

Class and Culture in America

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Office hours: MWF 1:15-2:15 and by appointment

History 230
Class meets MWF from
11:15-12:05
in Ross Hall 2275

Course Description and Goals:

This course investigates the development, meaning, and significance of class and culture in the American past. Both of these categories are remarkably complex and fluid, changing over time and influencing individuals, institutions, and American society in a variety of ways. Furthermore, class and culture took shape alongside and cannot be neatly separated from other categories of historical analysis—for example, race, age, gender, religion, and sexuality. While we will certainly not be able to address every aspect of these dynamic interactions, you should end the semester with an improved ability to recognize, evaluate, and appreciate both class culture as crucial categories with which to interpret the American history.

The goals of this course are:

1. To learn how “class” and “culture” are defined and used as categories of historical analysis.
2. To explore how these categories influenced everyday life over time.
3. To improve your reading, writing, and critical thinking skills.
4. To foster lively discussions.

Format

History 230 is an upper-division history course that combines reading, writing, lectures, and discussion.

Reading

You will be reading seven carefully selected books this semester. Learning to love reading is perhaps the most important outcome of a solid university education. I hope the reading in this course contributes to that end.

The books:

- Simon Middleton and Billy G. Smith, eds., *Class Matters: Early North America and the Atlantic World*
- Paul Johnson, *Sam Patch: the Famous Jumper*
- Lorien Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs: Violence, Honor, and Manhood in the Union Army*
- Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery*, with related documents, edited by W. Fitzhugh Brundige
- Thomas Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War*
- Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940*
- Matthew Delmont, *The Nicest Kids in Town: American Bandstand, Rock and Roll, and the Struggle for Civil Rights in 1950s Philadelphia*

Assignments

Writing

You will be completing two writing assignments, both of which should be typed (double-spaced) using 12-point Times New Roman and 1-inch margins. Everything you write in this course must follow Kate Turabian's, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, also known (affectionately) as the Chicago Style. If you are a history major, you should probably buy this book. Alternatively, you can purchase the history department's "manual of style" for \$3.00 in Ross 3270.

All papers must be turned in through blackboard's "Assignments" tab by the beginning of class on the due date. Each assignment's location will be clearly marked. If for any reason, you are unable to submit your assignments through blackboard, email them to me (tj.tomlin@unco.edu) by the due date. For details on the unpleasant consequences of tardiness, see the portion of this syllabus devoted to late exams and papers.

Response Papers. The first writing assignment is a collection of seven response papers to the course reading. This assignment gives you the chance to reflect on the assigned reading and gives me the chance to observe how and what you are thinking about it.

Each entry should be 1-2 pages (no longer!) and must contain the following elements:

- 1) A summary of one the author's *arguments*.
- 2) An explanation of how the author supports this argument with evidence.
- 3) An assessment of the argument's significance. How does it broaden, amend, or confirm your understanding of class and/or culture in American history? Why does the argument matter? In short, answer the "So what?" question with respect to this reading assignment.

A few examples of how to write great response papers:

- Connect the author's specific argument to a theme, debate, or development in American history. Be bold and creative while paying close attention to contexts and changes over time. That is, avoid big, broad generalizations about how, for example, the American Revolution is "just like" the Vietnam War.
- Explain why you were or were not convinced by the author's claim. Be specific.
- Carefully examine the author's evidence. What strengths and/or weaknesses does it have? How might a different kind of primary source confirm or challenge the argument?
- Compare the perspective or argument of one author with one of my lectures or with another author.

You are required to write one entry for each of the seven books assigned in the course. Any day on which reading is assigned from one of these seven books is fair game for a response paper. It is your responsibility to make sure you have submitted seven entries by April 20.

Turn in a copy of each paper to me (via blackboard) at the beginning of class on the day the assigned reading about which you write is due. Be sure to save a copy for yourself and bring it to class. I will return it within a week marked with a check, meaning that it met every requirement, a check-minus, meaning that it did not meet the criteria for this assignment, or a check-plus, meaning that it showed exceptional insight or reflection.

Your seven response papers will receive a grade according to the following grading scheme: seven checks equals 80/100; every check-plus will add 3 points to your grade; every check-minus will subtract 3 points from your grade; late entries will subtract 6 points from your final grade.

Note: even if you do not turn in a response paper for every book on time, your final journal must contain the seven required entries to pass the course.

Book Reviews. For these assignments, you will summarize and evaluate the historical significance of two books. Each review should be three pages (no longer!). After summarizing the book's main arguments and conclusions, you should explain how it contributes to an understanding of the time period about which it is written. This is sometimes referred to as the "So what?" question. For example, how does Paul Johnson use Sam Patch's popularity to make an argument about class tensions in the early nineteenth century? Do you agree? Why or why not?

You must complete a review of either Johnson (*Sam Patch*) on Feb. 20, or Foote (*The Gentlemen and the Roughs*) on March 5.

In addition, write a second review of either Andrews (*Killing for Coal*) on April 6, Benson (*Counter Cultures*) on April 20, or Delmont (*The Nicest Kids in Town*) on April 27.

Your book reviews will be graded on:

- The quality of your summary. (Did you grasp and articulate the book's claims?)
- The sophistication of your analysis, particularly regarding the book's historical significance. (Did you answer the "So what" question? Why should anyone care about or read this book?)
- The elegance and mechanics of your writing.

I suggest that you take advantage of UNC's writing center, located in Ross 1230. You can meet one-on-one with writing lab tutors or email a copy of your paper to a tutor who will usually send you comments within 24 hours. The writing lab is particularly good at helping you correct common writing and grammatical errors. You can arrange an appointment by email, crystal.brothe@unco.edu, phone, 351-2056, or in person. Visit them online at: <http://www.unco.edu/english/wcenter>

A serious word of warning: do not use online sources without formally citing them in your paper. There is no need to use internet sources for any of the writing assignments in this class. If you choose to use additional sources, it is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarized papers will receive no points.

Discussion and Participation

Communicating your questions, observations, and conclusions about the topics addressed in this course could be the most interesting aspect of our time together this semester.

Your participation grade will be based on your attentiveness, your contributions to class discussions, your performance on in-class writing exercises, and additional class assignments.

Exams

There will be two exams. You will need to bring a bluebook (available at the university bookstore or the Book Stop) to each of them. These will be a combination of matching, short answer, and essay questions. The midterm exam will cover material through the first part of the course. The final exam will focus on the topics we cover after the midterm.

Grading

Your grade for History 230 will be calculated out of 335 points:

- Discussion and participation will be worth 35 points
- Response Papers will be worth 100 points
- Book Reviews will be worth 100 points (50 points each)
- The Midterm Exam will be worth 50 points
- The Final Exam will be worth 50 points

All questions regarding the accuracy of exam and paper grades must be addressed no later than two weeks from the day I return the assignment. Any student who does not complete every assignment in the bulleted list above will automatically fail the course.

Course Grading Scheme

Your grade will be calculated using the plus/minus system. Specifically, pluses will be given to every grade ending in 7 or above within its percentile; minuses will be given to all grades ending in 3 or below within a percentile. The percentiles are as follows: 90th=A, 80th=B, 70th=C, 60th=D, 50th and below=F. For example, within the B range, an 80 to an 82 percent overall grade will earn a B-, an 83 to 86 will earn a B, and an 87 to an 89 will earn a B+. There will be no A+ or F-.

Contacting Me:

I look forward to meeting with and getting to know you. My office hours are Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 1:15-2:15 in Ross 3290D. Feel free to stop by during that time without an appointment. If you would like to arrange to meet at a specific time during my office hours, you can do so either in person before or after class or by email. If you have a scheduling conflict during my office hours, I will be happy to arrange another time.

I will always attempt to respond promptly to your email or phone call. Still, you should plan to wait 24 hours to hear back from me.

Course Policies

Attendance

I will take attendance at the beginning of every class. Please be on time. Arriving more than ten minutes late will count as an absence. Because participation and discussion are critical to this course, any student with more than six unexcused absences will automatically fail the class.

Missed Exams and Late Papers

Exams and assignments must be completed on the days indicated on the syllabus. If an emergency occurs preventing you from doing so, it is your responsibility to make a reasonable effort to contact me by phone or email within two days. Assignments may only be made up with a valid note from a relevant source (doctor, psychiatrist, funeral director, etc.).

Unless you have a legitimate, university-recognized, reason for doing so, any paper turned in after the *beginning* of class will receive no points. Even in this case, you must complete the paper in order to pass the course—see “grading” for further details.

Classroom Civility

Laptops are great. So is the internet. Combining the two in class is not. If you cannot resist playing games, updating your facebook status, or doing anything other than taking notes on your computer, do not bring it to class. If you use your computer for anything other than taking notes, you will be required to take notes on paper.

Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting disability accommodation for this class must inform the instructor by giving appropriate notice. Students are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services at (970) 351-2289 to certify documentation of disability and to ensure appropriate accommodations are implemented in a timely manner.

UNC's Honor Code

All members of the University of Northern Colorado community are entrusted with the responsibility to uphold and promote five fundamental values: Honesty, Trust, Respect, Fairness, and Responsibility. These core elements foster an atmosphere, inside and outside of the classroom, which serves as a foundation and guides the UNC community's academic, professional, and personal growth. Endorsement of these core elements by students, faculty, staff, administration, and trustees strengthens the integrity and value of our academic climate.

Course Schedule (subject to revision)

Week One

- Jan. 9 Introduction
- Jan. 11 Defining Class
Discuss *Class Matters* [hereafter *C.M.*], “Introduction.”
- Jan 13 Defining Culture

Week Two

- Jan. 16 **Martin Luther King Holiday.** No class.
- Jan. 18 An Introduction to the Atlantic World
Discuss *C.M.* Ch. 1, Newman, “Theorizing Class in Glasgow and the Atlantic World.”
- Jan. 20 Colonization and its Consequences
Discuss *C.M.* Ch. 2, Richter, “Stratification and Class in Eastern Native America.”

Week Three

- Jan. 23 Class and Crime in Early America
Discuss *C.M.* Ch. 13, Gottlieb, “Class and Capital Punishment in Early Urban North America.”
- Jan. 25 An Introduction to the American Revolution
Discuss *C.M.* Ch. 12, Humphrey, “Leases and the Laboring Classes in Revolutionary America.”
- Jan. 27 The Aftermath of Revolution
Discuss *C.M.* Ch. 3, Mandell, “Subaltern Indians, Race, and Class in Early America.”

Week Four

- Jan. 30 A Market Revolution
Discuss *C.M.* Ch. 10, Peskin, “Class, Discourse, and Industrialization in the New American Republic.”
- Feb. 1 Creating a Middle-Class Culture
Discuss *C.M.* Ch. 11, Branson, “Sex and Other Middle-Class Pastimes in the Life of Ann Carson.”
- Feb. 3 Discuss *C.M.* “Afterword: Constellations of Class in Early North America and the Atlantic World.”

Week Five

- Feb. 6 Early Industrialization
Discuss Johnson, *Sam Patch*, Preface and Ch. 1
- Feb. 8 Discuss Johnson, *Sam Patch*, Ch. 2
- Feb. 10 Leisure and Entertainment in the Nineteenth Century
Discuss Johnson, *Sam Patch*, Ch. 3

Week Six

- Feb. 13 Class, Culture, and Politics in the Age of Jackson
Discuss Johnson, *Sam Patch*, Chs. 4-5
- Feb. 15 Victorian Manners in Antebellum America
- Feb. 17 The Sectional Crisis

Week Seven

- Feb. 20 Manhood and Class in the Civil War
Discuss Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs*, Introduction and Chs.1-2
Johnson Review Due
- Feb. 22 Discuss Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs*, Chs. 3-4
- Feb. 24 T.B.A.

Week Eight

- Feb. 27 Discuss Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs*, Chs. 5- 6, and Conclusion
- Feb. 29 Open Discussion of *Class Matters*, Johnson, and Foote
- Mar. 2 **Midterm Exam**

Week Nine

- Mar. 5 The Genteel Tradition
Discuss *Up From Slavery*, Part I (Editor's Introduction) and Part II, Chs. 1-6 (to page 82)
Foote Review Due
- Mar. 7 Discuss *Up From Slavery*, Part II, Chs. 7-11(to page 122)
- Mar. 9 Discuss *Up From Slavery*, Part II, Chs. 12-17 and Part II (Related Documents)

Week Ten

- Mar. 12-16 **Spring Break**

Week Eleven

- Mar. 19 A Gilded Age
- Mar. 21 Businessmen and the Success Myth in the Gilded Age
Discuss Andrews, *Killing for Coal*, Introduction and Ch. 1
- Mar. 23 Work and Leisure at the Turn of the Century
Discuss Andrews, *Killing for Coal*, Chs. 2-3

Week Twelve

- Mar. 26 Organizing Labor
Discuss Andrews, *Killing for Coal*, Chs. 4-5
- Mar. 28 Progressivism and Labor Reform
Discuss Andrews, *Killing for Coal*, Ch. 6
- Mar. 30 Discuss Andrews, *Killing for Coal*, Ch. 7 and Epilogue

Week Thirteen

- Apr. 2 The Culture of Abundance in the American Century
Discuss Benson, *Counter Cultures*, Introduction and Ch. 1
- Apr. 4 Discuss Benson, *Counter Cultures*, Ch. 2
- Apr. 6 Advertizing in The Jazz Age
Discuss Benson, *Counter Cultures*, Ch. 3
Andrews Review Due

Week Fourteen

- Apr. 9 Hoover and The Great Depression
Discuss Benson, *Counter Cultures*, Ch. 4
- Apr. 11 The New Deal
Discuss Benson, *Counter Cultures*, Ch. 5
- Apr. 13 Discuss Benson, *Counter Cultures*, Ch. 6 and Conclusion

Week Fifteen

- Apr. 16 World War II and American Culture
Discuss Delmont, *The Nicest Kids in Town*, Introduction and Chs. 1-2
- Apr. 18 The Civil Rights Movement
Discuss Delmont, *The Nicest Kids in Town*, Chs. 3-4
- Apr. 20 Discuss Delmont, *The Nicest Kids in Town*, Ch. 5
Benson Review Due

Week Sixteen

- Apr. 23 Postwar Culture and Consumption
Discuss Delmont, *The Nicest Kids in Town*, Ch. 6 and Conclusion
- Apr. 25 Open Discussion of Benson, Andrews, and Delmont.
- Apr. 27 Conclusion
Delmont Review Due

****The Final Exam for this course is scheduled (not by me!) from 8:00-10:30 a.m. on Friday, May 4. Bring your bluebook and a strong cup of coffee.****