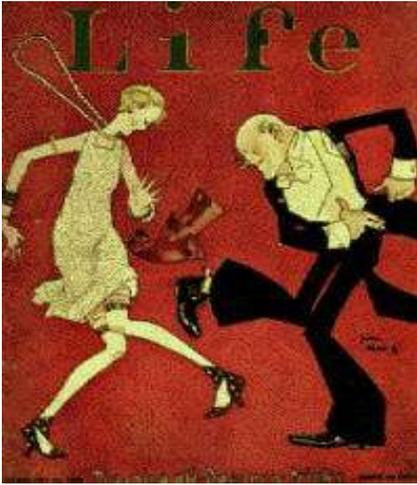


## Race and Violence in the Jazz Age



Class Meetings:  
Flint Hall 119  
Every Weekday 11:00 to 12:15  
Office Hours: Fri 10:00 to 11:00  
& happily by app't

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Images of the Jazz Age in the popular imagination tend to center around romantic notions of hedonism and excess: the booze-soaked writers of the Lost Generation; the fabulous rebellion of the short-haired, pant-wearing, dancing Flappers; the rise of the Hollywood celebrity and the Bohemian rejection of Victorian morality. Without rejecting the veracity of these developments, it is no less true to say that for many Americans the Jazz Age was characterized by searing poverty, xenophobia, and racial violence. In this course we will explore the ambiguities of this era so foundational to our own, and several questions will animate our search: In an era when Americans were attempting to make the world “safe for democracy,” what were the limits of democracy in America? In what ways have the promises of freedom and equality been in tension with American society? What role did violence and the threat of violence play in the race relations of the early twentieth century?

We will begin by reading E.L. Doctorow’s classic novel, *Ragtime*, in the broader context of the progressive era and the turn of the century. Next, we will study the meaning of “Race” in American history as we read *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* by James Weldon Johnson. We will then seek to understand the startling success of the Ku Klux Klan in the years following the First World War. In our final section, students will analyze the case of the “Scottsboro boys”—one of the most controversial and tragic episodes of racial injustice in American history—in order to generate their own arguments about race and violence in the Jazz Age.

## Required Texts

E.L. Doctorow, *Ragtime*

James Weldon Johnson, *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*

Selected documents handed out in class or online

## Grading

Participation & Homework—25%

Essay—25%

Midterm Exam—25%

Final Exam—25%

Attendance is mandatory, as is preparing for class. The course will emphasize discussion of readings, and there will generally be some sort of reading assignment for each day of class. The readings for each day are listed on the syllabus. Note that 25% of your final grade is based on participation—this means that in order to succeed in the course you need to read well and demonstrate *in class* that you are working hard to master the subject.

Here's a general rubric for how I grade participation:

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| A range | This student has not only done the reading but has actively engaged with its main themes, completed homework thoughtfully, and participated in class discussion in such a way that demonstrates a command of the material.                       |
| B range | This student has completed the readings and the homework but may have done so cursorily; speaks in class occasionally in a way that demonstrates satisfactory but not excellent engagement with the material.                                    |
| C range | This student may or may not have done the reading, and the homework does not reflect active engagement with the themes of the text; student does not speak in class, or occasionally does but does not demonstrate engagement with the material. |
| D range | This student demonstrated all the characteristics of a C range student, but may also have been disruptive to class and/or exhibited behavioral issues that compromised a constructive learning environment.                                      |

You may not text in class, nor can you use a laptop. If I notice you texting in class I will mark you absent. **Four absences will result in a failing grade for the participation portion of your class grade.**

There will be a mid-term and a final; the mid-term will cover the material in the first half of the term, and the final will be comprehensive. There will also be one essay in which you will analyze primary historical sources. I will occasionally give in-class quizzes and writing assignments on the assigned readings.

### **Late Work and Make-up Policy**

Late homework and quizzes will not be accepted. If you know you must have an excused absence, contact me beforehand to make arrangements to turn in work before class. Late essays will be accepted, but will be penalized one letter grade per day late.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

### **UF Grade Point Policy**

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	WF	I	NG	S-U
Grade Points	4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	.67	0	0	0	0	0

### **Grading Scale**

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D	65-69
F	0-64

### **Academic Honesty**

Be aware of the University's policy on plagiarism. 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>

## **Week One: The Search for Order in Modern America**

Mon 7/1—Introductions, Class themes, Syllabus, etc.

Tues 7/2—*Ragtime* discussion

READ: *Ragtime* ch. 1

DUE: Pick out one sentence that raises a historical question in your mind, and be prepared to discuss it in class.

Wed 7/4— *Ragtime* discussion

READ: *Ragtime* Part 1

DUE: Three analytical questions about the reading

Thurs 7/4—No CLASS 4<sup>th</sup> of July

Fri 7/5—*Ragtime Discussion*

## **Week Two: What is Race?**

Mon 7/8— *Ragtime* discussion

READ: Finish *Ragtime*

Tues 7/9—What does race mean in America?

READ: “Ideology and Race in American History”

Wed 7/10— Library Day: Newspaper Research

\*\*Meet for class in Library West

Thurs 7/11— Lecture: Violence and The Social Construction of Race

Fri 7/12— *Autobiography* Discussion

READ: *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, ch’s 1-5

## **Week Three: Racial Violence and American Culture**

Mon 7/15— *Autobiography* Discussion

READ: Finish *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*

DUE: Newspaper Assignment

Tues 7/16— Lecture: The American South after the Civil War

Wed 7/17— Discussion: Race, Gender, and Power

READ: Laura Edwards, “The Disappearance of Susan Daniel and Henderson Cooper”

Thurs 7/18—Midterm Exam Review

Fri 7/19—Midterm Exam

## **Week Four: The Ku Klux Klan: Who? When? Why?**

Monday 7/22—Lecture: Race, Communism, and Violence After WWI

Tuesday 7/23—Discussion: The KKK

READ: Maclean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry*, Intro and Ch. 1

Wed 7/24— Discussion: The KKK

READ: Maclean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry*, Ch's 2 and 3

Thurs 7/25— Film: *Birth of a Nation* (1915)

READ: *America on Film*

Fri 7/26— Film and Discussion: *Birth of a Nation* (1915)

## **Week Five: Representations of Race and Racial Violence**

Monday 7/29—Film: *Within our Gates* (1920)

Tuesday 7/31— Film and Discussion: *Within our Gates* (1920)

Wed 7/31— Lecture: Lynching and the American South

Thurs 8/1—Film: *Scottsboro*

DUE: Film response

Fri 8/2—Library Research Day

## **Week Six: The Scottsboro Boys**

Monday 8/5—Writing Workshop

Tuesday 8/6—Final Exam Review

Wed 8/7—Final Exam

Thurs 8/8—Essay Meetings

Fri 8/9—Final Essays Due