

REBUILDING A “RUINED NATION”: THE U.S. SOUTH AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

Dr. William D. Bryan

Following the Civil War, the most pressing question throughout the nation was what to do with the South. Emancipation and four years of war had destroyed the region’s plantation economy and upended its traditional social structure. Many people agreed with former South Carolina planter Ben Allston, who wrote just one year after Appomattox that “we must begin at the beginning again. We must make a new start.” To make this “new start,” people throughout the region sought to create a “New South” to replace their antebellum plantation society. Yet there was no consensus about what this should look like. This seminar will explore the many different visions that Southerners and Northerners alike held for the future of the region—visions with important social, political, economic, and environmental components. Sharecropping, railroad development, industrialization, tourism, and segregation all stemmed from different ideas about the best path for the future of the region. Ultimately, this course will consider why some visions proved more powerful than others, and will explore the extent to which the “New South” was truly something new from the antebellum South.

This class is not designed simply to introduce you to the history of the New South, but to teach you about how historians do what they do. As we read and write about the South, we will pay particular attention to the many different methods of historical research and writing. We will discuss what types of questions most interest historians, how they conceptualize their research projects, what types of sources help them answer important questions about the past, and how they approach the process of organizing and analyzing their research, as well as writing about it. This course will culminate in a semester-long research project that will give you a chance to put the historical methodologies that we talk about in class into practice.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

This seminar is organized around a series of primary and secondary source readings. For the first half of the course, we will spend Monday and Wednesday of each week discussing a different book. I have chosen each book to not only tell us about key themes in the postbellum South, but to introduce you to different styles of research and different source materials. Each Friday we will either analyze and discuss a series of primary sources or discuss a particular aspect of the historical method.

There are six books required for this course, as listed below.

- »Wayne Booth, *The Craft of Research*, Third Edition (ISBN#: 978-0226065663)
- »Scott Reynolds Nelson, *Iron Confederacies: Southern Railroads, Klan Violence, and Reconstruction* (ISBN#: 978-0807848036)
- »Tera Hunter, *To ‘Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women’s Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (ISBN#: 978-0674893085)
- »Charles Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition* (ISBN #: 978-0486431635)

»Duncan Maysilles, *Ducktown Smoke: The Fight over One of the South's Greatest Environmental Disasters* (ISBN #: 978-0807834596)

»Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of a New South, 1865-1913* (ISBN#: 978-0195054200)

All other materials for class discussion will be provided on ANGEL.

You are not required to buy/read a textbook for this course, but I've listed several good textbooks below if you ever feel like you need more background on the topics covered in class. I have placed copies of each on reserve at the PSU library.

»Howard Rabinowitz, *The First New South, 1865-1920* (the most accessible of the three)

»C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913*

»Edward Ayers, *The Promise of the New South*

GRADING POLICY

The class grade will be made up of two short papers analyzing a single primary source, a proposal for your term paper, class participation, an in-class presentation of your research, and your term paper/rough draft. The grade breakdown and due dates are listed below:

Document Analysis Papers (2) (10% each, or 20%)

»Paper 1 due **February 7**

»Paper 2 due **February 21**

Term Paper Proposal (10%): due **March 7**

Term Paper/Rough Draft (50%): Rough Draft due **April 14**; Final Papers due **May 2**

Class Participation/Class Presentations (20%)

Fifteen points will be deducted each day an assignment is late, and those more than four days late will not be accepted. I will not accept your final thesis late, so make sure to turn it in on the due date.

Grades will be calculated using PSU's grading scale: A (100-95), A- (94.9-90), B+ (89.9-87.9), B (87.8-83.3), B- (83.32-80), C+ (79.9-75), C (74.9-70), D (69.9-60), F (59.9 and below).

ATTENDANCE

Because this is a seminar class that revolves around discussion, attendance for all classes is required. You are allowed two unexcused absences for the term. Excused absences—such as illness, family emergencies, religious observances, and university-approved curricular and extra-curricular activities—must be cleared by me beforehand and should be properly documented.

You are also required to attend one plenary session not held during our scheduled class time that will bring together all students taking a 302W class this semester. This session will introduce you to new historical skills and themes. There are two possible dates to attend: **February 4 (4:15-5:30 PM)** or **February 6 (2:30-3:45 PM)**.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited. All students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts (Faculty Senate Policy 49-20). Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students who are found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions and will be reported to the University's Judicial Affairs office for possible further disciplinary sanction.

For further information about academic integrity at Penn State please refer to:
<http://tlt.psu.edu/plagiarism/>

DISABILITY ACCESS

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified people with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell me as soon as possible.

COURSE SCHEDULE

subject to change

Week 1: Introduction to the Class

January 13: Introduction to the Class

January 15: Introduction to the New South Era

January 17: Thinking Historically; How to Read Primary Sources

Assignment: Wayne Booth, *The Craft of Research* (Prologue; Chapters 1-2)*

*All additional readings for discussions will be posted on ANGEL.

Week 2: Introduction to the Historical Method/ Navigating PSU's Libraries

January 20: HOLIDAY

January 22: Library Orientation (Meet in W315 – Third Floor of West Pattee Library)

January 24: The Contours of Historical Research

Assignment: Wayne Booth, *The Craft of Research* (Chapters 3-6)

Week 3: Reconstruction

January 27: Scott Reynolds Nelson, *Iron Confederacies* (ALL)

January 29: Scott Reynolds Nelson, *Iron Confederacies* (ALL)

January 31: Primary Source Discussion*

*Primary sources for each Friday are available on ANGEL.

Week 4: From Slavery to Freedom

February 3: Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom* (ALL)

February 4: Mandatory Plenary Session (4:15-5:30 PM)*
In Knowledge Commons, Room 140

February 5: Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom* (ALL)

February 6: Mandatory Plenary Session (2:30-3:45 PM)*
In Mann Assembly Room, 1st Floor Paterno

February 7: Primary Source Discussion (**PAPER 1 DUE**)

***You are required to attend one of these two plenary sessions.**

Week 5: Southern Agriculture

February 10: Sharecroppers and Tenant Farmers

Assignment: Harold D. Woodman, "Post-Civil War Southern Agriculture and the Law"

February 12: Agriculture, Economics, and Social Control in the New South

Assignment: Barbara Fields, "The Advent of Capitalist Agriculture: The New South in a Bourgeois World"; Steven Hahn, "Class and State in Postemancipation Societies: Southern Planters in Comparative Perspective"

February 14: Putting Together Your Argument

Assignment: Wayne Booth, *The Craft of Research* (Chapters 7-11)

Week 6: Southern Populism

February 17: Southern Populism

Assignment: Steven Hahn, "Hunting, Fishing, and Foraging: Common Rights and Class Relations in the Postbellum South"

February 19: Southern Populism

Assignment: Steven Hahn, "Common Right and Commonwealth: The Stock Law Struggle and the Roots of Southern Populism"

February 21: Thesis Topics Roundtable (**PAPER 2 DUE**)

Week 7: Economic Development and Labor in the New South

February 24: Duncan Maysilles, *Ducktown Smoke* (ALL)

February 26: Guest Speaker

Assignment: Daniel Letwin, “Interracial Unionism, Gender, and ‘Social Equality in the Alabama Coalfields, 1878-1908””; Letwin, Essay on Southern Labor History (ANGEL)

February 28: Primary Source Discussion

Week 8: The World of White Supremacy; Fiction and History

March 3: Charles Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition* (ALL)

March 5: Charles Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition* (ALL)

March 7: Primary Source Discussion (**THESIS PROPOSAL DUE**)

Week 9: Spring Break (March 9-15)

Week 10: The Lost Cause

March 17: Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy* (ALL)

March 19: Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy* (ALL)

March 21: Primary Source Discussion

Week 11: Nature and the New South

March 24: NO CLASS – Work on your research projects

March 26: NO CLASS – Work on your research projects

March 28: The Craft of Writing

Assignment: Wayne Booth, *The Craft of Research* (Chapters 12-17); William Zinsser, “A Writer’s Decisions,” from *On Writing Well* (provided on ANGEL)

Week 12: Project Outlines

March 31: NO CLASS – Work on your research projects

April 2: NO CLASS – Work on your research projects

April 4: Discuss Paper Outlines in Class

Assignment: Bring a short outline of your paper to exchange with another student in class for in-class feedback.

Week 13: Individual Meetings with Instructor

April 7: Individual Meetings with Instructor

April 9: Individual Meetings with Instructor

April 11: Individual Meetings with Instructor

Week 14-15: Individual Meetings

April 14: **ROUGH DRAFTS DUE**

Assignment: Come to class prepared to hand in a rough draft of your final paper.

April 16-April 25: Individual Meetings with Instructor

Week 16:

April 28: Out of Class Writing

April 30: Out of Class Writing

May 2: **FINAL PAPERS DUE**