

**Southern Studies 401 -  
Southern Studies Seminar  
Fall 2008 – Tuesday 4-6:30  
Tupelo Room, 105 Barnard Observatory**

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**Required Texts:**

Robbie Ethridge: [Creek Country: The Creek Indians and Their World, 1796-1816](#)  
Eli Evans: [The Provincials: A Personal History of Jews in the South](#)  
Kevin Sessums: [Mississippi Sissy](#)  
Carol Stack: [Call To Home: African-Americans Reclaim The Rural South](#)  
David Oshinsky: [Worse than Slavery: Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice](#)  
Marybeth Hamilton: [In Search of the Blues](#)  
Bobbie Ann Mason: [Elvis Presley: A Life](#)  
Harry Crews: [Classic Crews: A Harry Crews Reader](#)  
LuAnn Jones: [Mama Learned Us to Work: Farm Women in the New South](#)  
Roger Brown: [Ghost Dancing on the Cracker Circuit](#)  
Michael Lewis: [The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game](#)

**Course Description:**

This course will concentrate on some lesser known—because they're lesser told—accounts of the Southern past. Some of these narratives focus on particular groups of people; others are about the changing nature of Southern life in different times and places. All of them complicate the standard Southern story, and all influence life in the present-day South. One of our tasks this semester will be to understand why these accounts are complications of the usual narrative. Another will be to understand how and why they continue to impact us today and what that means for your generation, as well as for future generations of Southerners.

Because this course is a seminar it will rely heavily on student-generated discussion. This will require students to always be familiar with the text(s) under discussion, to contribute to the discussion each week, and to respect the ideas and opinions of others in the class. Southern Studies 401 and 402 are the culmination of your work in this field. This course should, therefore, elicit your best work.

## **Course Objectives:**

This class will strive to accomplish the following goals:

- to raise students' awareness of the diversity and complexity of the Southern past.
- to acquaint students with ways in which the past influences the present.
- to sharpen students' critical thinking skills.
- to improve students' ability to give voice to their critical thinking skills, both orally and in writing.

## **Class Meetings:**

At the start of each class, students will respond in writing to a broad question regarding the day's reading assignment. These questions are designed to help students organize their thinking about central issues in the text and prepare us all for class discussion. Students may refer to the text and any notes they have during these twenty-minute, timed writings. (Responses will be graded: excellent responses will receive 5 points, good ones 4 points, adequate ones 3 points, inadequate ones less than 3 points. Students who are absent will receive a 0 for that day's response and will not be able to make up the writing at a later date.) Then, using students' responses as a springboard, the class will proceed to discuss that week's text and its relevance to contemporary Southern life.

## **Graded Work:**

Class participation (25%): In addition to getting up to 5 points for each class session's written response, students will also earn up to 5 points for their participation in each session's discussion. At the end of the semester this accumulation of points will determine the class participation portion of the student's grade.

Personal essay and oral presentation (15%): Students will turn in a 5-page personal essay and give an oral presentation summarizing the essay's main points during our October 7 meeting. The essays should be typed and double-spaced, using standard fonts and margins. No late work accepted.

Research Project (30%): Each student will complete a semester-long research paper of 20+ pages that will focus on some aspect of current (or very recent) Southern youth culture. Papers should be typed and double-spaced, using standard fonts and margins. No late work accepted.

Final Examination (30%): The final examination will be cumulative and take the form of several broad essay questions that ask students to make connections between the works we've studied and their relevance to life in the South today. Students may use

the texts, their notes, and their in-class writing responses in preparing their answers. One of the exam questions will ask students to make connections between the topic of their research papers and some of the larger themes we've discussed throughout the semester.

### **Course Policies:**

I expect students to come to class on time, to be familiar with the text(s) under discussion, to be prepared to ask provocative questions and to offer thoughtful comments.

Attendance: Since we meet only once a week, it is imperative that students attend class. Students who miss more than one class meeting will have their final grade lowered. Students who miss more than two class meetings will fail the course. Those who find it necessary to miss class should notify me in advance that they will be absent, preferably by speaking to me in person or by telephone.

Evaluation: I will examine your written work for evidence of the following qualities:

- thoughtful engagement with the subject matter and awareness of the topic's complexity;
- logical and convincing interpretation that leads the reader to insight;
- clear and logical organization of ideas within paragraphs and throughout the essay;
- adherence to the basic rules of grammatical English.

Naturally, the essays that you write during class will be less polished and less formal than the writing that you do outside of class and will be evaluated accordingly.

Grading Policy: I try to adhere to the following standards in assigning grades:

- A = excellent work
- B = good work
- C = adequate work
- D = inadequate work, but all assignments completed
- F = coursework not completed

Please note that a final course grade of B will indicate that you have done good work. To get an A one must do excellent work.

I do not give incompletes except in the most extreme of circumstances.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty, and ignorance of what plagiarism entails will not be accepted as an excuse. Each student should complete all

academic work with the standard of personal integrity that the University of Mississippi demands. According to A Writer's Reference (Diana Hacker, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1992), "To borrow another writer's words and ideas without proper acknowledgement is a form of dishonesty known as plagiarism. To avoid plagiarism, you must cite all quotations, summaries, and paraphrases as well as any facts or ideas that are not common knowledge. In addition, you must be careful to put paraphrases and summaries in your own words" (pp.214-5). Acceptable channels of assistance with written work completed for this class include the Writing Center and conferences with me. Students unclear about the precise definition of plagiarism should see one of us early in the semester to clarify their understanding of the term. **Students practicing academic dishonesty will fail this course.**

Disabilities: If you have a disability, please see the Office of Student Disability Services for appropriate accommodation.

**Tentative Calendar:**

8/26	introduction  course expectations  seminar workshop  <b>assignment for next week:</b> write a 3-page (no more, no less) "history of the South." You will need to bring a hard copy to class next week, but your essay is due (as an e-mailed attachment) by next Monday night at the latest.
9/2	discuss "history of the South" essays  <b>assignment for next week:</b> read Ethridge
9/9	discuss Ethridge  <b>assignment for next week:</b> read Evans
9/16	discuss Evans  <b>assignment for next week:</b> read Sessums
9/23	discuss Sessums  hand out personal essay/oral presentation assignment (due 10/7)  <b>assignment for next week:</b> read Stack
9/30	discuss Stack  <b>assignment for next week:</b> personal essay due at beginning of class; oral presentations to be given during class

10/7	<p>oral presentations</p> <p>schedule individual conferences with instructor for 10/16, 10/17, or 10/20</p> <p><b>assignment for 10/21:</b> read Oshinsky</p>
10/14	no class (individual conferences to be scheduled later in week)
10/21	<p>discuss Oshinsky</p> <p><b>assignment for next week:</b> read Hamilton</p>
10/28	<p>discuss Hamilton</p> <p><b>assignment for next week:</b> read Mason &amp; Crews</p>
11/4	<p>discuss Mason &amp; Crews</p> <p><b>assignment for next week:</b> read Jones</p>
11/11	<p>discuss Crews &amp; Jones</p> <p>schedule individual conferences for later in week</p> <p><b>assignment for next week:</b> read Brown</p>
11/18	<p>discuss Brown</p> <p><b>assignment for 12/2:</b> read Lewis</p>
11/25	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING WEEK
12/2	discuss Lewis
final exam	research papers due