

HIST 4004 Spring 2008

CRN 17649

Seitz 313

MWF 1:25–2:15

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Office hours (tent.): Mondays, 10:00–11:30; Thursdays, 2:00–5:30; after class; and by appointment

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Topics in Social and Cultural History: HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE U.S. SOUTH

Faculty and students alike often know very little about the history of their own institution. So I ask you: What do you know, and what might you like to know, about the history of your university, or how it might compare with other institutions of higher education? HIST 4004 will emphasize selected parts of the history of American higher education, primarily in the South in the twentieth century. Through work in primary and secondary sources, students will individually develop an expertise in some area of inquiry and will collectively generate an amended view of the past. This course is designed in part to encourage the production of papers that — substantively interesting and professionally executed — might qualify for presentation at one or more conferences. Certainly it is designed, too, to foster projects that reflect both a keen interest on your part and the discipline that must accompany a serious engagement with historical methods and materials.

Shall we write a book this semester? I have in mind a collection of essays from this class for a book, prepared in hard copy and/or CD, to be ready for distribution to the class before commencement. Write an excellent (and timely) paper, so it can be included! If so, first you'll be reading books I contributed to, and then you'll each be contributing to a book yourself.

Designed as a junior/senior capstone seminar, this version of HIST 4004 builds on your previous undergraduate work, particularly HIST 2004, Historical Methods. In content, it emphasizes matters of social and institutional history. In approach, it pursues further exploration of (1) sources for doing history, (2) methods for extracting the stories those sources can tell, and (3) approaches for presenting the results. Consider this course the Wallenstein Professional Development Institute, 4000 series.

Early in the semester, especially, I'll be sending you off to do work in various kinds of primary materials in the library, as well as some web research.

Most of the assigned reading for everyone is scheduled for completion during the first half of the semester, before you focus on your most sustained writing project. I am assigning two books for this class. One I co-authored with a former journalist and later an advisor to President Hahn, Warren Strother: From VPI to State University: President T. Marshall Hahn Jr. and the Transformation of Virginia Tech, 1962–1974 (2004); the library has copies, including one in Special Collections that does not circulate. The other, just out this month, is a book I edited, Higher Education and the Civil Rights Movement: White Supremacy, Black Southerners, and College Campuses (2008); I have placed a copy on reserve in the library (currently for 2-hour loan periods, for use in the library only, but that can be changed as seems appropriate).

There may be other, much shorter common reading assignments along the way. And of course you will be doing individualized reading for your own projects. For the history of Tech, situated in state, regional, and national contexts, you might sometimes find useful my earlier book, Virginia Tech, Land-

Grant University, 1872–1997: History of a School, a State, a Nation (1997); it's out of print now, but available (multiple copies) in the library. In addition, you might explore the collections of essays done by my students back in 1997 and 1998 in classes on the history of Virginia Tech — if you are considering, or then actually doing, a topic on Tech's history, you will very likely need to know about these essays by your predecessors.

My **GTA this semester, Robert Murray** — whose office is at 418 Major Williams and whose email is <rpmurray@vt.edu> — will often be in class, and he will also be available to be of assistance to you in your work. He, too, looks forward to working with you.

Until sometime after the December commencement, neither you nor I knew I would be teaching this course, or that you would be taking such a course. But we are about ready to go. Below are many things you will need to know about course expectations and weekly assignments. As I often do, I plan from time to time to give you more detailed weekly assignments for library and other work, and I may also to give you revised reading assignments along the way. When I last checked, books were not yet in the bookstores, for example, so that may necessitate some modifications.

TENTATIVE LINE-UP OF ASSIGNMENTS

We will meet most regularly scheduled class days, but not all; we will skip an occasional Friday, when you will be working on your own projects.

Week 1, Jan. 14. Getting acquainted, getting organized. Primary sources, and secondary. Go carefully through the entire syllabus. If books are available, begin reading. Begin getting acquainted with the additional sources and resources listed not only for this week but also for the next few weeks. For Wednesday/Friday, stop by **Special Collections**, first of all to get acquainted with the place, and most of all to see Tech student yearbooks and student directories; most yearbooks are also in the stacks. You'll find that many of the yearbooks — the Bugle and, for four years beginning in 1925, the Tin Horn — are also available on-line. Assignment may be specified.

Week 2 (Jan. 23, 25). **TMH** book, through chapter 1, and see appendices 1–3; **Hed/CRM**, preface and introduction. 500-word written response, due to me by Tuesday evening, Jan. 22. In your response, for each of the readings, this week and afterwards, consider (1) what are the main developments being traced, (2) what are the main ideas presented by the author/s, and (3) what you find most arresting, and what you make of it all. In addition to the reading, get acquainted with the Freeman File — an index to the Richmond Times-Dispatch and Richmond News Leader, from the 1920s to the 1980s—which is on fiche in Newman Library; the newspapers themselves are on microfilm. Assignment to be specified.

Week 3, Jan. 28. **TMH**, chapters 2–4, 6; **Hed/CRM**, chapter 1 and appendices 1, 4, 7, 8. The usual written response, this one due Sunday night, Jan. 27. It is time to begin getting acquainted with at least **the following web and other resources**: (1) America: History and Life, a guide to secondary sources — books and journal articles in U.S. history; (2) LexisNexis, which gives you access to appellate court cases and also law review articles; and (3) the New York Times — the hard copy index, in Reference, as well as the on-line version of the paper itself. Assignment to be specified, including a brief bibliography, properly formatted, drawn from at least the first item and the third.

Week 4, Feb. 4. **TMH**, chapters 7–10, 12, 16. Your 500-word written response, is due Sunday night, Feb. 3. Further work in primary sources, to be specified.

Week 5, Feb. 11. **TMH**, chapters 16–20, plus the epilogue, and see the appendices again; **HEd/CRM**, chapters 2–3 and appendices 1, 4, 7–9. A 500-word written response, by Sunday night, Feb. 10. In addition, select and read an article, something on higher education, in the **History of Education Quarterly** (or another such article, one that you encountered in **America: History and Life**). The usual 500-word written response, due Sunday night, Feb. 10. Have you identified a promising topic for your project? If not, be on the lookout — your proposal for the project is due in two weeks.

Week 6, Feb. 18. **HEd/CRM**, chapters 4–7, the afterword, and the appendices, especially 10. A 500-word written response, by Sunday night, Feb. 17.

Week 7, Feb. 25. Project proposal due in class Monday (see instructions). You are under way. Be sure to pick the marked-up proposal in class on Wednesday. (Note: next week is spring break.)

Week 8, March 10. Framing the projects. Oral reports in class on your on-going projects.

Week 9, March 17. Updates/oral reports in class on your on-going projects.

Week 10, March 24. The latest introduction and a “chapter” of your project due Friday.

Week 11, March 31. Updates on the projects. The primary and the secondary — your “value added.”

Week 12, April 7. Preliminary complete version (and the complete packet) — just as complete and clean as you can manage (do not think of this as a rough draft) — due in class Wednesday, April 9.

Week 13, April 14. Pick up your preliminary version, with my comments, in class Monday.

Week 14, April 21. Final version due Friday.

Week 15, April 28 Wrap-up. Final reports on the projects.

What do you want to know? What do you want to say? How best to say it? And how best to present the whole thing? Superior papers reflect (a) a successful search for appropriate sources; (b) a critical and imaginative mind, including a sense of what is relevant, appropriate, significant (together with a knack for showing it to be so); and (c) a facility for clear writing — as well as (d) an appropriate narrative strategy and (e) an acceptable style sheet. You might make a checklist of these features for each of your assignments.

Your writing will be expected to display a command of such things as effective paragraphing, appropriate word choice, and proper punctuation. As for footnotes and bibliography, you must cite primary and secondary sources, as appropriate, and your work must display an historian's (Chicago-style) formatting.

THE BIG PROJECT

The most ambitious piece of writing for this course, a mini-term paper, will involve a project that results in an excellent essay with the following specifications:

(1) a narrative of **3,000-5,000 words**, or approximately 10 to 18 standard double-spaced pages (short for a journal article, but long for most conference papers); **plus**

- (2) properly formatted endnotes; and
- (3) properly formatted bibliography, together with annotation—that is, after each major item in the bibliography, you will briefly evaluate it (in a sentence, or fragment, or two) as to its value in general and its utility for your project; and
- (4) at least one apt visual, in most cases a photograph.

The project must be substantial enough that you have time and space to explore a variety of appropriate sources, **primary and secondary**; develop some central idea or theme; and generate and incorporate information that aptly illustrates your generalizations. In presenting this essay, you will be expected to move back and forth between the concrete and the abstract, the particular and the general. Keep in mind (whether you find a particular source at the library or on the web, whether it is hard copy or electronic) that just because something is written down does not make it true, and just because it is true does not make it relevant or interesting. Your task is to sift for truth and relevance and make clear the significance you see in what you select for inclusion.

Process and chronology. The project will be accomplished in stages, each of them graded:

By the beginning of class **on Monday, February 25**, you will be turning in a **proposal** — an introduction to your project—a page that contains 1) a tentative title and 2) a statement, perhaps 200 words, of what you plan to do; and a second page that supplies 3) a formal bibliography of at least 8 to 10 promising sources, divided between primary and secondary (supply both; specify which are which), briefly annotated (how do you see using each of them?).

A draft of one “chapter” of the paper, with an updated introduction as well — together with the proposal — is due **Friday, March 24**.

A “preliminary” version is due no later than the beginning of class **on Wednesday, April 9**. Be sure you get it back before you head out for break. Note that this is not a first draft. It should be as complete and clean as you can get it. And it must be accompanied by the earlier materials, the proposal and the initial draft of a chapter, the copy that has my comments.

A final version (this one to be accompanied, too — by the preliminary version and the proposal — the complete package) is due **Friday, April 21**. (A “finished” version for the book, reflecting fine-tuning in light of my comments on this “final” version, might still come in a bit later, but not much.)

MY EXPECTATIONS REGARDING ALL ASSIGNMENTS FOR THIS COURSE

Each essay should carry your name (!) and the date (both of these in the upper right-hand corner) and a descriptive title (centered, no underline, no quotation marks) — no separate title page.

I expect that each piece of work will be “perfect,” the best you can do at that time; that it will be carefully proofread; and that it will reflect whatever comments I have made about the presentation of your previous papers. First drafts are rarely welcome — I want finished quality (I do not want to be the first reader; that should be you). Take pride in your work — do work that you can take pride in.

Essays must be readily legible. I strongly prefer that they be word-processed (dark printer or e-mail). Regardless, I do not want to be getting hairy pages torn from a notebook.

If you **e-mail** me a paper, be sure that the **subject line** identifies the course and the assignment (4004-response). And if you send an **attachment**, be sure to identify the **file** by course name, your name, the date, and the assignment (e.g., 4004-Smith-Feb 25-proposal).

Given all the short assignments for this class, especially in the early going, it is imperative that you stay

current. All out-of-class written assignments are due at the start of class, unless otherwise directed (If I find them under my door when I return from class, or if they arrive by e-mail after I leave for class, they are late.) Lateness will result in a reduction of as much as 10 points per day (or partial day). If you miss the due date for something, do not just wait until the next class to turn it in — get it to me as soon as possible.

All assignments will be evaluated on language (including spelling and word use — it's/its, affect/effect, however/but) and grammar as well as content, **style as well as substance**. I encourage students to work together, in groups of two or three, on short assignments as well as on your larger projects (for example, three people might huddle along the way while each writes on a different aspect of some larger topic). Also, students will report back to the class on your discoveries and on the progress of your work on your research projects.

If I direct you to the Writing Center for assistance, your making use of that University resource becomes a class assignment for you, to be successfully attended to and completed.

Class attendance. Much of the work in this course will take place in class. Plan on few if any absences. If you cannot commit to attending class far more often than not, you might better enroll in some other course, any other course. You are graded on your attendance, your participation, and your performance on in-class assignments; and you are expected to know, and apply, what we cover in class. Do not skip class to complete any work — it's already late.

Retain all graded work through the term—and copies on disk of all electronically prepared items you turn in. Late in the term I will make available to each of you a list of items that I have received (and the grade on each). If my records seem in some way at odds with your understanding of your performance, you will have in your possession the original graded work so that you can help me correct the record.

Second attempts. Some work may cry out for a second attempt. Unsatisfactory work (D, F, check-dash-minus or check-minus) must be satisfactorily redone (C or better). So humor me. Satisfy my expectations here, and keep in mind that mediocrity is not encouraged. Rewritten essays must abide by the following rules:

1) All reworked assignments must be turned in within a week of the class I hand things back; absence on turn-back day does not extend the deadline; the reduction of 10 points for each day, or partial day, that you turn in something late is a separate consideration, so, in that sense, you could do satisfactory work, either on the original pass at an assignment or the re-try, and end up with less than a C grade on it.

2) The original version (bearing my scrawled comments) must accompany the new version, and you must have addressed the concerns (stylistic and substantive) that I expressed on the original version. As for stylistic concerns, it does not remotely suffice that you fix the single instance I noted of a characteristic problem—all such must be identified and fixed; I am not your editor, and I do not pretend to note every example of a lapse. I want you to learn to recognize things that need fixing.

3) For each assignment, I will average the original and the re-try, if any. So consider the permanent grade on the assignment to be the **average between the first attempt and the re-try**; if the re-try is also unsatisfactory, the grade is a zero (think of each graded piece of work as starting out at zero and staying there until either the first try or a re-try earns a grade that crests 70).

4) Even if you do "satisfactory" work on an essay, you may re-do it to improve it. Just follow all the procedures indicated here.

5) Note that a re-try does not guarantee a higher grade—or even keeping the original grade— though a good-faith effort will likely lift the evaluation.

Along the way, you will likely find yourselves not only consumers of historical knowledge—but producers as well. Let's talk about the essays that really turn out well. I have tentative plans, at the end of the term (if you each approve of your essay's inclusion), to compile the stronger essays in a published collection, usually produced at the Copy Center. Your essay must have earned at least a straight B — a B+ or higher would be better — and I'll also need it in electronic format as a Word file. You can own a copy of that collection, at cost, if you wish.

As you develop your essays, short or long, you will be exemplifying what I mean when I speak of the strengths and promise of **undergraduate research at a research institution**. As part of that enterprise, you will be encouraged — pending production of a fine piece of work — to submit an essay in the annual statewide competition conducted by the Virginia Social Science Association. And you will be urged, too, to propose a paper for presentation at the Virginia Tech History Graduate Student Association's annual conference each spring, as well as for presentation at the Virginia Tech undergraduate research symposium, also each spring. Juniors, keep in mind next fall's Middle Atlantic Regional Conference of Undergraduate Scholarship (MARCUS), held each October at Sweet Briar College. Also, the History Department runs essay competitions each spring — one on Virginia and/or Civil War topics, the other on any historical theme or topic.

AUTHENTICITY AND FELONY

Faculty are urged to say something in each syllabus about the **Honor Code**. It should go without saying that the Honor Code applies to all the work you do in this course. You are encouraged to work together on assignments, unless otherwise directed, but you must turn in work that is in fact your own.

Theft of language and/or ideas constitutes a crime against the institution and the enterprise. **Write your own**. And **cite if you borrow — that is what quotation marks AND endnotes (or footnotes) are for**. Students — and faculty — are entitled to a cheat-free learning environment, and of course I expect integrity. If I encounter an abuse of this expectation, you can expect a zero on the assignment — which in itself can mean that you fail the class—and a close encounter with the Honor Court.

Borrowing other writers' materials, whether ideas or facts, requires footnotes crediting the original source. Borrowed language demands quotation marks as well as footnotes.

Regardless of the rule regarding quotation marks, write your own material, words and music. Strive to develop a command of your ideas and materials such that you are the best author of your papers. Quote on occasion, but only where it makes great good sense to, and of course only when you give full credit to your source of the quotation. You may fairly often find it useful to quote from primary sources; less often will you rightfully find it appropriate to quote from secondary sources. Another author wrote for another purpose than yours — and got there first with his/her language. As I say, write your own.

FINAL GRADES

Students will be evaluated on the basis of the effectiveness of the following:

- (1) the **short essays** and other brief projects, plus your weekly **responses** to the readings; and
- (2) your participation in **class discussion** (thus also your class attendance) — the ideas you bring to class, the questions, your in-class contributions to everyone's cooperative learning, including oral presentations of your big project; and

(3) the **big project** (the proposal, an early chapter, the preliminary version, and the final version — all of which, as the thing develops, I will see each time I see any of it.

Numeric grades will convert at 920 for a straight A, and 900-919 A-; 870 or more will convert to B+, 830 to B, 800 B-; 775 C+, 725 straight C, and 700 a C-; and so on.