

## COURSE SYLLABUS: RESEARCH SEMINAR: PLAIN FOLK OF THE OLD SOUTH, HIST 710

*Maybank 304*  
*Thursday, 4:00-6:45 p.m.,*

*Instructor: David Gleeson*  
*Office: Maybank 317*  
*953 1915*  
*gleesond@cofc.edu*

SPRING 2008

---

### ***Course Description***

In the study of the Old South (1607-1865) historians have paid a lot of attention to the people at the very top, the planters, and the very bottom, the slaves. In comparison, very little research has been done on the people in between, broadly defined as the “plain folk.” This group in fact made up the majority of the population in the region. You will study and review innovative works on the topic and also complete a major primary-research paper on some aspect of the subject. Your paper should incorporate some of the social-history techniques explored in class. Writing is a major element of this class. Active participation in class discussion and constructive criticism of your colleagues’ work will also be a major part of this seminar.

### ***Required Reading***

*Plain Folk of the Old South.* By Frank L. Owsley. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949.

*Poor Whites of the Antebellum South: Tenants and Laborers in Central North Carolina and Northeast Mississippi.* By Charles C. Bolton. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994.

*Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Lowcountry.* By Stephanie McCurry. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

*The Origins of the Southern Middle Class, 1800-1861.* By Jonathan Daniel Wells. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

*Neither Lady nor Slave: Working Women of the Old South.* Edited by Susanna Delfino and Michele Gillespie. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

*The Free State of Jones: Mississippi’s Longest Civil War.* By Victoria Bynum. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

### ***Office Hours***

T, R, 10:40-12, 3-4, or by appointment.

I encourage you to make every effort to come and discuss your work with me. If you do not understand any feedback I write on your papers, exams etc., please do not hesitate to make an appointment.

### ***Grading***

Book Reviews:	40%
Major Paper:	50%
Participation and Criticism:	10%

#### **Book Reviews:**

You will write a review of every book you read. It should be 3-4 pages in length and incorporate criticism of style, substance, and sources. Include some information on the author. For examples of reviews see the *American Historical Review*, the *Journal of American History*, and the *Journal of Southern History*. One of your review grades may be dropped.

#### **Major Paper:**

Each person will write a major research paper (**25 pages minimum**) on a topic approved by the instructor. It must be on some aspect of plain folk of the Old South. The paper will include primary and secondary sources. The **majority** of the paper should be generated **from primary sources**. You must include **at least 20** secondary sources. Throughout the semester, you will be required to discuss your progress on your topic as well as provide a preliminary bibliography, prospectus, and outline.

#### **Participation and Criticism:**

Each student should be prepared to discuss the books/topics assigned for each week. Every class meeting will begin with a criticism of the preceding week's writing. Everyone will read everybody else's work. For the final paper, you will be appointed the major critic of one of your colleagues. You will be expected to lead the critique of their paper. You will turn in a written critique both to the instructor and to your partner. Your criticism should be constructive and based on a solid analysis of style, substance, and sources.

A=90-100, B+=88-89, B=80-87, C+=78-79, C=70-77, D=60-69, F=0-59

*Outline\**

January 10  
Introduction

January 17--**Meet at South Carolina Historical Society**

January 24--**Meet at Avery Center**  
Owsley review due

January 31  
McCurry review due  
Paper topic discussion

February 7  
Bolton review due

February 14  
Wells Review due  
Paper topic and prelim. bib. due

February 21  
Delfino and Gillespie review due

February 28  
Paper prospectus and bibliography due

**March 6--No class--Spring Break**

March 13  
Bynum review due

March 20  
No class  
Work on paper

March 27  
No class--Paper--sample pages and outline due

April 3  
Paper Progress Report

**April 10**  
**Paper due 5:00 pm**

April 17  
Critique Session 1

April 24  
Critique Session 2

May 1  
Critique Session 3—if necessary

*\*subject to revision*

### ***Policies***

- ▶ Assigned work will be accepted **no later than the date due**. Please see the instructor **prior** to the due date for discussion of exceptions to this policy. Only serious excuses (see attendance policy above) will be approved.
- ▶ **Incompletes** will not be given for the convenience of the student.
- ▶ Consumption of food and beverages which disrupts class is not permitted.
- ▶ Cheating and plagiarism are absolutely unacceptable. The Honor Code of the College of Charleston specifically forbids lying, cheating, attempted cheating, stealing, attempted stealing, and plagiarism. A student found guilty of any of these offenses will receive a failing grade for the course. Additional penalties may include suspension or expulsion from the College at the discretion of the honor board. See the student handbook for definitions of these offenses.
- ▶ Disruption of class will not be tolerated and will result in expulsion from the class. Please be on time. Turn off all cell phones.