



Introduction to Arkansas History:

Stories of the Past in Local, Regional, and Global Perspectives

Course Description: This course examines the history of Arkansas from the 1500s to the present. We will explore Arkansas's place in the world, the compelling stories in its past, and its most important events and people. The course is arranged chronologically, but we will also engage some topics and themes out of their historical sequence. We will examine Arkansas' complicated past, from Native American histories to famous Arkansans on the national political stage. We will examine the state's role in national events and issues (exploration, the Civil War and Reconstruction, segregation and the Civil Rights Movement). We will also explore how political and economic forces have shaped the lives of Arkansans.

This course will introduce students to the basics of conducting historical research on-line as well as in libraries and archives. We will also engage in historical analysis using music, film, oral histories, and archival documents. We will explore primary and secondary sources. Through lectures, reading material, in-class discussions, and written assignments this course will attempt to survey the state and its peoples over time and give students the skills to gather, analyze, and deploy information about the past.

Course Goals: This course will cover many issues surrounding the ways in which groups of people, individuals, and places in Arkansas have interacted over the time. This course is intended to give you the tools to think critically and creatively about the past and to examine Arkansas and its place in the region, country, and world. We will examine the past from different perspectives (social, economic, and political) and on different scales (local, regional, and national). This class, then, should help you to:

- 1) **communicate** your ideas. Both through written work and through classroom discussions, history classes like this one intend to develop your critical thinking skills. We will emphasize developing arguments, articulating ideas, and presenting evidence to support your ideas in a collegial environment.
- 2) **understand** complicated historical events and issues and the basics of historical research. This course will help you to become more aware and critical of your own assumptions about the past. We will also discuss the historical roots of some current social, political, and cultural issues. You will learn to locate and evaluate primary and secondary sources through traditional and on-line research.
- 3) **think** about your community and your place in the world. This course will give you some of the tools to think about where you live and the forces that have shaped Arkansas. On multiple scales, this course should give you tools to engage Arkansas history as it intersects your life, your school, your community, and your world.

Course Requirements: Students are expected to read all assigned material, attend and participate in all discussion sections, and complete all assignments. Regular attendance and thoughtful participation in class discussions are an important part of the course. All students are expected to complete the reading assignments before each class session and should be prepared to answer questions and participate in class discussions. No late research papers or written assignments will be accepted.

All students are expected to be respectful of one another and participate in creating a collegial learning environment. Exams, written work, and your participation in discussions are intended to expand your knowledge of Arkansas history and to develop your skills in critical thinking, communication, and analysis.

Course Grades:

Discussion Section Participation/Assignments/Quizzes: 30%

Midterm Exam: 20%

Research Paper: 30%

Final Exam: 15%



Research Paper Options:

1. Create a field trip for your class to a significant historic or cultural site in Arkansas. Design grade-appropriate reading assignments (primary sources) for your students to prepare them for the field trip. Draw on secondary sources for your background research. Create a lesson plan for your visit to the historic site. Explain how your field trip (and all assignments) meets educational goals for your students. Create assignments for your students to reinforce the educational experience. Include a narrative bibliography. Students who are pursuing a teaching degree are encouraged, but not required, to choose this option.
2. Write a short history of an important local event or place. Using primary sources and secondary sources, write a 10 to 12 page research paper. This paper must have a clear, well-argued thesis and include analysis of primary source material. You must use professional citations, and create a bibliography. The research topic must be bounded, and certain topics are off-limits because of their large scale. See course website for successful research papers from previous years. Consider visiting local history sites and museums (and Special Collections at the library) for ideas.

Week 1: Defining Arkansas

Reading: From *Arkansas: A Narrative History* [Introduction, Chapter 1]; Excerpt from *Hill Folks: A History of Arkansas Ozarkers & Their Image*; [Arkansas's Apostrophe Act](#):

http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2007/02/27/arkansas_house_to_argue_over_apostrophes/

Assignment: Consider the geographic location of Arkansas, how it became a part of the United States, and its demographic and cultural composition. Write a one-page, double-spaced response to this question: If the United States is composed of regions, in which region is Arkansas and why? (The South? The Southwest? The Midwest? The West?)

Lecture 1: Placing Arkansas in History and in the World

Lecture 2: Native Arkansas: Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Places

Discussion: Overview of syllabus, assignments, readings, and coursework. Turn in one-page assignment. Discuss perceptions of Arkansas, Arkansans, and Arkansas's place in the world.

Week 2: Native Peoples and European Exploration

Reading: From *Caddo Indians: Where We Came From*; from *Rumble of a Distant Drum: The Quapaws and Old World Newcomers, 1673-1804, Chapter V: Competing Fathers and Quapaw European Policy*;

Assignment: The Osage Indians call(ed) the Ozarks home. Think about the many ways we know about the Osage people – archaeology, oral history, document-based history, etc. The Osage live on across the country and the world. What is the legacy of their peoples, the Wha-Zha-Zhi, in the Northwest Arkansas area? Bring a brief one paragraph response to this question with you to discussion section.

Lecture 1: Native Arkansas Continued: Placing Arkansas and Its People in the Global Context

Lecture 2: DeSoto, the Spanish, and Strange Trips through Arkansas

Discussion: What are some key similarities and differences between the Native Americans in the area that would become Arkansas? Think about economics, political structures, social norms and customs.

Week 3: Big Deals and Little Boats

Reading: Excerpt from William Dunbar's Journal; "Missed Connections: The Passenger Pigeon Extinction" from Jennifer Price's *Flight Maps*; Chapter 2: Spanish and French Explorations in the Mississippi Valley from *Arkansas: A Narrative History*

Assignment: Compose a one to two paragraph answer to one of the Discussion questions listed below and bring your written answer with you to your discussion section.

Lecture 1: The Real History of Razorbacks: Wildlife and Wilderness in Arkansas

Lecture 2: The Louisiana Purchase, Earthquakes, and Possibilities: Early Anglo Impressions of Arkansas

Discussion:

- Are wild boars the "ultimate frontier animal?" Are they a good mascot?
- What were the most important economic forces in Arkansas before statehood?
- Compare the Spanish and French and American explorations in Arkansas. Who was looking for what?

Week 4: Life and Hardships in Territorial Arkansas

Reading: Conevery Valencius, *The Health of the Country: How American Settlers Understood Themselves and Their Land*, Chapter 1; explore the exhibits either on-line or in person at the Shiloh Museum of Ozark History.

Assignment: Bring a short summary of your proposed research topic (one page); include a tentative bibliography of 5 sources you intend to use.

Lecture 1: Many Trails, Many Tears: Native American Removal and the Creation of Indian Country

Lecture 2: Jumping Off Point: Fort Smith and the Road(s) West; Pioneer Women in Arkansas

Discussion: What were the main challenges Anglo pioneers faced in the early 1800s? What was everyday life like for white men, women, and children? The Trail of Tears runs through Arkansas. What is the legacy of the policy of "Indian Removal" in Arkansas and the region?

Week 5: King Cotton and Plantation Slavery

Reading: Excerpt from *Slave Narratives: a Folk History of Slavery in the United States From Interviews with Former Slaves Arkansas Narratives*; Tom Dillard, "Madness with a Past: An Overview of Race Violence in Arkansas History"

Assignment: You have been hired as the curator of museum. The goal of the museum is to explain plantation agriculture and plantation slavery to the public. Considering the diversity of your audiences, your interpretation of these historical issues would be challenging. Consider one aspect plantation agriculture that we have discussed (physical violence, economy, impact on the landscape, political ramifications, social structures) and write a brief summary of how you would explain the subject matter to the public (no more than one page). You may use excerpts from the texts, images, songs, etc. to create your exhibit.

Lecture 1: Development in the Delta: Agro-Economy of the Plantations

Lecture 2: The Violence of Slavery: Facing the Legacy of the Past

Discussion: Free writing; What were the major political and economic consequences of the slavery within the state of Arkansas?

Week 6: The Blue, the Gray, and the Hogs

Reading: Excerpt from James McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom*, "Facing Both Ways: The Upper South's Dilemma;" Excerpt from Mark Schantz' *Awaiting the Heavenly Country*

Assignment: Explore one of the Arkansas Civil War sites, either on-line or in person. Write a short assessment of how the historic site interprets the war: what is the main focus of the site? What do they leave out? How do you think they could better tell the story of the war in Arkansas? No more than two pages.

Lecture 1: The War at Home: Battlefronts, Turning Points, and Arkansans

Lecture 2: Field Trip; Guided Tour of Civil War Arkansas. Check course web site for details.

Discussion: Guest: Civil War Reenactment Enthusiast discusses his experiences in living and fighting the war in modern times.

Week 7: Reconstructing the Unreconstructable: The Aftermath of the War and The Exodusters

Reading: Excerpt from *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas After Reconstruction*; Excerpt from *Race Relations in the Natural State*, Chapter 4 “An Unnatural Death—The End of Reconstruction”

Lecture 1: Challenges and Opportunities in Reconstruction Arkansas

Lecture 2: No Lecture: In-Class Midterm exam.

Discussion: Cancelled; review for exam.

Review Session for Exam: We will review the format of the exam; key ideas, terms, and people. Attendance is not required.

MIDTERM EXAM

Week 8: Gilding the Magnolia: White Supremacy and Segregation

Reading: Various *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* articles; will be distributed in lecture; excerpts from *Ruled by Race: Black/White Relations in Arkansas From Slavery to the Present* by Grif Stockley

Assignment: Bring a short summary of your reading, including one or two discussion questions based on the article.

Lecture 1: Calling the Hogs to Fayetteville: Land Grant Universities in Arkansas and the South

Lecture 2: For Hate and Terror: Lynching and the KKK

Discussion: What changes did Reconstruction bring about in Arkansas? Were any of those changes lasting? What is sharecropping? In what ways was sharecropping like or unlike the slave-based system that preceded it?

Week 9: Popular Populists: Agrarian Dreams in Arkansas

Reading: From *American Populism: A Social History, Chapter 3, The Farmers' Alliance in Search of the Cooperative Commonwealth*

Assignment: After completing the reading, consider the questions below. Come to discussion section prepared to talk about **all** of the questions, in reference to the reading. Bring a one-page, double-spaced response to **one** of the bulleted questions below to discussion section.

- What were the basic goals of Populism? Did the Populists achieve any of their goals?
- Some historians consider Populism a failed movement. Do you agree? What were the obstacles to the Populists' goals?
- People, often politicians, continue to use the term "populist." How is (lower-case, contemporary) populism like or unlike the Populist movement? Are you a populist?

Lecture 1: An Alternative Plan in an Agricultural State:

Lecture 2: Commonwealth College and Arkansas's Biracial Populism

Discussion: Focus on Questions listed above.

Week 10: Roaring, Revivals, and Revolt

Reading: Chapter 11: "Reasonable Progress: Limits of Progressive Reform" in *Arkansas: A Narrative History*

Assignment: Turn in Research Paper Outlines in Discussion Section.

Lecture 1: Stills in the Hills: Owen Vincent Madden; and Sin City: The New Hot Springs

Lecture 2: Elaine, Arkansas: An Exploration of Racial Violence in the South

Discussion: What do you think were the most important progressive reforms in Arkansas? What were the most significant obstacles to reform?

Week 11: Arkansans and the Depression

Reading: Excerpt from *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression*

Assignment: Compose a brief (one-page) interpretation of one of the WPA photographs, WPA paintings, or political cartoons provided during Lecture 1.

Lecture 1: How Arkansans Became Arkies: The Depression, Displacement, and “Natural” Disasters

Lecture 2: “I Got a Right to Sing the Blues:” Hard Times, But Not in Music

- Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Delta Blues, King Biscuit, and others.

Discussion: Legacies of the Alphabet Soup in Contemporary Arkansas. Examination of art and images of the Depression.

Week 12: Segregation and Southern Culture

Reading: Watch: “Don’t Shout Too Soon” from *The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow*; From *Race Relations in the Natural State*, Chapter 8.

Assignment: Write a short (no more than one page) reaction piece to the film.

Lecture 1: Post-War Realignment: Politics, Arkansas Sub-Regions, and Riding Jim Crow

Lecture 2: Central: School Desegregation in Little Rock and Beyond

Discussion: Japanese Internment Camp (Jerome, Arkansas) and discussion of the state and national significance of the Little Rock Nine. Film Clip: 50th Anniversary of the Desegregation of Little Rock.

Week 13: Vietnam

Reading: Excerpt from J. William Fulbright, *Vietnam, and the Search for a Cold War Foreign Policy*

Assignment: Bring *two copies* of your Draft Research Papers for peer review.

Lecture 1: The Egghead from Arkansas: Vietnam and J. William Fulbright

Lecture 2: The Game of the Century: Texas vs. Arkansas and Nixon’s Jinx

Discussion: Politics on campus; clip from “The War at Home”

Week 14: Always Low Prices: The Origins of Wal-Mart, Tyson, and Trucking in the Ozarks

Reading: Excerpt from Bethany Moreton's *The Soul of the Service Economy: Wal-Mart and the Making of Christian Free Enterprise, 1929—1994*; Excerpt from Sandra Vance and Roy Scott's "Sam Walton and Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.: A Study in Modern Southern Entrepreneurship."

Assignment: Bring one "Discussion Question" based on your reading with you to section. Sketch a few possible responses to your question, including references from your reading. No more than two paragraphs.

Lecture 1: Jimmy Driftwood and the Preservation of the Buffalo River

Lecture 2: Mr. Sam and the Ozarks: Southern Enterprise Goes Global

Discussion: View short film on the history of Tyson, "Feathers in Our Cap," produced in 1984. Is Wal-Mart Arkansas's most significant export? Your questions.

Research Papers Due Friday 5:00pm.

Week 15: Beyond Yellow Dogs: Clinton, Huckabee, and Arkansans Playing Politics on the National Stage

Reading: None. Extra Credit Opportunity: Evening Film.

Lecture 1: Red, Blue, or Just Plain Different: Arkansas Politics in the New Millennium (featuring early Bill Clinton campaign ads)

Lecture 2: Final Exam Review

Discussion: Cancelled; Students are encouraged to attend Final Exam Review.

Final Exam