

SOCI 3420
Sociology of the South
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:40 – 11:05 AM
Zandria F. Robinson, Instructor

Office Phone: 678-3778
Office Location: Clement 309D
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12:30 – 2:30 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is the South? Where is it? How is it represented? What is southern culture? How is it implicated in distinctive patterns of inequality? What will be the long-term effect of the South's increasing racial and ethnic diversity? This course examines the history, identities, cultures, and experiences of the South and southerners, with particular attention to the ways in which inequality, both within the region and between the region and the rest of the U.S., shapes regional outcomes.

COURSE MATERIALS

James Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity*
Wanda Rushing, *Memphis and the Paradox of Place: Globalization in the American South*
Keith Wailoo, *Dying in the City of the Blues: Sickle Cell Anemia and the Politics of Race & Health*
Mary Frederickson, *Looking South: Race, Gender, and the Transformation of Labor...*
Robert Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality*
Clyde Woods, *Development Arrested: Blues and Plantation Power in the Mississippi Delta*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Personal Essay. Course participants will write a personal but critical essay about their relationship to the South and southern identity. See the syllabus appendix for more information and the course calendar for due dates. **The personal essay is worth 15% of the final grade.**

Blog Posts. Course participants will post to the [course blog](#) a total of four (4) times throughout the semester. Blog posts should be original, **500-word** short-essay observations about any course-related issue. See the syllabus appendix for more information and the course calendar for due dates. **Blog posts are worth 35% of the final grade.**

Photo Essay. Course participants will explore course themes using documentary photography methods. See the syllabus appendix for more information and the course calendar for due dates. **The photo essay is worth 20% of the final grade.**

Final Examination. The final examination is comprehensive and will evaluate participants' ability to apply theoretical concepts to a range of course themes. **The final exam is worth 30% of the final grade.**

COURSE POLICIES

- **Plagiarism** is a serious offense punishable by university sanction and will not be tolerated.
- **Late work** will not be accepted save for in the case of the Apocalypse.
- **Talking** while the instructor or a colleague is speaking or otherwise being disruptive (e.g., texting, etc.) is prohibited. Violators will be asked to leave class. Repeat offenders will be referred to the [Office of Student Conduct](#).

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COURSE CALENDAR

This is a suggested reading schedule so that you might pace yourself to keep up with the amount of material. However, I suggest you read ahead as much as possible to glean maximum benefit from the course discussion. The “Major Text” is the text that will be central to our discussions in a particular section of the course. Readings listed below that are not in required course texts are available on [UM Drive](#).

Week I: Course Introductions

Aug 25: Kreyling, “Toward ‘A New Southern Studies’”

Skim the posts at the blog [Pop South](#)

Aug 27: Overview, “The State of Metropolitan America”

Frey, “Race and Ethnicity” chapter of “The State of Metropolitan America”

Wait. Who Are We? Deconstructing Southern Identity

Major Text: *Away Down South*

Sep 3: Introduction and Chapters 1 - 3

Sep 5: Chapters 4 – 6

Sep 10: Chapters 7 - 9

Sep 12: Chapters 10 - 12

The Place Where It All Began: Memphis & the Global South

Major Text: *Memphis and the Paradox of Place*

Sep 17: In-Class Viewing: *Hustle & Flow*; **Personal Essay Due**

Sep 19: Introduction and Chapters 1 – 3

Sep 24: Chapters 4 – 6

Sep 26: Chapter 7

“City of Blues and Booze and Bad News”

Major Text: *Dying in the City of the Blues*

Oct 1: Introduction and Chapters 1 – 2; **Blog Post I Due**

Oct 3: Chapters 3 – 5 and Conclusion

Oct 8: Chapters 6 – 7 and Conclusion

Oct 10: Discussion & Review

Putting in Work: Race and Labor in the South

Major Text: *Looking South*

Oct 17: Introduction & Part II; **Blog Post II Due**

Oct 22: Part III

Oct 24: Part IV

Oct 29: In-Class Viewing: *The American South Comes of Age*

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Southern Wastelands: The South and Environmental Justice

Major Text: *Dumping in Dixie*

Oct 31: Chapters 1 – 3; **Blog Post III Due**

Nov 5: Chapters 4 – 6

Nov 7: Chapter 7 and Discussion

Mississippi, Goddamn: Blues and the Plantation Economy

Major Text: *Development Arrested*

Nov 12: Chapters 1 – 3

Nov 14: Chapters 4, 5, and 8; **Photo Essays Due on the Course Blog**

Nov 19: Chapters 10 – 11; **Written Accompaniment to Photo Essays Due in Class**

Photo Essay Presentations

Nov 21: Group A; **Blog Post IV Due**

Nov 26: Group B

December 3: Course Wrap-Up and Final Exam Review

The final exam will be held Tuesday, December 10, 2013 from 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

KEY DATES:

SEPTEMBER 17

PERSONAL ESSAY DUE

OCTOBER 1

BLOG POST DUE

OCTOBER 17

BLOG POST DUE

OCTOBER 31

BLOG POST DUE

NOVEMBER 14

PHOTO ESSAY DUE

NOVEMBER 19

WRITTEN ACCOMPANIMENT TO PHOTO ESSAY DUE

NOVEMBER 21

BLOG POST DUE

DECEMBER 10

FINAL EXAM

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SYLLABUS APPENDIX

ASSIGNMENTS

Personal Essay

Regardless of one's physical location or geography of birth, as people living in the United States of America, we are all connected to the South. Write a **three-to-five (3 – 5) page** critical essay that grapples with your relationship to the South and southern identity. What is *your* South? Who and what are included in it? What is not? Reflect on the changes that have happened in the South and the milieu into which you were born. How do you relate to the “old South” and fit into the “new South”? **The personal essay is due September 17th.**

Blog Posts

Over the course of the semester, you will write **four (4), 500-word blog posts** on some topic related to the sociology of the South. Topics might include southern identity, culture, economy, labor, race, inequality, demographic changes, environmental issues, or a host of topics. However, they must be relevant to the course material and should reference course material that we have covered.

Accessing the Blog

You can access the blog by visiting blogs.memphis.edu/dirtysouth. Click “log in” and log in with your UUID credentials. You are a member of the blog, and therefore can post to the blog.

Posts

Blog posts should be 500 words of original content. Links to other blog posts, articles, photos, YouTube videos or songs are also acceptable as long as you include a 500-word analysis of the linked content and demonstrate its relevance to the course. Be sure to tag your posts to allow your colleagues to easily search the blog. Posts will be graded on originality of content, critical thought, grammar, and integration of course materials, ideas, and resources. Although blog writing is in some ways less formal than traditional essay writing, treat your blog posts as more or less formal commentaries on

Due Dates

Blog posts are due by 11:59 p.m. on **October 1st, October 17th, October 31st, and November 21st**.

Photo Essay

The photo essay gives you the opportunity to use documentary photography methods to explore course themes. Your photo essay should reflect the course theme of your choosing, e.g., environmental inequality, identity, culture, racial inequality, class inequality, place, demographic change, etc., as it intersects with “your” South.

Research your theme so that you can shoot it knowledgeably and talk knowledgeably about it as well. Your job is to take approximately 100 pictures and narrow them down to 15-20 photos to create a thematic photo essay. You will post these photos on the Photo Essays page of our [course blog](#).

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SYLLABUS APPENDIX

Assignment Components and Due Dates

There are **three** parts to this assignment. The first is the **fieldwork** component, in which you go out and take the shots for your photo essay and upload the shots that best tell the story you're trying to tell to our course blog. *Photos are due on the course blog on November 14th*. The second part is where you write up the "data." Thus, you will compose a **three-to-five (3 – 5) page written essay** to accompany your photo essay. This written accompaniment to the photo essay should 1) provide background for the images you capture, whether from things we've read and discussed in class or other scholarly sources, 2) detail the methods you used to choose your topic, take your photos, and narrow them down to the photo essay, and 3) provide a critical explanation of your photo essay. *This written accompaniment is due November 19th*. Finally, you will give a **presentation** of your photo essay to the class and talk briefly about your process and what you tried to capture in your photo essay. *Photo essay presentations will be November 21st and November 26th*.

For inspiration, see the [Invincible Cities](#) project and the [Southern Spaces](#) blog.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I take the pictures?

Pictures can be taken anywhere in the South.

I don't have a camera. Can I take pictures on my phone?

Yes. You can use any device to take photos.

I have some photos I took on vacation with my girlfriend/cat/dog/uncle last spring break. Can I use those?

Umm, no. These pictures should be new and exclusively for this assignment.

Can't I just find some pictures on the Internet?

You could. But I'd know. And you'd get an F.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

John Shelton Reed, *One South: An Ethnic Approach to Regional Culture*

Zandria F. Robinson, "Soul Histories: Hip-Hop & Historicity in Memphis," in *Hip-Hop in America: A Regional Guide*.

Zandria F. Robinson, "Southern Crunk and Hip-Hop Culture," In *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*,
Vol 15: Urbanization.

Houston Baker, *I Don't Hate the South*

David Goldfield, "A Regional Framework for the Urban South"

W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South*