"A common history has not necessarily meant a common experience, nor has it produced a uniformity of heritage and a conformity in character." — C. Vann Woodward

Course Description:
Southern theorist C. Vann Woodward pondered in 1950 whether there was any usefulness in a southerner calling oneself southern. He argued that the collective historical experiences of the South where generations of scarcity and want, a pessimism in its social outlook and moral philosophy, and a deep historical consciousness all contribute to this distinct region. Later in the century, southern historian James C. Cobb claimed that the culture of the modern South is largely a mass-produced caricature of hackneyed southern stereotypes. Regardless of the utility of authenticating a “southern experience,” many people from within the borders of the traditional South, as well as people from all over the world, continue to document their admiration of the region, while others seek to express their repulsion of the South’s turbulent history.

In this course, we will examine the historical and social changes of the American South throughout the twentieth century. Material and visual culture, literature, journalism, music, food, religion, and recreation serve as our course materials. This multi-disciplinary exploration of the region’s folkways dispenses with the notion of a monolithic southern culture. Among our objectives is to consider the cultural constructions of southern identity, paying particular attention to the reasons and means for the development of “The South.”

Course Policies:
- No eating in class, but I do allow water/soda/coffee/etc. Please be discrete
- I encourage spirited dialogue among students, but please remain courteous to each other.
- No Laptops, unless the assignment requires one in class. Also, turn off all cell phones.
- Taping or other forms of recording are not permitted.
- This syllabus can be changed at my discretion.

Accommodations:
Students who believe that, due to the presence of a disability, they may need academic accommodations in order to meet the requirements of this or any other SLU class are encouraged to contact Disability Services, either via phone at 977-8885 or in person at Busch Student Center Suite 331. Upon my receipt of an approved letter from Disability Services, I’ll be glad to arrange reasonable and appropriate accommodations. And, of course, I’ll handle such matters in strict confidence.
Grading:

- **Song Project (10%)**: During the semester you will choose one song in any of the explored genres (Country, Blues, Rap/Hip-Hop, Southern Rock, etc.). Bring the song to class on a CD, iPod or computer file to share with the class. Further, compose a short, 500-word response to the themes explored in the lyrics. Pay particular attention to how this cultural product intersects with the historical events discussed in class. Be prepared to speak briefly to the class about your conclusions.

- **Attendance/Class Participation (10%)**: You are allowed three unexcused absences during the semester. Each additional unexcused absence will result in 1% deducted from your final grade. I expect everyone to be prepared to contribute to class discussion.

- **Book/Movie Review (15%)**: Choose one book or movie—it does not need to be current—to review. Explore how the text relates to topics/themes discussed in class. I must approve the cultural text, but I will also provide a list of suggestions. 700-900 words.

- **Paper (20%)**: Each student must write a 6 to 8-page paper. We will develop paper ideas throughout the semester. Part of the assignment will be to provide a thorough peer review of a classmate.

- **Midterm (20%)**: An exam of the first half of the semester.

- **Final Exam (25%)**: A comprehensive exam that is weighted toward the second half of the semester.

Required Texts:

Articles:

A few of our readings will come from two online southern journals
- Southern Cultures: [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/southern_cultures/](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/southern_cultures/)
- Southern Spaces: [http://www.southernspaces.org/](http://www.southernspaces.org/)

Periodicals that Focus on Southern Culture
- Mississippi Quarterly Oxford American (non-scholarly)
- Southern Literary Review
- Southern Quarterly: A Journal of the Arts in the South
- Journal of Southern History

Also, journals that typically include articles on the South in each issue
- African American Review
- Callaloo
- American Quarterly
### Schedule of Class Sessions and Assignments

(ADS) = *Away Down South* / (TSTT) = *The South Through Time*

#### Week 1: The 19th Century South, an Introduction

**Mon: 8/29**  
**Orientation and Course Materials**  
— **Handout**: Christopher, Cooper and Gibbs Knots, “Rethinking the Boundaries of the South,” *Southern Cultures*, Winter 2002.

**Wed: 8/31**  
**Southern Exceptionalism**  

**Fri: 9/2**  
**Righteous Defeat**  
— *ADS*, Ch. 2 “The South Becomes a Cause”: p. 34-66.

#### Part 1: SOUTHERN MYTHMAKING

#### Week 2: The First “New South”

**Mon: 9/5**  
**LABOR DAY (NO CLASS)**

**Wed: 9/7**  
**Industrial Might Makes Right**  
— *ADS*, Ch. 3 “The New South and the Old Cause”: p. 67-98.  

**Fri: 9/9**  
**New South Creed**  

#### Week 3: Appalachia: Hillbillie Happenings

**Mon: 9/12**  
**Bluegrass**  
— Hanson, Bradley, “The Tennessee Jamboree: Local Radio, the Barn Dance, and Cultural Life in Appalachian East Tennessee,” *Southern Spaces*, Nov. 2008. [LINK](#)

**Wed: 9/14**  
**“New Deal” South & the TVA**  
— **In Class Film**: *The High Lonesome Sound* (1963). Dir. John Cohen. (30 min.)
Week 4: Faulkner: Creating Yoknapatawpha County

Mon: 9/19  Introduction to the Southern Renaissance
— ADS, Ch. 4 “The Southern Renaissance and the Revolt of the New South Creed”: p. 99-129.

Wed: 9/21  “THE BEAR”
— William Faulkner, “The Bear.” Malcolm Crowley Intro & Part I:

Fri: 9/23  READING DAY (NO CLASS)
— William Faulkner, “The Bear.” Parts II, III:

Week 5: The “Mind of the South”

Mon: 9/26  Dr. Matthew Mancini Guest Lecture. Dept. Chair, American Studies.

Wed: 9/28  Radicals
— ADS, Ch. 6, “The Mind of the South”: p. 185-211
— Handout: Excerpt of Wilbur Cash’s Mind of the South.

— In Class Film: Miss Lil’s Camp (2008). 27 min.

Week 6: The Blues and African American Diaspora


Fri: 10/7  The Myth of Robert Johnson

Part 2: THE SOUTHERN RIGHT & CIVIL RIGHTS

Week 7: Challenging the Solid South


— **Handout**: Midterm Review Packet

**Week 8: MIDTERM WEEK**

**Mon: 10/17** **National “Spokesmammies”**

**Wed: 10/19** **MIDTERM REVIEW**

**Fri: 10/21** **(MIDTERM)**

**Week 9: Framing the South**

**Mon: 10/24** **FALL BREAK (NO CLASS)**

**Wed: 10/26** **FALL BREAK (NO CLASS)**

**Fri: 10/28** — Godfrey Cheshire, “‘Personal in My Memory’: The South in Popular Film,” in *Southern Cultures*, Fall 2011.
— **In Class Film**: *SUD* (1999) Chantral Ackerman

**Week 10: Dying for Dixie**


**Week 12: The “No South”**

**Mon: 11/7** — ADS: Ch. 8, “No North, No South?” pp. 212-235.


Week 11: The “New” New South


— TSTT: “Forever Southern”: p. 599-609

Fri: 11/18 Consuming the New South
— “You Don’t Know Dixie,” http://www.history.com/shows/you-dont-know-dixie

Week 13: “The Others’ South”

— Movie Night — FILM SHOWING: Mississippi Masala (1991), Dir. Mira Nair

Wed: 11/23 THANKSGIVING (NO CLASS)

Fri: 11/25 THANKSGIVING (NO CLASS)

Week 14: “What Chu Really Know about the Dirty South?”—Goodie Mob


Fri: 12/2 — Short Film: “‘Let Me Do My Thang’: Rebirth Brass Band.” LINK (15 min.)
— PAPER DUE

Week 15: The Southernization of American


Week 16: Wrap-up
Mon: 12/12    REVIEW DAY (LAST DAY OF CLASS)

Week 17:    Exam Week

Mon: 12/19    FINAL EXAM: 2:00-3:50pm