

HIST 231-402/AFRC 229-402
Racial Violence in Modern America

Tuesdays, 3:00-6:00pm
Location TBD

Dr. Jason Morgan Ward
Penn Humanities Forum
warjason@sas.upenn.edu

Office Hours: T 11-12, 2-3, or by appointment

Racial violence has shaped Americans' perceptions of themselves and their country's history since settlement. After the Civil War, the end of slavery and struggles over citizenship transformed the scope and the stakes of that violence. In this course, we will examine how racial violence has influenced modern American history and shaped civil rights struggles. From the anti-lynching movement of the earlier twentieth century to the backlash against church bombings in the civil rights era, violence has inspired everyday Americans to join the very campaigns that racial terrorists intended to crush. Indeed, Americans have often cited incidents of racial violence as catalysts for progressive social movements and legislative reform. But racial violence has just as often retarded social progress and discouraged many from admitting or examining this painful part of our nation's history.

The readings and discussions in this class will take a broad, comparative approach by examining how racial violence has affected African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and other ethnic minorities. Furthermore, we will investigate how other factors, such as gender, religion, and political ideology, influence acts of violence against racial minorities. We will also explore how the memory and portrayal of racial violence in historical scholarship and popular media has changed over time. Students will be not only students of the topic, but scholars as well. Class time will be devoted not only to discussing assigned readings and designated themes, but also to discussing the best practices of historical research and writing—from strategic reading and note-taking to storytelling and the use of quotations. By the end of the semester, each student will produce a work of original scholarship that engages with the intertwined themes of race and violence in modern America.

Required Books

Crystal Feimster. *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching*. Harvard University Press, 2009.

Karl Jacoby. *Shadows at Dawn: An Apache Massacre & the Violence of History*. Penguin, 2008.

Benjamin Heber Johnson. *Revolution in Texas: How a Forgotten Rebellion and Its Bloody Suppression Turned Mexicans into Americans*. Yale University Press, 2003

Nicholas Lemann, *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2006.

Scott Zesch. *The Chinatown War: Chinese Los Angeles and the Massacre of 1871*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

- All other assigned readings will be provide via library databases, website links, and/or documents provided by the professor.
 - Readings below not marked “PDF” or followed by a weblink must be accessed and download via UPenn online databases (JSTOR, Academic Search, etc.)

Assignments

Discussion Leader	due weekly	10%
Term Paper Presentation	due April 29	10%
Term Paper Proposal	due March 25	10%
Primary Source Narrative	due March 4	15%
Weekly Responses / Participation	due weekly	25%
Term Paper	due May 6	30%

Students are expected to prepare thoroughly for—and engage actively in—each seminar meeting. Attendance is mandatory, and students who miss class will forfeit the opportunity to earn participation credit—a full quarter of the final grade—for the class meeting missed. Students who anticipate an exceptional circumstance—or who encounter an unforeseen emergency—should contact Dr. Ward immediately. Students who already anticipate events and obligations that conflict with multiple class meetings should find a course more conducive to his or her schedule.

Student preparation and participation will be measured in multiple ways. Weekly responses will provide an opportunity to reflect on specific questions and themes addressed in the assignments, which may include multimedia sources as well as readings. During seminar meetings, students will complete informal and structured exercises related to weekly themes or research paper preparation. Any activity—written or verbal—performed during seminar meetings will be credited towards the participation component (25%) of the final grade.

Students will also serve as discussion leader *once* during the semester. In addition to completing a response, the discussion leader will provide a brief introduction at the beginning of class and compose questions and talking points to guide the discussion portion of the weekly meeting. More detailed instructions will follow. This assignment will count for 10% of the final grade.

The formal writing assignments for the semester are focused on developing research and writing skills that will be demonstrated in the completion of an original research paper. For the first assignment—the primary source narrative—each student will complete a 1000 word (4-page) essay based on a common set of historical documents. The assignment will count for 15% of the final grade. The objective of the assignment is to practice and discuss the techniques and challenges of effective historical writing. Detailed guidelines for this assignment will be provided and discussed well in advance of the March 4 due date.

In preparation for the final research paper, students will prepare a term paper proposal that includes a working thesis, topic description, and an annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources. This assignment will count for 10% of the final course grade and will be due on March 25. Students will also prepare a brief formal presentation on their research project,

which will count for another 10%. Students will present their projects during the final class meeting on April 29. The following week, on May 6, students will submit their 5000-word (20-page) final paper. Detailed instructions for the proposal, presentation, and final papers will be provided and discussed extensively in advance of these due dates.

Course Schedule

WEEK 1 (January 21) - INTRODUCTION

WEEK 2 (January 28)- THE RECONSTRUCTION ERA

Readings:

- Lemann, *Redemption*

WEEK 3 (February 4)- FRONTIER VIOLENCE

Readings:

- Jacoby, *Shadows at Dawn*

WEEK 4 (February 11) - WHITENING THE AMERICAN WEST

Readings:

- Zesch, *The Chinatown War*

WEEK 5 (February 18) - GENDER AND VIOLENCE IN THE NEW SOUTH

Readings:

- Feimster, *Southern Horrors*

WEEK 6 (February 25) - BORDER WARS

Readings:

- Johnson, *Revolution in Texas*

WEEK 7 (March 4) - RESEARCHING RACIAL VIOLENCE: WORLD WAR I

Readings:

- Primary Source Packet

Due:

- Primary Source Narrative

WEEK 8 (March 18) - THE ANTILYNCHING MOVEMENT

Readings:

- Walter White, selected readings (PDF)
- Amy Louise Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle*, pp. 179-222 (PDF)
- Christopher Waldrep, "The Controversy Over the Definition of Lynching, 1899-1940," *Journal of Southern History* 66 (2000): 75-100.
- NAACP, *Lynching Goes Underground* (PDF)

WEEK 9 (March 25) - RACIAL VIOLENCE DURING WORLD WAR II

Readings:

- Victor Rotnem, "The Federal Civil Right 'Not to Be Lynched,'" *Washington University Law Quarterly* 28 (1943): 57-73.
- Jason Morgan Ward, "No Jap Crow: Japanese Americans Encounter the World War II South," *Journal of Southern History* (2007): 75-104.
- Eduardo Pagan, *Murder at the Sleepy Lagoon*, pp. 167-90 (PDF)

Due:

- Final Paper Proposal

WEEK 10 (April 1) - RACIAL VIOLENCE IN COLD WAR AMERICA

Readings:

- Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton UP, 2001), pp. 18-46 (PDF)
- President's Commission on Civil Rights, *To Secure These Rights* (1947)
 - Link: <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/civilrights/srights1.htm>

WEEK 11 (April 8) - RIGHTS AND REPRESSION

Readings:

- Glenn Eskew, *But for Birmingham: The Local and National Movements in the Civil Rights Struggle*, pp. 53-84
- Danielle L. McGuire, "'It Was Like All of Us Had Been Raped': Sexual Violence, Community Mobilization, and the African American Freedom Struggle," *Journal of American History* 91 (December 2004): 906-931.
- Timothy Tyson, "Dynamite and 'The Silent South': A Story from the Second Reconstruction," pp. 275-97
- Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another County: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution*, pp. 108-43

WEEK 12 (April 15) - RACE, VIOLENCE, AND THE RADICAL RIGHT

Readings:

- Andrew MacDonald (William Pierce), *The Turner Diaries* (PDF)

WEEK 13 (April 22) - RACIAL VIOLENCE AND HISTORICAL MEMORY

Readings:

- Mark Auslander, "'Holding on to Those Who Can't be Held': Reenacting a Lynching at Moore's Ford, Georgia," *Southern Spaces*
 - Link: <http://www.southernspaces.org/2010/holding-those-who-cant-be-held-reenacting-lynching-moores-ford-georgia>

Due:

- Presentations

WEEK 14 (April 29) - PRESENTATIONS / COURSE WRAP-UP

FINAL PAPER – Due May 6