

HIST 2100-A05
Introduction to Historical Methods:
The Great Depression and the New Deal

UNC-Charlotte, Fall 2009
Mondays, 9:30-12:15, in Denny 202

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Course description

A response to the crisis of the Great Depression, the New Deal of the mid-1930s redefined the United States government and its relationship to the economy and the American people. Controversial from the start, the New Deal and its legacies continue to be central reference points in political debates today. This course will familiarize students with the history of the New Deal and how that history has been re-interpreted over time. Students will use the topical material to develop the skills required of good historians, including critical analysis of primary and secondary sources; use of electronic and traditional library resources; appreciation of historiography, proper techniques for note-taking and citation; and the art and method of original historical writing. Course requirements include participation in discussions of weekly readings, oral presentations, individual meetings with the instructor, and a research paper project that involves a full draft and peer review.

Students meet the Oral Communication requirements through formal oral presentations and regular participation in class discussions.

This course is a prerequisite for the senior seminar, History 4000. In order to register for HIST 4000, you must receive a grade of C or better in HIST 2100.

Academic Integrity:

Academic honesty and integrity are essential to the existence and growth of an academic community. Without the maintenance of high standards of honesty, members of the instructional faculty are defrauded, students are unfairly treated, and society itself is poorly served. Maintaining academic standards of honesty and integrity is ultimately the formal responsibility of the instructional faculty; and this responsibility is shared by all members of the academic community. Students are expected to abide by University Code of Student Integrity. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will result in a grade of F in the course, and possibly other consequences as required by University regulations.

Diversity:

UNC Charlotte strives to create an academic climate in which the diversity of all individuals is respected and maintained. Therefore we celebrate diversity that includes, but is not limited to, ability/disability, age, culture, ethnicity, gender, language, race, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status.

Course requirements .

Weekly class meetings (unless otherwise noted in the syllabus) will be based on the discussion of assigned course reading. All students are expected to complete the reading assignment before class, be present and contribute actively to the discussion. In addition to this, in many weeks, students will turn in two pages of written (typed) responses to the required readings. These responses may include informal personal reactions, but they should also provide some comments and questions suitable for discussion by the entire class. They may either be sent to me via email or turned in to me in person or in my box in the history department office. Early submissions are welcome. Because this course meets only one day a week, attendance at each meeting is essential. If you miss a class, you will be expected to provide a written explanation for your absence, along with a 5-page discussion of the reading assignment for that week. If you know in advance that you must miss a class, inform Dr. Wilson as soon as possible.

The main writing assignment for this course is a short research paper on a topic of the student's choosing, within the general subject of the history of the United States during the era of the Depression and the New Deal. The final result of this project will be an original research paper of about 2,000 words. Additional graded assignments related to your research project will include an investigation of library resources, a paper proposal, a full rough draft of your research paper (and peer review of other rough drafts), and a 6-minute oral presentation of your research.

Grades . Grades will be calculated as follows:

Participation in class discussions	15%
Response papers (4)	20%
Paper proposal, including short oral presentation of it	10%
Rough draft of research paper (including peer review)	10%
Oral presentation on research paper, Dec. 5:	5%
Final paper	40%

Late reading responses will not be accepted. Other (unexcused) late assignments will be marked down ONE FULL letter grade for EACH day that they are late. Late final papers will not be accepted except in documented cases of serious emergency.

Required books, available for purchase at the University Bookstore and Gray's:

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 5th Ed. (Boston and New York: Bedford / St. Martin's, 2007). One copy on library reserve.

David M. Kennedy, *The American People in the Great Depression [Freedom From Fear, Part I]* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). Also 2 copies on library reserve.

Robert S. McElvaine, *The Depression and the New Deal: A History in Documents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Jason Scott Smith, *Building New Deal Liberalism: The Political Economy of Public Works, 1933-1956* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). The bookstore will carry the 2009 paperback edition when it becomes available. Also on library reserve.

There are many valuable websites with primary and secondary materials on the New Deal. A good place to begin is with the New Deal Network site, <http://newdeal.feri.org>.

Course Schedule

August 24: Introductions
 Orientation to the 1930s via discussion, film clips, etc.

August 31: How Do Historians Make History?

*Read Rampolla, *Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, entire book.

*Find, via the library catalog, and read carefully, the following article: Mark H. Leff, "Taxing the 'Forgotten Man': The Politics of Social Security Finance in the New Deal," *Journal of American History* 70:2 (September 1983): 359-381.

* The **response paper due** today will consist of your questions and comments about Rampolla, as well as your responses to a worksheet on the Leff article that will be handed out on August 24.

September 7: NO CLASS—LABOR DAY HOLIDAY

September 14: Discussion: Hoover Years Through the First New Deal, 1929-1934
 Special Topic: Primary vs. Secondary Sources (some time in library)

*Read Kennedy, ix-217

*Read McElvaine, 8-57, 101-137

***Two-page response paper due**

September 21: Individual meetings with Dr. Wilson

*Continue to read and skim in all books

*Bring ideas for research questions and sources to your individual meeting

September 28: Focus on Archival Research (class meets on 10th floor of Atkins Library)

*Continue to read and skim in all books

*Continue to refine research questions and sources, using online and library resources

*Bring questions about locating primary and secondary sources

October 5: Discussion: Protests, Second New Deal, & End of Reform, 1934-1940

*Finish Kennedy, 218-425

*Finish McElvaine, 59-99, 139-179

***Two-page response paper due**

October 12: NO CLASS—FALL BREAK

October 19: Group Discussion of Our Paper Proposals

***Research Paper Proposal Due**

***Short oral presentation on research paper proposal due**

*Bring questions and comments about research paper projects

October 26: Individual meetings with Dr. Wilson

*Read Smith, 1-134

*Bring questions about research paper project to individual meeting with Dr. Wilson

November 2: State of the Art: Discussion of a Recent Monograph on the New Deal

*Finish Smith, 135-266

***Two-page response paper due. Refer to questions on worksheet about Leff article, 31 Aug**

November 9: Workshop on Writing

*Continue with research and writing of your draft paper

*Bring Rampolla, Leff article, and Smith book to class

November 16: Organizational Meeting / Individual Meetings with Dr. Wilson

***Full Draft of Final Paper due. The draft should be a full 2,000 words long, with footnotes and bibliography. Bring five (5) hard copies of your draft with you to class.**

*Discuss questions or concerns about papers with Dr. Wilson

November 23: Peer Critiques of Final Papers

*Prepare written comments, to be delivered in person, on drafts of each of your group members

***Submit copies of your comments to Dr. Wilson**

November 30: Oral Presentations on Final Papers

*Continue to revise your paper, using comments of peers and Dr. Wilson

*Oral presentations due (for half the class)

December 7: Oral Presentations on Final Papers

*Continue to revise your paper, using comments of peers and Dr. Wilson

*Oral presentations due (for half the class)

December 14: **FINAL VERSION OF FINAL PAPER DUE**