The 1920s and the Great Depression
21:512:384
Spring 2020

Class Location: Conklin 238
Class Time: Mon. 2:30-3:50, Wed. 1:00-2:20

Professor: Dr. Beryl Satter
satter@newark.rutgers.edu
My Office: 336 Conklin Hall
Phone: (973) 353-3900
Office Hours: Mondays, 4:00-5:00 p.m. and by appointment (I will be available most Wednesday afternoons)

History Department Office: 323 Conklin
History Department Phone: (973) 353-5410, ext. 2

Course Content
This course covers the history of the United States in the 1920s and 1930s. Topics explored include immigration, the sexual revolution, consumerism, popular culture, the labor movement, big business and big government, "rugged individualism" versus community and collectivism, religious fundamentalism versus modernism, changing reactions to gay male culture, women’s experiences of the Great Depression, and debates about racial identity and American identity.

Class Format
This class will be taught through lectures, class discussions and small group exercises. Class exercises and discussions will focus on the readings and films listed in the syllabus that follows. The exercises are intended to help you reach an understanding of the meaning of the readings and films. In some cases, members of the class will read different documents and be responsible for teaching the contents to other members of class. Because of the central place of discussion in the class, it is essential that you complete the assigned readings by the date indicated on the syllabus.

Class Goals/Learning Outcomes
Upon completion of this course, you should
- Know the basic history of the U.S. in the 1920s and 1930s (by drawing upon course lectures and course readings), and understand how and why U.S. culture changed over the course of the 1920s and 1930s.
- Understand the underlying concerns and debates that gripped U.S. culture in the 1920s and 1930s (such as those surrounding the issues listed under “Course Content,” above).
- Understand how to critically read primary sources. This means mastering both how to analyze language and imagery used in those sources (for example, repeated words, themes or metaphors as well as tone and style), and how to interpret such language and imagery in its historical context.
- Understand how to read and apply the arguments of secondary sources, or scholarly articles that analyze the history or culture of the 1920s and 1930s.
- Learn how to integrate lectures, readings, and primary and secondary sources in order to write source-based, essay-length responses to questions about major issues in 1920s and 1930s America.

**Number of Preparation Hours**
As with any college-level course you take, you should expect to spend at least two hours outside of class for every hour you spend inside the classroom. During weeks when there are tests or essays due, you should plan to spend several additional hours preparing for those tests or essays. Since this class is approximately 3 hours a week, you should expect to spend at least six hours a week outside of class on reading, studying, and assignments for the course.

**Class Writing Requirements**
- Short, written responses to six sessions’ worth of class readings.
- 1920s newspapers analysis
- Mid-term exam
- Essay on class readings
- Final exam

For each of the six sessions that you will be responding to, I will provide you with a question or questions to spur your thinking about that class’s readings (you may answer those questions, or you may write your own response to the readings). Your response should be between a paragraph and a page in length. It will be due 24 hours before the class meets. You will post it on Blackboard. The entire class will read your response before the class meets. Your response will help guide our class discussion.

- **Q: How do I know which sessions to respond to?** A: I will randomly assign each of you the six sessions you will be responding to. I will post the schedule of who is responding to which reading on Blackboard.
- **Q: Will my responses be graded, and if so, what will the grade be based on?** A: Your responses will be graded. Your grade will be based on how well you understand the readings, and on how deeply you have thought about the reading (the level of analysis that you bring to the readings).

The 1920s newspapers analysis will be a short (no more than five page) summary and analysis of between three and six newspaper articles that you will find. The articles must deal with a major issue of the 1920s (such as Prohibition, the Ku Klux Klan, lynching, segregation, Fundamentalism vs. modernism, the Scopes trial, immigration, nightlife, flappers, or feminism). One of the articles must be from the New York Times. One must be from the Chicago Defender, which was a newspaper written by and directed to African Americans. One can be from another newspaper of your choosing. The newspapers can be found in the ProQuest Historical Newspapers database (through the Rutgers University Library). I will show you how to do ProQuest searches in class. Your newspaper analysis will be due on Mon. March 2.
The **midterm** will be an in-class test. It will be held on Wed. March 11.

The **essay** will ask you to compare and contrast the ideas presented in class readings and films. It must be five-to-eight pages long (approximately 250 words per page), typed and double-spaced. It is due Wed., April 22.

The **final exam** will be cumulative (it will cover the entire course). Exam time and date to-be-announced.

**Class Participation**

Please bring an index card and pen to each class. At the end of each class, jot down a thought, observation, or question about the readings, lecture, classroom discussion, or some other aspect of that day’s class session. You must include *your name and the date* on the card. The cards will not be graded, but will count toward participation. I will also use them to take attendance. At the start of the next class, I will call on people randomly to present the question or thoughts about the previous class’s readings and/or discussion that they submitted on their index card.

**Class Readings**

Almost all of the readings for this course are on Blackboard, under “Course Documents.” Most are documents and articles. I have also posted pages from a textbook, Michael L. Kurtz’s *The Challenging of America, 1920-1945*, which will provide basic background on the history we are covering in this class. This textbook will be useful for those of you who are a bit shaky on U.S. history during this period.

We will be discussing the readings on the dates noted on the syllabus. Therefore you must print out or have digital access to the readings on the dates for which they are assigned. If you don’t print out the readings, be sure that you can mark them up digitally (for example, that you are able to comment on or highlight specific words or themes in the document or reading).

The class readings on the syllabus are marked with asterisks. One asterisk (*) means that the reading is a secondary source. Two asterisks (**) means that the reading is a primary source. Readings from the textbook are simply labelled “Kurtz.”

**Items You Must Purchase**

The only reading you must purchase is the book *Passing* by Nella Larsen. It is available for purchase at the Rutgers University-Newark Barnes and Noble, located in the Hahne Building, 42 Halsey Street. Please purchase this version of the book, as it is important that we all read copies with the same page numbers. The book is selling for $3.75 (rented, used) to $7.95 (new).

Also purchase a set of 3’ by 5’ index cards that you will use to hand in your class questions.
Grading
Written responses to six sessions' class readings...20%
Newspapers Analysis........................................................20%
Midterm...........................................................................20%
Essay...............................................................................20%
Final Exam.......................................................................20%

Attendance policy
Attendance is required. If you miss more than four classes, your grade will be lowered by half a grade (from B+ to B, for example). If you miss more than six classes, your grade will be lowered by one full grade. IMPORTANT: If you miss more than 8 classes, through any combination of excused or unexcused absences, you will not earn credit for this course. Such students should withdraw from the class.

Names and Pronouns
Please let me know by email if your preferred pronouns or name are different than what is on the class roster. Every student deserves to be addressed in the way they prefer.

Late assignments and exams
Assignments and exams are due on the dates announced in class or indicated below. Unless discussed with me in advance, late assignments or exams will have their grade lowered.

Technology
Blackboard and Email:
The use of Blackboard and Email is mandatory for this course. Please let me know if you have trouble with either of these platforms.

Phones:
Please turn your phone off during class. Don’t even think about FaceTiming during class. It is obvious when you’re texting or looking at cat photos online with your phone in your lap. Please don’t. If your phone goes off in class, you will be sent out of the classroom to turn it off. You can come back into class after that, but you will be counted as "absent" for that day (see above for policy on missing classes).

Laptops and Tablets
I do not encourage students to use laptops or tablets for notetaking during class. First, students retain information better when they take notes by hand. Second, laptops and tablets can be flirtatious monsters, inviting students to engage in non-class activities such as visiting other websites or checking e-mail, which can distract you and the people around you from what’s going on in the classroom.
Recording
Recording audio or video during class is prohibited, unless the Office of Disability Services has notified me that this is a necessary accommodation for an individual student.

Policy on Academic Integrity (Cheating and Plagiarism)
The university’s policy on academic integrity is available at http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu. Principles of academic integrity require that every Rutgers University student:

- properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, or words of others
- properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work
- make sure that all work submitted as his or her own in a course or other academic activity is produced without the aid of unsanctioned materials or unsanctioned collaboration
- obtain all data or results by ethical means and report them accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with his or her interpretation or conclusions
- treat all other students in an ethical manner, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This requires that a student neither facilitate academic dishonesty by others nor obstruct their academic progress
- uphold the canons of the ethical or professional code of the profession for which he or she is preparing.

Adherence to these principles is necessary in order to insure that:

- everyone is given proper credit for his or her ideas, words, results, and other scholarly accomplishments
- all student work is fairly evaluated and no student has an inappropriate advantage over others
- the academic and ethical development of all students is fostered
- the reputation of the University for integrity in its teaching, research, and scholarship is maintained and enhanced.

Failure to uphold these principles of academic integrity threatens both the reputation of the University and the value of the degrees awarded to its students. Every member of the University community therefore bears a responsibility for ensuring that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld.

– The Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy

The History department requires that the following honor pledge is written and signed on examinations and major course assignments submitted for grading: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment).”

Additional Important Information:
Writing Center
If you are having difficulty in any stage of writing your essays for this or any of your courses, please make use of the resources RU-N has to offer. Our Writing Center can provide you with assistance, free of charge. It is located in room 126 in Conklin Hall. See https://myrun.newark.rutgers.edu/writing-center
**Students with Disabilities**

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University’s educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation. See [https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines](https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS website at [https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form](https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form).

For more information, please visit the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, Suite 219 or contact odsnewark@rutgers.edu.

**Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance**

Rutgers faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. Rutgers has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The University strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the University. Please be aware that all Rutgers employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as advocates, counselors, clergy and healthcare providers as listed in Appendix A to Policy 10.3.12) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the University. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the University’s Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak with a staff member who is confidential and does not have this reporting responsibility, you may contact the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance at (973)-353-1918, or at run.vpva@rutgers.edu. Learn more about the office here: [http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/vpva](http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/vpva)
Wed. Jan. 22: Introduction: Late Victorian America

Mon. Jan. 27: The Progressive Era and the Great War

**"Lincoln Steffens Exposes the Corruption on Municipal Politics, 1904" in MP-GA


**Helen Todd, “Getting Out the Vote” (1911) in POW

**The Socialist Party's Platform, 1912," in MP-GA

**"Theodore Roosevelt on the New Nationalism, 1910"

Wed. Jan. 29: "The Great War" and the Transformation of Values

**Woodrow Wilson, "Address to Congress" (1917), in MPU

**"Senator Robert M. La Follette's Antiwar Dissent, 1917," in MP-GA

**Louis Felix Ranlett, "Life in the Trenches--France, 1918," in AF

**Ernest Hemingway, "In Our Time (1925)," in MPU

Mon. Feb. 3: The Red Year of 1919

**Attorney General Palmer's Case Against the 'Reds," 1920, in MP-AH

**Emma Goldman, Living My Life (LML), 1931, pp. 716-717

**"Lynching and the NAACP," in DHNP

**"The NAACP Confronts the Post-World War I Challenge," in NPT

**A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen: A Socialist Critique in The Messenger, in NPT

Wed. Feb. 5: Debates Over Immigration: Closing the Gates

**Randolph Bourne, "Trans-National America" (1916), in WAI

**Madison Grant on the New Immigrants as Survival of the Unfit, 1918," in MP-GA

**"Immigration Restriction" (1920, 1921) in 20s

Mon. Feb. 10: Big Business Triumphant
**Warren G. Harding, "Campaign Speech at Boston" (1920) and Edward Earle Purinton, "Big Ideas from Big Business" (1921), in POW

**Herbert Hoover, "The Constructive Instinct," 1922, in 20s

**"Charles M. Schwab Defends Big Business, 1926," in MP-GA

**Robert Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, "Why Do the Work So Hard?" Middletown (MI) (1929)

Kurtz, pp. 4-5, 8-16

Wed. Feb. 12: Mainstream America and its Critics

**H. L. Mencken, Introduction and "On Being An American" (1920) in HLM

**Anzia Yezierska, "How I Found America" (1920), in HIFA

Kurtz, 31-34.

Mon. Feb. 17: Youth Culture and the 1920s Generation Gap

1920s NEWSPAPERS ANALYSIS TOPIC CHOICE DUE

**"Prohibition," in 20s

**"A Debate About Morality" and "The Overnight Realists," in 20s

*George Chauncey, "Prohibition and the Pansy Craze," in GNY

Kurtz, 34-38

Wed. Feb. 19: "Flappers" and the 1920s Sexual Revolution

*Christina Simmons, "Modern Sexuality and the Myth of Victorian Repression," in PAP

*Hazel Carby, "'It Just Be's Dat Way Sometime': The Sexual Politics of Women’s Blues," in US

**Dorothy Dunbar Bromley, "Feminist--New Style" (1927), in MP-AWH


Mon. Feb. 24: Provincialism vs. Cosmopolitanism
**W.B. Riley, "The Fundamentalists' Point of View," in 20s**

**Margaret Mead, "Coming of Age in Samoa," in AIH**

**The Monkey Trial," in 20s**

**Hiram Wesley Evans, "The Ku Klux Klan" (1926), in 20s**

Kurtz, 38-45

Wed. Feb. 26: FILM: King Vidor, "The Crowd" (1928)

Mon. March 2: FILM: Conclusion of King Vidor, "The Crowd"

NEWSPAPER ANALYSIS DUE

Wed. March 4: The Harlem Renaissance

**George Schuyler, "Our Greatest Gift to America," in HA**

Kurtz, 45-50.

Monday March 9: The Harlem Renaissance

Nella Larsen, *Passing* (1929)

Wed. March 11: MIDTERM EXAM

Mon. March 16, Wed. March 18: SPRING BREAK

Mon. March 23: The Great Depression. FILM: "A Job at Ford's"

**Fortune Magazine, "Editorial on Economic Conditions" (1932), in POW**

**Frank G. Moorhead, "Broke at Fifty-Five" (1931), in SD**

**Meridel Le Sueur, "Women on the Breadlines" (1932) in RI**

*Jacqueline Jones, "Harder Times: The Great Depression," in WA

Kurtz, 51-62

Wed. March 25: Initial Responses: Questioning Individualism
**Herbert Hoover, "Speech at New York City" (1932), in POW


**Charles Beard, "The Myth of Rugged American Individualism" (1932) and F.D.R., "Bold, Persistent Experimentation" (1932), in NDT

**H. N. Brailsford, "An English View of the Crash" (1933), in SD

**"Negro Newspaper Editors Discuss Communism," 1932, in NPT

Kurtz, 63-68.

Mon. March 30: The New Deal and its Critics


**"Down and Out in the Great Depression," in AF

Kurtz, 69-86; 87-95

Wed. April 1: Politicized Art of the Depression Era

**"Theater--The Fabulous Invalid," in 30s

**Hallie Flanagan, "The Drama of the Federal Theater Project" (1939), in NDT

**Arthur Arent, "Scene from the Federal Theatre" (1938), in SD

**Muriel Rukeyser, "Boy with His Hair Cut Short" (1938), in AW

**Richard Wright, "Joe Louis Uncovers Dynamite" (1935) and John Spivak, "A Letter to President Roosevelt" (1934), in NM

**"Carlos Bulosan, a Filipino American, Depicts his Ambivalence about America's Kindness and Cruelty, 1937," in MP-Al&EH

Kurtz, 108-113, 120-124

Mon. April 6: The 1930s Labor Movement
**Gene Richard, "On the Assembly Line" (1937), in AM 159:4

**Le Sueur, "I Was Marching" (1934), in RI

**"The CIO Takes the Offensive," in 30s

**"Organizing the Masses," and John L. Lewis, "The Steelworkers Organization Campaign," 1936, in MPU

Kurtz, 96-98

Wed. April 8: The 1930s Labor Movement

**Bruce Bliven, "Strike at Flint Plant" (1937), and Herbert Harris, "Sit-Down at General Motors," 1938, in 30s


**Ann Banks, ed., First Person America, pp. 51-55, 60-68, 123, 125-130, 135

Mon. April 13: The Forgotten Woman


**Grace Hutchins, "Women Under Capitalism" and "The Double Burden" (1934), in WR

Wed. April 15: Gender and Popular Culture: The Jack Benny Show

*George Chauncey, "The Exclusion of Homosexuality from the Public Sphere in the 1930s," pp. 331-346, 351-354, in GNY

*Margaret McFadden, "'America's Boy Friend Who Can't Get a Date': Gender, Race, and the Cultural Work of the Jack Benny Program, 1932-1946," JAH June 1993

Kurtz, 113-118, 119-120

Mon. April 20: Gold-Digger Films of the 1930s (film excerpts)

Wed. April 22: PAPER DUE

Mon. April 27: Depression-Era Debates over American Identity
**Louis Adamic, "Thirty Million New Americans" (1938) pp. 210-229, in MA

**Aiji Tashiro, "The Rising Son of the Rising Son," NO, Aug. 1934

**Carey McWilliams Assails Mexican Repatriation from California, 1933," in MP-MAH

**William H. Hastie Foreshadows a Shift in the NAACP" (1939), in NPT

Wed. April 29: “The Reluctant World Power"

*Dexter Perkins, "The Reluctant World Power," 1957, in 30s

**FDR, "Annual Message to Congress" (1941), in POW

Kurtz, 125-142.

Mon. May 4: 1940s America: The Age of Doubt


Final Exam: Time and Date to-be-announced

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**SOURCES OF COURSE READINGS**
AM: Atlantic Monthly
JAH: *Journal of American History*
NM: *New Masses: An Anthology of the Rebel Thirties.*
NO: *New Outlook*