be asked to reflect critically on how the historical experiences of diverse American peoples carry implications for the contemporary world, and how their own lives relate to that unified but diverse American culture.

Diversity Student Learning Outcomes to be addressed:

- Knowledge and understanding of where diverse and particular groups of Americans fit within the social and political structures of the United States
- Identification and evaluation of students' social status, opportunities, and constraints in comparative context to that of members of other groups within American society

General Education Objectives for Humanities (H)

This course provides instruction in key themes, theories, and methodologies used in the study of history. Students will engage with critical historical thinking by learning how to read and analyze primary documents as well as secondary sources produced by historians and in turn formulating historical arguments based on these readings. Lectures will examine the ways in which the historiography of particular events, periods, and processes, has changed over time and continues to evolve. In-class discussions are devoted to working out the meanings of crucial concepts such as “slavery” and “citizenship” and debating the impact of multiple perspectives on our understanding of past. The secondary readings provide various scholarly approaches to the issues and problems of a diverse American history while primary sources including government reports, laws, court cases, and treaties as well as speeches, artwork, novels, protest statements, memoirs, autobiographies, and reminiscences offer students the chance to learn to ask how, why, and by whom are historical documents created, to think about the historical, social, cultural, and political contexts in which they are imbedded, and thus to engage in critical thinking about the limitations and possibilities of making meaning out of them. They also learn about the diverse kinds of evidence, including oral histories, and ethnographies that can supplement the documentary record and enrich our understanding of historical perspectives across a spectrum of experience. The question of what sources are available and how they shape historical knowledge and significance is central to this course, focusing as it does on the experiences of indigenous peoples who did not until more recent times produce a large body of documentary evidence of the sort historical are accustomed to rely on. This course is designed to teach students how to use documents so that a variety of perspectives can be gleaned from them, to read closely for biases in these documents, and to think about what can be gained from incorporating a variety of diverse source materials in a wider spectrum of primary sources.

Humanities Student Learning Objectives to be addressed:

- Knowledge and understanding of the historical, theoretical, and ethnohistorical methodologies used by historians to study the diverse groups in the American past.
- Identification and evaluation of the multiple and contrasting perspectives and biases that have shaped and continue to shape the discipline of history
- Effective communication through oral and written expression of the critical thinking and analysis required by the discipline of history

I encourage questions and class discussion. Please do not hesitate to ask both factual and interpretative questions. If you have specific questions on the subject matter or grading, please come see me during office hours. I also encourage you to contact me by e-mail as I respond promptly to questions, concerns, or comments.

Weekly Topics and Reading Assignments

Weekly Assignments

It is of great importance that you complete the assigned readings each week, otherwise you run the risk of falling behind, getting lost, and having to catch up. Also, in order to participate in discussion – which

will represent 20% of your final grade in the course – you need to have the assigned readings complete by the time class meets. The following five books are required reading; they can be purchased at the UF bookstore & textbook stores around town- They are also available for purchase on-line through vendors like Amazon-

The Making of African America. Ira Berlin. (2010) called **Making** in the syllabus
A Disability History of the United States. Kim Nielsen (2012). Called **Disability** in the syllabus.

Why You Can't Teach United States History without American Indians. Susan Sleeper-Smith et al (2015). Called **Indians** in the syllabus.

Born for Liberty (reprint edition) Sara Evans (1997). Called **Born** in the syllabus.

Working Towards Whiteness: How America's Immigrants became White. David Roediger (2005). Called **Working** in the syllabus

COURSE SCHEDULE

Students should note that the syllabus is a guideline and that there may be changes to the class schedule.

Weekly Syllabus & Readings-

It is important that you keep up on the readings, as they will provide the basic knowledge for class lectures and discussions

Week One- Week of January 4:

- Many Americas- An introduction to the history of diversity in America

Week Two- Week of January 11:

- Original Americans- 500 Nations- We will look at Native Americans on the eve of contact with Europeans

Readings: **Disability**- Intro & Chapter One
Born- Intro & Chapter One
Indians- Intro & Chapters One & Two

Week Three- Week of January 18:

- Colonial America- Red, White, & Black- We will examine the interactions between Europeans, Native Americans, and African slaves brought to the New World during the colonial period

Readings: **Making**- Prologue & Chapter One
Disability- Chapter Two
Born- Chapter Two
Indians- Chapter Three

Week Four- Week of January 25:

- Revolutionary America- Are All Men Created Equal? How did the American Revolution and the development of a new nation affect diverse peoples?

Readings: **Making-** Chapter Two
Disability- Chapter Three
Born- Chapter Three
Indians- Chapter Four

Week Five- Week of February 1:

- Antebellum America- Reform & Magnolias- How did slavery and reform movements affect diverse populations?

Paper One Due- due at beginning of class- Thursday February 5th

Readings: **Making-** Chapter Three
Disability- Chapter Four
Born- Chapter Four
Indians- Chapters Five, Six, and Eight

Week Six- Week of February 8:

- Many Civil Wars & Reconstructing What? Examining the Civil War through the lens of race and disability & how did the nation come back together after 4 brutal years of war (or did it?)

Readings: **Born-** Chapter Five
Indians- Chapter Nine

Week Seven- Week of February 15:

- A Gilded Age for Whom? How does industrialization and an increasingly powerful business elite affect diverse populations?

Readings: **Disability-** Chapter Five
Working- Chapter One
Indians- Chapters Ten & Eleven
Born- Chapter Six

Week Eight- Week of February 22:

- Where have we come so far?

Quiz 1 in class Thursday February 25th

Reading Journal One- due at beginning of class- Thursday February 25th

**Week of February 29- March 4:
SPRING BREAK**

Week Nine- Week of March 7:

- The Progressive Impulse & the Great War- Does progressivism mean a “Square Deal” for all?

Readings: **Making-** Chapter Four
Disability- Chapter Six
Born- Chapter Seven
Working- Chapter Two

Week Ten- Week of March 14:

- Closing the Door- Saving the State- The Booming 20s and the Great Depression- differing effects on diverse populations

Readings: **Disability-** Chapter Seven
Born- Chapters Eight & Nine
Working- Chapters Three, Four, and Five
Indians- Chapter Twelve

Week Eleven- Week of March 21:

- The Good War and Good Times- World War II and the post-war high tide of liberalism- what did they mean for diversity?

Readings: **Born-** Chapters Ten and Eleven
Working- Chapters Six and Seven

Week Twelve- Week of March 28:

- Revolution- The 1960s and the rights revolution(s) open up new doors for all (and present new problems)

Readings: **Disability-** Chapter Eight
Born- Chapters Twelve and Thirteen
Indians- Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen

Week Thirteen- Week of April 4:

- Moving towards a quilt of Diversity- The issues of diversity in the modern world

Paper Two Due- due at beginning of class- Thursday April 7th

Readings: **Making-** Chapter Five
Born- Chapter Fourteen
Indians- Chapters Eighteen and Nineteen

Week Fourteen- Week of April 11:

- Whither American diversity in the Future? Are we headed to a fractured or an inclusive society?

Readings: **Making-** Epilogue
Disability- Epilogue
Working- Afterword
Indians- Chapter Seventeen

Week Fifteen- Week of April 18:

- Wrap-up

Quiz 2- in class on Tuesday April 19th –

Reading Journal Two- due at beginning of class- Tuesday April 19th

Tuesday April 19th will be the last day of class

There will be no class Thursday, April 21st

FINAL PAPER: THURSDAY APRIL 28th 3:00-5:00 PM Turn in final paper in our regular classroom