

## **Course Syllabus: History 3311**

**Fall 2024: Sul Ross State University-RGC**

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**Office Hours: by arrangement**

### **Required Texts:**

Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, eds. *American History Now*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011. ISBN # 978-1-4399-0244-8. On Amazon you can get this book for about \$30.00.

Extra Reading: <http://abuss.narod.ru/Biblio/eng/carr.pdf>

### **Section: Introduction to the Study of History and Historiography**

What is history? If it is simply a collection of facts, why are there so many different books written about the American Revolution, the American Civil War, or other events in American history? This course, *The Study of History* prepares history majors and minors, and social science majors and minors to be better able to answer these questions. This seminar introduces students to a range of historical methods and topics. We will examine our current and past assumptions about progress, the reliability of primary and secondary sources, historical objectivity, and the purpose of the historical profession. By its nature, such a course can never be “complete,” but we will read widely across temporal borders, sample a range of perspectives on the writing of history, and consider a number of theoretical approaches that have been influential in the field. Students will also hone skills essential to the historian’s craft (and by extension, the social scientist)---reading writing, and critical thinking.

### **Course Objectives:**

1. Understand the major historiographical trends in American history over the course of the twentieth century.
2. Define primary and secondary sources and the differences between them.
3. Identify and write a thesis.
4. Compare and contrast multiple points of view and historical interpretations.
5. Write effectively, logically, and persuasively about topics and individuals in American history with proper citations.
6. Determine and evaluate how historians locate, gather, organize, analyze, interpret, and report information using various methodologies.
7. Understand the professional role that historians play in contemporary society, both as academic and public historians.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. The history student will demonstrate historical research skills in a logically organized, written paper that is mechanically correct and supported by relevant documentation of historical content.
2. The history student will demonstrate the ability to write about topics in historiography and how those topics are interpreted.
3. The history student will demonstrate knowledge of American History, World History, and Non-American History.

### **Marketable Skills of a History Major**

1. Students can identify useful resources from a pool of data.
2. Students can select and organize data in a relevant manner.
3. Students can make written presentations to various audiences.
4. Students can utilize data to persuade various audiences.
5. Students can utilize data to generate and strengthen ideas.
6. Students can decipher stances adopted by various individuals.
7. Students can meet deadlines in a successful manner.

### **Course Policies:**

**Contacting the Instructor:** The instructor's email is the preferred method of contact.

[Msaka@sulross.edu](mailto:Msaka@sulross.edu). Please contact me only through the Sul-Ross email as I do not respond to private email such as yahoo, gmail, Hotmail, etc. This is for yours and my security.

I do, however, have a backup email, [mark.saka1@yahoo.com](mailto:mark.saka1@yahoo.com). This is a backup in the event of a malware attack or if for some other reason the system goes down. I rarely check it as I want you to only use my yahoo account for emergencies. I check my Sul Ross email regularly. Please stay in contact if you are ill or cannot make class for a legitimate reason.

**Late Assignments:** Late assignments incurs a ten-point penalty for every 24-hour period that passes from the due date and time until the instructor receives the assignment.

**Academic Integrity:** Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared and focused; meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

1. Turning in work as original that was used in whole or par for another course and/or for another course and/or professor.
2. Turning in another persons' work as one's own.
3. Copying from professional works or internet sites without citations.
4. Collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden.

### **Classroom Climate of Respect:**

Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting

to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still, we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing sensitive political issues.

### **ADA Statement**

SRSU Disability Services, SRSU is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans Disability Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Kathy Biddick at (830) 279—3003. The address is 2623 Garner Field Road, Uvalde Texas 78801. [kbiddick@sulross.edu](mailto:kbiddick@sulross.edu)

**SRSU Distance Education Statement:** Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based or distance education courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complain are located in the student handbook.

### **Course Requirement and Grading:**

There are four grading assignments and points to determine your grade.

1. "The Cast of historical characters will constitute 100 possible points
2. Your book review will constitute 100 possible points
3. Weekly Assignments (ten) will constitute 100 possible points
4. The historiographical essay will constitute 300 possible points

Therefore, there is a possible 600 points and thus your final grade will be calculated as such:

540-600 (A)

480-539 (B)

420-479 (C)

360-419 (D)

(<359) (F)

1. **"Cast of Historical Characters"** You will write a 250-word short essay describing a key figure who has been influential on the historical profession. These individuals' names tend to pop up frequently in discussions of history. Your job is to identify their ideas and how they have influenced the practice of history, so that collectively you will generate a sort of Cliff's Notes of

major thinkers and intellectuals. Summarize their ideas and contributions in a carefully constructed 300-word short essay. You will turn in this short essay via Blackboard.

You will also briefly (5 minutes) on your historical figure, who they were/are, their significance to the field of history, and why you chose that figure.

2. **Weekly Reflections.** Most of our meetings will include the discussion of common readings that are required for everyone. For ten of the eighteen of these chapters, you will be required to write a two-page reflection of the reading, which you will turn in on Blackboard. In this reflection, I encourage you to write about ideas, questions, observations, or comparisons that are worth bringing up for discussion. This is not a formal piece of writing but rather something that indicates that you have read and thought about the material. That said, I expect you to write in complete sentences with proper grammar and use citations where appropriate. There is a total of 10 reflections assigned (one for each chapter) out of a total of eighteen chapters.

Each written assignment is worth ten points for a total of 100 points. The written reviews are all due by November 09. However, I encourage you to turn them in as you write them, which is a better practice and strategy. If you wait until November 09 to turn them all in, you will not get any feedback until all of them are in.

3. **Book Review:** Each of you will be required to select and read a book of your choosing. Note: you must clear your book with me beforehand. You will then write a formal book review. These book reviews must be no more than or no less than three pages. A handout will be provided for tips on how to write a successful book review. You will also be required to submit the paper through SafeAssign on Blackboard to check for plagiarism. The book review and the five-minute presentations over your book are due November 14.

You will also present your book review on November, 5 minutes, informal.

The book review is worth 100 points.

4. **Historiographical Essay:** The major assignment for this class will be a historiographical essay, which will turn in at the end of the semester. **The Paper should be between eight and ten, double-spaced with standard margins and twelve-point font.** For this paper, you can choose and event, individual, idea, or policy you would like to analyze in American history. You will then pick **three historical monographs (books)** that explore your topic. In your paper, include a brief summary of each, but focus on using the books to explain the trajectory of the field and how interpretations have changed over time. How has the study of the topic evolved? How many different approaches and sources have been used? What's been left out and why? You will also be required to use **three primary sources** in your essay, proving that you can analyze primary source material as well as place primary source material within the context of secondary source material.

This assignment is worth a total of 300 points (50% of your grade). There will be four different grades associated with this major assignment. The first is a bibliography of the books you choose

along with a brief description of why you chose them. For the second grade, you will turn in a copy of your reading notes on the books. The third will be a rough draft of your paper. The final essay will serve as the fourth grade. Here is the breakdown:

Bibliography==75 points.

Reading Notes=75 points.

Rough Draft==75 points

Final Essay===75 points

Total=====300 points

The papers are due, along with your presentation on Monday, November 28.

**Semester Schedule and Outline:**

**Aug. 26-introduction to course, the course syllabus, expectations, requirements, readings, etc.**

For the next four lectures, read <http://abuss.narod.ru/Biblio/eng/carr.pdf>

**Aug. 28-Lecture: What is History? What is Historical Thinking? History as Reconstruction, Continuity and Change, Multiple Casualty in History, Telling a Story.**

**Sept. 02-Labor Day, no class**

**Sept. 04: Lecture: How do we confront historical account? How do historians do history? Reading History, History on Film, Oral History, Photographs in History, Interpreting History, writing for your Reader.**

**Sept. 09: What is Historiography? Examples: "The Historiography of Texas" and the Historiography of Mexican Americans."**

**Sept. 11—Be prepared to present in a five-minute presentation (informal—please do not sweat this—it will not be graded as long as you try) of your historical figure in the cast of characters.**

**Sept. 16-Chapter one in textbook**

**Sept. 18-Chapter two in textbook**

**Sept. 23-Chapter three in textbook**

**Sept. 25-Chapter four in textbook**

**Sept. 30-Chapter five in textbook**

**Oct. 01-Chapter six in textbook**

**Oct. 07-Chapter seven in textbook**

**Oct. 09-Chapter eight in textbook**

**Oct. 14-Chapter nine in textbook**

**Oct. 16-Chapter ten in textbook**

**Oct. 21-Chapter eleven in textbook**

**Oct. 23-Chapter twelve in textbook**

**Oct. 28-Chapter thirteen in textbook**

**Oct. 30-Chapter fourteen in textbook**

**Nov. 04-Chapter fifteen in textbook**

**Nov. 06-Chapter sixteen in textbook**

**Nov. 11-Chapter seventeen in textbook**

**Nov. 13-Chapter eighteen in textbook. By this date, all the of your written chapter reviews are due.**

**Nov. 18—Turn in Book reviews this day and present book review to the class—what was the book about, how did the author approach history, how does the book fit into the historiography of the subject matter/theme, why did you choose this book? The presentations only have to be five minutes and will not be graded so please do not sweat it. (ALSO-----last day to withdraw from the course with a grade of “W”)**

**Nov. 20-work on papers**

**Nov. 25-work on papers**

**Nov. 27-thanksgiving, no class**

**Dec. 02, 04—papers due on this day and present your paper to the class—what was your historiographical paper about and why did you choose it? Again, five to ten minutes, the presentation will not be graded so please do not sweat it.**

## **Cast of Characters**

- 1. Herodotus**
- 2. Flavius Josephus**
- 3. St. Augustine of Hippo**
- 4. Ibn Khaldun**
- 5. Niccolo Machiavelli**
- 6. David Hume**
- 7. Auguste Comte**
- 8. Immanuel Kant**
- 9. Friedrich Nietzsche**
- 10. Leopold Ranke**
- 11. Bartolome de las Casas**
- 12. G.W.F. Hegel**
- 13. Fernand Braudel**
- 14. Karl Marx**
- 15. Friedrich Engels**
- 16. E.P. Thompson**
- 17. Eric Hobsbawn**
- 18. Alexis Tocqueville**
- 19. Edward Gibbons**
- 20. Alexander Solzhenitsyn**
- 21. Arnold Toynbee**
- 22. Barbara Tuchman**
- 23. Anne Applebaum**
- 24. Theda Skocpol**
- 25. Hannah Arendt**