

Honors 1300: U.S. Institutions
Professor Victoria Grieve
MWF 10:30-11:20am
Fall 2006

Classroom: BUS 211

Office Location: MAIN 323

Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday 1-2pm, and by appointment

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NOTE: This syllabus is subject to changes and/or additions at the discretion of the professor.

USU 1300 courses are intended to provide “a basic understanding of the history, principles, form of government, and economic system of the United States” with “an emphasis on ideas and critical thinking rather than dates, names, and places.” This course will achieve those goals by exploring the political, economic, and historical relationships between government, culture (broadly speaking), and cultural institutions in the United States. The course is divided into three sections: History and Culture; Government Funding of the Arts; and Culture in the Public Sphere. We will consider: the nature and purposes of cultural policy; the history of government involvement in the arts; issues surrounding public art and museums; cultural policies in wartime; censorship of literature and music; First Amendment questions of censorship and freedom of expression, the “culture wars, “ and current events in cultural politics.

Class discussions, in both large and small groups, will be an important part of this class. You are expected to come to class having completed the reading for the day and thought about the issues and questions raised by the readings.

Course Objectives:

- 1.) Understand historical and contemporary developments in American arts policy and cultural issues.
- 2.) Develop critical thinking skills by examining various perspectives of cultural debates, defending positions with thoughtful arguments, and writing coherently about cultural debates and positions.

Why is history a useful and important field of study, and what is its value for the non-historian?

Historical study teaches us how and why change occurs over time. It can teach us where political systems and cultural values come from and how they evolve. More generally, it is invaluable for learning how to understand the significance of a primary source (text, image, or artifact). The past and the present provide an overwhelming number of facts and events that are not equally important. Many are inconsequential. Historical inquiry helps us discern which are most important and why. The late E. P. Thompson, a brilliant historian, once remarked: “Only we, who are now living, can give a 'meaning' to the past. But that past has always been the result of an argument about values. What we may do is identify with certain values which past actors upheld, and reject others. ... Our vote will change nothing. And yet, in another sense, it may change everything. For we are saying that these values, and not those other values, are the ones which make this history meaningful to us, and that these are the values which we intend to enlarge and sustain in our own present.”

---Michael Kammen, Professor of American History and Culture at Cornell University

Course texts: (available in USU Bookstore)

- Zimmerman, Jonathan. *Whose America? Culture Wars in the Public Schools* (Harvard University Press, 2005).
- Course readings packet.
- Additional readings will be available through online reserves, websites, or in-class handouts.
- Weekly on-air broadcasts or podcasts of “The Politics of Culture,” available for listening or download at <http://www.kcrw.com/show/pc>. These will be discussed in class each Wednesday – come prepared for written quizzes!

Assignments and Grading

1.) Periodic pop quizzes/writing assignments and (quality) class participation (5%). Quizzes will be given on the assigned readings for the day and podcasts, especially if it becomes clear that students are not completing the readings. If you miss a quiz, you may not make it up for any reason, but your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

2.) Policy essay (15%)

Question: Should the federal government support the arts? Why or why not? If yes, how? Drawing on what you’ve learned in class so far this semester, write a 3-5 page essay either supporting or opposing federal support for the arts. Take a *reasoned position* expressing an *informed opinion*, taking into consideration the positions of your opponents. Note this is not a polemical diatribe or a research paper, but you may draw on the assigned readings to support your opinions. Cite every source! **Due: October 16.**

3.) Critical Book Analysis (15%)

Jonathan Zimmerman’s book *Whose America?* provides historical background for culture wars in the public schools, focusing on debates over History textbooks and religious and ethical issues such as prayer and sex education. In a five-page paper, respond to the following two questions: 1.) Discuss two examples of how politics influenced history textbooks in the 20th century. How did Americans compromise in each case, and what was the effect on how history is taught? 2.) Zimmerman proposes a solution to the debates over religion in the public schools. What is his solution, and do you think this it is a workable one? Why or why not?

Due: November 20.

4.) Cultural Policy in the News – Group Paper and Class Presentation (20%)

The class will be divided into groups of three students (You might also consider these colleagues a study group). Your assignment is to locate three news reports **in newspapers, NOT ONLINE**, covering various perspectives on one significant issue regarding current cultural policy or a cultural event. To encourage you to meet with your group early in the semester, your **proposed topic and a list of sources will be due** in class on **Monday, October 9**. In a ten-minute presentation to your classmates, summarize **all sides** of the issue and discuss how it relates to some of the issues discussed in class. A five-page paper will be **due on December 6**. Presentations will be held in class during the week of Nov. 29 - Dec. 6.

5.) Three tests, each worth 15% of your grade (45% total). Your exams will be composed of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. If you have a **valid** reason (see me to define “valid”) for inability to take the exam at the scheduled time, you must let me know **immediately**. You must have a **documented and significant** reason. **Test dates: Sept. 22, Oct. 25, Dec. 12.**

6.) Attendance. More than two absences will result in a half-letter deduction from your course grade for each additional absence.

NOTE: ** All assignments should be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins and 10 or 12 point font with no extra spaces between paragraphs. Please include a separate title page with your name, and cite all sources with footnotes, not in the body of the text. Papers that do not meet these specifications will not be accepted.**

ATTN: A half-letter grade will be deducted for each day late an assignment is late. No excuses!

Academic Honesty

Academic misconduct will not be tolerated in this course, and will be grounds for a failing grade for the assignment or the course. Academic misconduct includes plagiarism, which includes knowingly “representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one’s own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.” (*Code of Policies and Procedures for Students*, Article V, Section 3A.1) The penalties for plagiarism are severe. They include “#1) warning or reprimand and #2) grade adjustment” (see: Article VI, Section 1A): Other penalties may also be imposed at the Dean’s discretion. These include probation, suspension, expulsion, withholding of transcripts, denial or revocation of degrees, referral to psychological counseling, and other appropriate disciplinary actions. Please review “The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University” for more information.

Disability Resource Center

Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability must register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), which will issue a verification letter. DRC is located in University Inn 101, and is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Mon-Fri; 797-2444.

Course Schedule

Readings in your packet are followed by (P) in the schedule below.

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
8/28 Introduction to the course and to one another; Start reading Zimmerman, <i>Whose America?</i>	8/30 Section I: History and Culture What is “Culture?”	9/1 Myth, Memory, and Amnesia in American Historical Art (P)
9/4 No Class... but who is Samuel Gompers, anyway???	9/6 Culture in the Market: “Uses of Tradition in Commercial Culture, 1889-1936” (P)	9/8 Culture and Class: Highbrow, Middlebrow, Lowbrow
9/11 Culture, Class, and Assimilation (P)	9/13 Video: The Devil’s Music: 1920s Jazz	9/15 --- The Politics of Rap Music: from Rose, <i>Black Noise</i> (P) pg. 99-114
9/18 The Politics of Rap Music: <i>Black Noise</i> (P) pg. 124-145	9/20 Class Discussion: Culture and Race in America	9/22 Test #1

9/25 Section II: Government and the Arts Culture and the State before 1935 (P)	9/27 Cultural Policy and the New Deal – “Post Offices and Public Art in the New Deal” (P)	9/29 Cultural Policy and the New Deal – The Federal Writers’ Project FILM SHOWING – <i>Salt of the Earth</i> , 4pm; Location TBA; On reserve in library afterwards
10/2 The Culture of the Cold War – Film clip	10/4 “Hollywood’s Cold War: The Suppression of <i>Salt of the Earth</i> ” (P) Class Discussion: Culture and the Cold War	10/6 National Endowment for the Arts/National Endowment for the Humanities
10/9 “Visionaries and Outcasts” (P) “Culture in the News” paper topic proposals due	10/11 The Culture Wars (P)	10/13 The Culture Wars – “Eagle Letters” and “CATO Institute” (P)
10/16 Class Discussion: Should Government Fund the Arts? *Funding the Arts Paper due*	10/18 War and Propaganda: Federal Policy during World War I “How We Advertised America” (P)	10/20 FALL BREAK No Class
10/23 Federal Policy during World War II – “The Censored War” (P)	10/25 Federal Policy and the “War on Terror”	10/27 Test # 2
10/30 Section III: Art and Culture in the Public Sphere “Challenges and Changing Role of Cultural Institutions” (P)	11/1 Public Art Controversies – “Spirit Poles and Flying Pigs” (P)	11/3 History in Museums, Case Study: The Enola Gay Exhibit http://www.lehigh.edu/%7Eineng/enola/
11/6 Tour of (some) public art on campus (Weather permitting!)	11/8 Class visit to the Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art; Meet at the museum at 10:20am	11/10 Class Discussion: Zimmerman, Section I
11/13 Freedom of Expression http://www.csulb.edu/%7Ejvancamp/freedom1.html Government Funding & the First Amendment http://www.csulb.edu/~jvancamp/freedom3.html	11/15 The Case of Mark Twain’s <i>Huckleberry Finn</i>	11/17 Huck Finn, cont.
11/20 Class Discussion:	11/22 Thanksgiving Holiday –	11/24 Thanksgiving Holiday - No

Zimmerman, Section II and PAPER DUE	No Class	Class
11/27 In-class group meetings	11/29 In-class presentations	12/1 In-class presentations
12/4 In-class presentations	12/6 In-class presentations; ALL PAPERS DUE	12/8 Class Wrap-Up and Final Exam Review
12/12 TEST #3 11:30 am – 1:20 pm	Happy Holidays!	<i>Grades will be posted 96 hours after the final exam. Due to FERPA restrictions, I cannot email exam results or final grades. Thank you for not asking!</i>