

History 410/Research Seminar
American Voyage: 1877-1945

Dr. Stuart Knee
Fall 2008

Office Hours: MWF 11 - 11:50 a.m. and 1 - 1:50 p.m.
Office and Extension: Maybank 213 (843) 953-5938

Course Requirements:

- A. Active participation in the class will be evaluated in your favor and regular class attendance is required. After three (3) unexcused absences, the student will receive a warning from me that his/her absences are excessive. Additional unexcused absences will result in grade deflation or a determination that the student should receive a "WA."
- B. Oral participation and conversation: All the readings except the first will become subjects of extended class analysis. After a few weeks of introductory lectures given by me, all students must be prepared to contribute! Each week, two students will lead a particular discussion on an assigned topic with accompanying class debate. To be a discussion leader means that students must have done background research sufficient to place a monograph or an historic era in context, critique it, and offer the class a short bibliography of relevant works. Also, all student research will be presented to and discussed by the class before final drafts of the Seminar paper are submitted.
- C. Seminar Paper: This will be a 25 page paper, topic and focus to be decided in conference with me. There are four general choices as to requirement:
1. A primary resource paper based upon manuscript/archival holdings at the Addlestone Library, the Avery Institute or any other suitable Charleston archive. For a paper like this you'd probably examine family records, organizational histories, financial and account books, cultural reminiscences(on tape), plantation records or College of Charleston yearbooks! See me, or better yet, the rare books and manuscripts librarian, the curator of our Jewish Studies Archive (Professor Dale Rosengarten), or all of us. For an introductory summary of holdings at the Addlestone Library, see the South Carolina Historical Magazine, vol. 81 (April 1980), pp. 131-153. Note: I'm scheduling a couple of archival tours as soon as class begins.
 2. A primary resource paper of a more national nature which should center on any legitimate issue in American history. The paper's focus may be a specific event, personality, philosophy or phenomenon which shaped American history, either abroad (foreign policy) or at home. The paper must use primary source materials available in the campus library, e.g. Congressional Record, Foreign Relations of the United States, Messages and

Papers of the Presidents of the United States, family collection, newspapers, documents, edited collections of correspondence and letters, published diaries and memoirs, as well as standard monographic sources.

3. A critical study of a major historian. This calls for a brief biographical sketch of the historian, placing him/her in the context of relevant historical writing, an extended analysis of a group of his/her works or a single well-known work, with emphasis on the dominating ideas and theories which shape and inform his/her writing and a discussion of the historian's influence and contribution to scholarship. Generally speaking, this sort of essay would demand that you consult the works of other historians who either criticize or commend your subject, read book reviews and some works in intellectual history in order to find and place your subject and, perhaps, show a transition in his/her point of view during the course of a career. Some historians you might consider are Carl Degler, Ann Firor Scott, Gabriel Kolko, Nell Irvin Painter, Angie Debo, George Mowry, John Morton Blum, Edward Ayers, Ronald Takaki, Leon Litwack, Dee Brown, Charles Beard, Thomas A. Bailey, C. Vann Woodward, Richard Hofstadter, Robert Wiebe, John Higham, James M. Burns, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., William Leuchtenberg and Arthur Link.

4. An historiographical study of a particular event or figure in history. This involves the question of how historians approach and interpret a personality, event or historical problem.

Examples:

- a. New South—Something old or something really new?
- b. Businessmen in the Gilded Age—far-seeing captains of industry or robber barons?
- c. Populism—a new sort of popular reform or an old sort of prejudice (or both)?
- d. Spanish American War--ideals and/or self interest?
- e. Progressives--innovators or efficiency experts (do one of the following three: Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft or Woodrow Wilson)?
- f. The reason or reasons for U.S. participation in World War I—an evolving, 80 year study.
- g. The New Deal--evolution or revolution?
- h. The reason or reasons for U.S. participation in World War II--an evolving, 60 year study.
- i. The Turner thesis and the historians—how vital is the West?

- j. Dropping the Bomb--was it worth it or was the price too high?
- k. Woodrow Wilson as peacemaker; FDR as peacemaker--good or bad?

The point is you take an incident, period, figure or even a document (e.g. The Progressive Era, The New Deal) and do a thorough study of how historians vary in their interpretations of its significance. But I stress - this is not in any case to be merely a survey of what historians have said about a particular problem - and it is definitely not to read like an annotated bibliography. You, the researcher, must trace trends and directions of scholarship on the subject; you, the researcher, should relate these trends to the period in which the history was written; you should deal with background and climates of opinion in an effort to judge to what degree historians represent their times. Some articles to consult are:

1. John Higham, "The Historian as Moral Critic," American Historical Review, LXVII (April 1962), pp. 609-625.
2. Stanley Elkins, Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life, Chapter 1: "An Introduction: Slavery as a Problem in Historiography," pp. 1-26.
3. Charles G. Sellers, Jr., "Andrew Jackson vs. The Historians," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLIV (March 1958), pp. 615-634.
4. Perez Zagorin, "Theories of Revolution in Contemporary Historiography," Political Science Quarterly, LXXXVIII (March 1973).
5. David M. Potter, History and American Society: Essays, New York, Oxford University Press, 1973.
6. Robert A. Skotheim, American Intellectual History and Historians; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966.
7. Rhys Isaac, "Order and Growth, Authority and Meaning in Colonial New England," American Historical Review, 76 (June 1971), 728-737.
8. Jack P. Greene, "The Social Origins of the American Revolution," Political Science Quarterly, LXXXVIII (March 1973), 1-22.

Papers are due December 8 and I will not grade late submissions; for those, you will receive an "F". The paper is 75% of your grade, and should be submitted in three parts:

Part I, a 1-2 page narrative with projected bibliography must be submitted on September 17
Part II, a more extensive bibliography with a 5-10 page narrative is due October 22
Part III, the final product, 25 pages, inclusive of bibliography is due on the last day of class.

D. Required Reading:

1. Jules R. Benjamin, A Student's Guide to History, 10th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007.
2. Stuart E. Knee, Christian Science in the Age of Mary Baker Eddy. Westport, CM: Greenwood Press, 1994.
3. Lynn Dumenil, The Modern Temper: American Culture and Society in the 1920's. New York: Hill and Wang, 1995.
4. Paul K. Conkin, The New Deal, 3rd ed. Wheeling, IL; Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1992.
5. Lewis Erenberg, The Greatest Fight of Our Generation: Louis vs. Schmeling. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
6. Robert H. Abzug, Inside the Vicious Heart: Americans and the Liberation of Concentration Camps. New York: Oxford University press, 1985.

Assignment Schedule

Week of:

August 27:	Introduction
September 1:	The Scope of American Historiography
September 8:	Studies in American Historiography: The Robber Barons, Populism and The Spanish-American War
September 15:	Studies in American Historiography: World War I
September 17:	<u>Preliminary Bibliography and 1-2 pp. Precis due</u>
September 22:	The Gilded Age <u>Due: Knee, Christian Science in the Age of Mary Baker Eddy</u>
September 29:	The Progressive Era in Historiographical Perspective
October 6:	The 1920's <u>Due: Dumenil, The Modern Temper</u>
October 15	The New Deal I: Politics <u>Due: Conkin, The New Deal</u>

October 20 The New Deal II: Society and Culture

October 22: **Extended bibliography and 5-10 page narrative due**

October 27: The New Deal III: Ethnicity
Due: Erenberg, The Greatest Fight of Our Generation

November 3: World War II
Due: Abzug, Inside the Vicious Heart

November 10: PRESENTATION of Research

November 17: PRESENTATION of Research

November 24: PRESENTATION of Research

December 1: PRESENTATION of Research

December 8: SUMMATION: Gaining A Perspective on Historical Research 1877-1945

December 8: **Final Papers due**