COURSE SYLLABUS
Texas History
HIS3398W
3 credit hours
FALL 2015

Section .02, Online; CRN 81001

Section .03, Live; CRN 81003
The Woodlands Center (TWC), room 150; 6:00pm – 8:50pm Wednesday

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History Dept. 936-294-1475

Texas History 398 is a "W" course, which means that at least 50% of your course grade will derive from writing activities designed to help you master course objectives. Writing in this course is one of the tools your instructor will use to help you learn course material. Some writing activities will require you to draft and revise your work, with or without instructor feedback. Others may not receive a grade but are designed to assist you in critical reflection of the course material. You should approach writing in this course as a tool to use a part of your learning as well as a tool your instructor will use to assess your level of learning.

—posted per directive, College of Humanities & Social Sciences
CONTACT PROTOCOL
Students in the Section .02 online class should expect to conduct all business with me on Blackboard (Bb). I will try to be available at TWC on Wednesday afternoons for students in the live section (.03). The faculty offices are located on the 3d floor of the building. I am always delighted to meet with students—especially those who email in advance and make an appointment! Please know that prior commitments as well as unforeseen circumstances may occasionally keep me from holding office hours...another good reason to drop me an email and let me know you're coming.

Please use your university-issued email address exclusively. If you use an outside address, there is a good chance it will go straight to spam. Normally I respond to my students quickly. If you have an emergency, please call the history department office.

Important Note Regarding TECHNICAL ISSUES
The number for Bb support is 936-294-2780. Otherwise, be aware of two useful items in your Bb course menu. The “Need Help?” tab will let you know whom to contact. The Technical Support icon located just above the course menu will lead you to additional Bb support.

A Note of admonition and fair Warning!!!
Everyone needs to see this link
NOTE: Please know that I reserve the right to make revisions to the syllabus.
If I find it necessary to make changes, I will try and notify the class by email.

University & Personal Policies
- The following link will take you to the University policies regarding Academic Dishonesty, Absences for Religious Holidays, Students with Disabilities, and Visitors in the Classroom. Be advised that you are bound by these policies whether you read them or not: http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/
- The following link will take you to the University policies regarding Attendance: Link.
- The following link will take you to the University policies regarding Use of Technology: Link.
- The following link will take you to Dr. Cashion's policy regarding Classroom Behavior: Link.

Another important note...never use the “digital drop box!”
Course Objectives and Instructional Method

Students will develop an understanding of the history, land, and culture of Texas through lectures, text, readings, and film. Beyond a survey knowledge of Texas history, students will learn to think critically, form opinions, and express themselves through written work (and, for the live section, in class discussions).

Schedule of Activities and Examinations

To view the weekly assignments and dates of the exams, please go to Blackboard and click on the tab “Units,” located on your menu to the left of the page.

The pace and periodization for this course is organized around the C&D textbook. As a matter of routine, you will be assigned a chapter from the textbook almost weekly. I will deliver corresponding lectures, and a reading from the LSR will normally be assigned as well. Occasionally you will have a virtual assignment (i.e., a reading or video from the web). Weekly examinations covering the textbook, lectures, reader, and virtual assignments will be administered via Blackboard. The course grade will be calculated on an averaged 100-point scale, contingent upon the volume and quality of your written work as outlined below.

Please take the time to read and understand everything in this section. Feel free to contact me if something seems unclear.

A Lone Star Reader

Link to format instructions and content guidelines for A Lone Star Reader here

- You will be responsible for reading 12 chapters from A Lone Star Reader as well as submitting synopses/reviews for selected chapters as follows:
  - No student will receive an A in the course who has not produced and submitted in a timely manner* acceptable papers for at least 9 of the 12 assignments; 7 of 12 for a B; 5 of 12 for a C. No student will pass the course who has not submitted at least 5 of the assignments in a timely manner.
  *If you cannot complete a couple of writing assignments on time, it’s not the end of the world. But, if you miss three due dates, you will owe me an additional paper. Miss five or more due dates, and you will owe me three additional papers.
- RE, due dates. Each written assignment will be due anytime during the week of the reading assignment.
- Be aware there will be questions over the current LSR reading on almost every exam. Ergo...you do not have to produce papers for every assignment, but you will have to read each one—and in a timely manner.
- Please submit each paper through Blackboard. Look for the tab “LSRs.”
- Grading
  - “Acceptable” indicates that you have read and comprehended the material at hand sufficiently, and you have summarized the thesis, conveyed the main points, and suitably expressed your opinion. “Needs Work” indicates that either you read the material, but not thoroughly enough to understand it, or that...
you were incapable of expressing yourself adequately. "Unacceptable" simply indicates an unacceptable
effort, and it will not count toward your total (no re-do's!).

- Please understand there will be up to 80 of you in two sections, but there's only one of me (that means if
everyone does their job, I'll be looking at 800 papers. If everyone does their job, but in an untimely
manner, it could conceivably result in over 1,000!). Expect to hear from me if your paper needs work, or
is unacceptable. If your paper is acceptable, you may or may not receive feedback. You will, however,
know that it has been received and opened by going to the LSR tab on Blackboard.

Lectures & Virtual Assignments

- Lectures
  - Podcasts of the lectures delivered to the “live” class on Wednesdays will be posted to Blackboard each
    Wednesday evening. (On the rare occasion when class does not meet, I will post a previous lecture.)
  - Each paper will be graded either “Acceptable,” “Needs Work,” or, "Unacceptable.”
  - If for some reason you cannot open the podcast, make sure your software is up-to-date...if that does not
do the trick, then try a different server (e.g., if you’re on Firefox, switch to Chrome)
  - If it still does not open, see “In Case of Technical Issues” below. If all else fails, let me know. Rest assured
    that I will not be able to fix the problem, but I will know someone who can!

- Virtual Assignments
  - “Virtual assignments” refers to various online selections (e.g., Handbook of Texas Online, and YouTube)
  - Please let me know if a link is unavailable
  - If I have to post an alternate link or assignment, I will inform the class by email.

Exams & Grading

- “Reading Checks” for The History of Texas (C&D)
  - For each C&D chapter, you will find a corresponding set of questions in Blackboard. These will provide a
    reading check. When the time comes for you to take the weekly exams, all questions over the textbook
    will come straight from these pools.
  - The reading checks are not compulsory, nor will you receive a grade for them.
  - Note: Folks, this is the kind of information for which the men of Delta Tau Chi were digging through that
dumpster in Animal House; take advantage of this opportunity!

Studying for Lectures & Virtual Assignments

- Expect to see two types of lecture questions on the exams. One type will test your grasp of the context, or “big
  picture”; the other type will test to see how well you listened.
- Study tip: Many students have told me they have taken the time to revisit the podcasted lectures right before
  opening the exam, rather than taking notes. They contend that it takes more time to study their notes than to
listen to the podcast. This makes perfect sense. There are all kinds of studies that will tell you a person has “X%”
recall (would it make you feel better if I fabricated a number? OK, 95%) within an hour of a lecture, and that it
drops off precipitously the longer you wait. The moral of this story: “Take the exam while the information is fresh
on your mind.”
- The object of the virtual assignments is to enlighten/inform/entertain. I do not want to spoil the moment by
  compelling you to take notes. Enjoy them! Any questions over these assignments will be so general in nature that
if you watch/read/listen they should be...dare I say...“virtual gimmes.”

- Important Exam Information
  - My philosophy regarding exams has changed in recent years because of the way most youngsters have
    adapted to technology as well as the tendency of so many to wait until the last minute to prepare. For
these reasons I will post exams almost weekly, rather than hold you responsible for two or three large
blocks of information over the course of the semester.
Each Friday at noon an online exam over the weekly unit material (i.e., C&D, lectures, LSR, and virtual assignments) will be made available on Blackboard; they will remain open until midnight the following Monday.

Questions over the LSR readings and virtual assignments will be broad enough in nature that you will be able to answer them if you remain attentive; i.e., do not feel compelled to take notes or invest any more time in these assignments than it takes to read/watch/listen to them carefully.

You will have between 15 and 20 minutes to answer between 20 and 30 questions, composed of some variety of multiple-choice, matching, and true-false.

In all, 13 exams will be made available to you.

- Only your 10 best exam grades, plus your comprehensive final, will count toward your course grade.
- ERGO: You are responsible for taking only 11 exams (i.e., 10 plus the comprehensive final); if you know that school- or personal-related matters will weigh heavily upon you during some particular week, then do not feel compelled to invest your time studying for a history exam that you know will not be a “keeper.” BUT, do not leave yourself without the “wiggle room” to deal with unanticipated matters that might come up later.

Be aware there will be up to 7 C&D questions worth 1-point apiece over each chapter on the final. If you skip a couple of weeks, you will have time to read the chapters as you prepare for the final, because there will be no lecture, LSR, or virtual assignments that week.

IMPORTANT NOTE 1: Because the exams are online, I cannot expect the class to comply with a “no peeking” policy. At the same time, I want your grades to be a reflection of your reading and listening comprehension. Limiting the exam time means you will have to study. You might have the time to look up an answer here and there if you are well-organized, but you will not have enough time to look up the answers in a leisurely manner.

IMPORTANT NOTE 2: Do not freak out if you feel as if you are running out of time; the exam will not close on you. Blackboard will simply inform me that you exceeded the time limit. If occasionally you bleed over by a couple of minutes, no big deal; if, however, it’s taking you an hour, then I might suspect you are taking liberties, and I will ask you to retake a supervised exam.

IMPORTANT NOTE 3: Let me admonish you to resist the temptation of taking these exams “by committee” (i.e., having your swimming buddies standing by to help). If you do so, that final exam will “out” you!

IMPORTANT NOTE 4: I reserve the right to have any student re-take an exam under video supervision through the DELTA center if I suspect cheating is involved.

While I do not anticipate offering extra credit, I do expect there will be enough room to curve the final grade.

Comprehensive Final Exam

Everyone will be compelled to take the final examination; it is not one you can drop. Moreover, it will count twice (i.e., if you “ace” it, two hundred points will be added to your exam total; if you bomb it, that grade will count twice as well).

If you read all the assigned C&D chapters diligently, the final examination will be the easiest one you will take this semester. In any event, your grade will certainly be deserving of your efforts. It will be administered in two parts—one composed of 20 questions that covers the Unit 13 C&D chapter, the other composed of 80 questions that is comprehensive in nature. Both parts of the exam will draw only from the C&D reading checks. There will be no questions over the lectures, LSRs, or virtual assignments.

The final exam will open at the scheduled time on the scheduled date. Please know, however, that it will not be a two-hour exam, and you will not have a window of two hours to open it at your leisure. Like the other exams, you will have adequate time to finish. But unlike the other exams, everyone will begin at the same.

When the administration posts the Final Examination Schedule, I will pass the time along to all of you.