

## **Progressive America: TR to FDR**

**History 337, Section 001**

**Monday, 2:00-4:30 p.m., Brock 406**

**Fall 2009**

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History is not merely reading about things that happened a long time ago. Rather, it is an active engagement with artifacts and texts that we organize into arguments about our shared past, our present condition and our imagined future. This course is designed to explore a range of political, social and cultural issues central to the experiences of Americans living through the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. As a 300-level course, it carries a very demanding (but, I promise, rewarding) reading load. The readings are arranged in roughly chronological order, but they cover a range of overlapping topics and time frames.

As with any survey-ish course, this one cannot possibly cover every important event or person or movement that shaped the years between 1870 and 1945. You might feel otherwise when you see the reading list, but I assure you we're barely skimming the surface. So, in our class-time, we will not attempt to be comprehensive. We will examine several large themes through specific examples. What we lack in breadth we will (try to) make up for in depth. A major goal of our class is to become active historians rather than passive readers. To achieve this goal we will divide our class time between short introductory and/or situating lectures followed by class discussion.

I try to persuade students to believe that history is as much about the present as it is about the past. Consequently, a theme in this course will be the impact of all the topics we discuss on the years after 1945. That might seem counterintuitive in a course about what happened *before* 1945, but it's actually essential if we want to understand why historians revisit certain topics and not others. The books we read this semester will challenge us to analyze everything from gender to race, from violence to religion, from work to play. Somewhere in there are also snapshots of real people, places and events. Our job is to weigh the success or failure of each author's attempt to grapple with those things.

To make the most of your class you must engage the material, both reading and lectures, and use them to form your own opinions, arguments, and questions that you will contribute to the in-class discussions. If you have questions about lectures, discussions, the paper assignments, or any other issue related to the class, please do not hesitate to email me, come by my office hours, or set up an appointment. This course fulfills a general education requirement in Humanities and Fine Arts. If you are a student with a disability requiring special assistance or accommodation, please call the Office for Students with Disabilities at 425-4006 and talk to me immediately so we can figure out how to best accommodate your needs.

**Participation and Discussion Forum:** This is a seminar-style course, so the largest percentage of your grade will come from your participation in class discussions and your contributions to the discussion forum. I cannot stress enough how important it is that you take this part of the course seriously. If you do not read the books and come to class every day ready to talk, ***you will not do well in the course***. In addition to in-class discussions, you will be expected to post weekly questions and responses via our Blackboard Discussion Board. There's a forum for each book. Each week, you must post a question of your own by midnight on Sunday and respond to another person's question by noon on Monday. The departure point for our discussion in class will be the issues you've raised on the forum. This is your opportunity to shape the course, so don't waste it. Don't let me be the professor-dictator I secretly want to be.

**Attendance:** Every day you are not in class to participate is a day you lose the opportunity to earn your grade. You get ONE freebie, no questions asked. Beyond that, I will deduct a letter grade from your final grade for each day missed. If illness or some other emergency prevents you from coming to class for more than one day, you must provide appropriate, written documentation of your absence: a doctor's excuse, a printed obituary, a signed letter from the court, or a letter of explanation from the Dean of Students. *Absolutely no exceptions, so please don't ask me.* It is your responsibility to be in class AND to be here on time. It is disruptive to me and to your classmates who are here on time when you show up late. Further, if you are more than 5 minutes late to class, do not bother coming at all.

**Papers:** You will write two 2-3 page (500-750 word) papers on topics I'll explain in class. I will pass out an assignment sheet detailing each of these papers closer to the respective due dates. Each of these papers will count 25% towards your final grade. 2-3 pages is a SHORT paper and I promise that you will be asked to grapple with complicated issues. The challenge will be to deal adequately with these questions in the short space you have allotted to you. In other words, you will have to make a very clear and concise argument.

**Chickamauga Field Trip and Hunter Visit:** We will be going on a field trip to the Chickamauga National Battlefield on October 12. Dr. Daryl Black of the Chattanooga History Center will lead us on a tour intended to highlight issues of Civil War memory and the building of national identity. On that day we will meet in the parking lot of the Chickamauga Visitor's Center at 2:30. I suggest carpooling. We will also visit the Hunter Museum of American Art on November 9 for an examination of relevant art from the period. Adera Causey, the Curator of Education, will be leading this session for us. In order to participate, you need to be a member of the museum. Student Memberships cost \$10.00 and last a full year. The benefits of membership include unlimited admission for a year, discounts at area merchants, and invitation to Hunter special events. You must purchase your membership BEFORE our visit to the Hunter on November 9 (it would be very difficult for their guest services to process 30 new memberships in a timely fashion right before our class meeting). Class will begin 10 minutes after and end 10 minutes before our regularly scheduled time to allow you sufficient travel time from and to campus. (So, we will meet at the Hunter at 2:10 p.m. and end class by 4:20 p.m.) Visit the Hunter Website for directions and hours: <http://www.huntermuseum.org>

**Policies:** There will be no cell phone/portable music device use of any kind in class. If you demonstrate such a lack of respect and interest in the class, you will be asked to leave and you will be marked absent for that day. It is your responsibility to keep track of your assignments and their due dates. When students get up in the middle of the class it is disruptive to everyone. You are adults, if you need to go to the bathroom either go before class or *hold it*. We will be taking a 10-minute break about half way through our period, so there should be no reason for any disruptions. There is no need to talk to other students during class. If we are having a class discussion then all comments should be addressed to the entire class. Talking in class or asking questions of your fellow students is distracting to me and disruptive to those around you. Students exhibiting this behavior will be asked to leave.

**Academic Honesty:** Although this course doesn't lend itself to plagiarism or cheating very well, the University's Honor System still applies. Doing the readings and writing discussion questions based on your own reading (and not book reviews or summaries) is the same as writing a research paper or taking an exam on your own. When you don't read, it's obvious. And coming to class unprepared is the same as cheating, because you're relying on your classmates to inform you about work you didn't do for yourself.

**Grades:**

- 25% Participation
- 25% Discussion Forum
- 25% Paper #1
- 25% Paper #2

**Required Texts (available at the UTC Bookstore and much, much cheaper from online vendors):**

- Arnold, Harriette. *The Dollmaker* (1954; reprint, New York: Scribner, 2009).  
Giddings, Paula. *Ida: A Sword Among Lions: Ida B. Wells and the Campaign Against Lynching* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008).  
Gilmore, Glenda. *Who Were the Progressives?* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002)  
Lears, Jackson. *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009).  
McCullough, David. *The Johnstown Flood* (1968; reprint, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987)  
Rauchway, Eric. *The Depression and the New Deal: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford UP, 2008).

**Weekly Schedule:**

- August 17: Introduction
- August 24: *Who Were the Progressives?* (Part One: Introduction and Part Two, sections 1 and 2, )
- August 31: *Who Were the Progressives?* (Part Two, sections 3 and 4)
- September 7: NO CLASS (Labor Day)
- September 14: *Rebirth of a Nation* (Introduction – Chapter 4)
- September 21: *Rebirth of a Nation* (Chapter 5 – Conclusion)
- September 28: *The Johnstown Flood* (**PAPER #1 DUE!!!**)
- October 5: *Birth of a Nation* (screening TBA)
- October 12: Civil War Memory and National Identity Field Trip  
(meet at the Chickamauga Battlefield Visitor's Center)
- October 19: NO CLASS (Fall Break)
- October 26: *Ida: A Sword Among Lions* (Intro – Chapter 12)
- November 2: *Ida: A Sword Among Lions* (Chapters 13-26)
- November 9: Art as Argument (meet at the Hunter Museum of Art)
- November 16: *The Depression and the New Deal*
- November 23: *The Dollmaker*
- November 30: *The Dollmaker* (**PAPER #2 DUE!**)