

Texas A&M University Central Texas
Department of Humanities

Fall 2019
HIST 4389 Perpetual Fetes: Holidays in American History

Instructor: Dr. Timothy C. Hemmis
Meeting Room: FH 203
Meeting Time: MW: 11-12:15PM
Office: HH 216H
E-Mail: themmis@tamuct.edu
Phone: 254-501-5931
Office Hours: by appointment



Course Description and Objectives:

This class delves into the history of holidays in America from 1607-Present. It will examine the cultural history of America through studying holidays: federal, state, religious, and unofficial. Through lecture, discussions, readings, and multimedia, this course will explore themes in American history. This course will strengthen your critical thinking, reading, and writing skills, and provide a foundation for understanding the modern world. You will demonstrate the ability to develop and focus on one topic in writing assignments and present ideas in an organized, logical, and coherent form. You will also demonstrate the ability to use Standard English grammar, punctuation, spelling, and usage. Lastly, you will hopefully leave this class with a better understanding of America's past and how it has shaped the present.

The course objectives:

- To draw connections between the past and the present.
- To understand historical debates.
- To work with primary documents and develop an understanding of how historians use documents to interpret the past.
- To critically analyze a historical text.
- To write clear and coherent essays that develop a historical argument.

Required Texts

Etzioni, Amitai, and Jared Bloom. *We Are What We Celebrate: Understanding Holidays and Rituals*. New York, N.Y.: New York University Press, 2004.

Nissenbaum, Stephen. *The Battle for Christmas*. New York: Vintage books, 1997.

Schmidt, Leigh Eric. *Consumer Rites: The Buying and Selling of American Holidays*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Recommended Texts

Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. 2018.

There can be other articles and book chapters that the Professor may provide electronically each week.

Course Requirements

Grades will be determined on the following basis:

Seminar Participation/ Attendance	100 points	All semester
Exam 1 (Midterm)	100 points	
Exam 2 (Final)	200 points	
Book Review Nissanbaum	150 points	
Comparative Essay	150 points	
Holiday Research Rough Draft	100 points	
Holiday Research Paper	200 points	

Scoring:

Final Grades will be determined based upon the following scale:

A	=	900-1000 points
B	=	800-899 points
C	=	700-799 points
D	=	600-699 points
F	=	Below 600 points

Attendance and Participation

Participation is 10% of the final grade

Class attendance and participation are crucial elements of the learning experience. Attendance is your responsibility. Attendance will be taken daily. In addition, attendance means staying for the whole class. Do not leave early without speaking to me beforehand. Failure to regularly attend class will result in dire consequences such as failing the class. Please come to class prepared and ready to discuss the readings assigned for the day.

Exams

Exams will be 30% of final grade

There will be two exams in this class. Exams for this class will not be cumulative, although they will reflect persistent themes, ideas, and terminology that run throughout American History. The exams can be identification terms and/or essays.

Writing Assignments

Book Review 15% of final grade

There will be one critical reviews of a monograph. The review will be 900-1100 words long and be modeled after critical reviews in academic journals such as the *American Historical Review* or *The William and Mary Quarterly*. A book review concentrates on identifying and critiquing on the author's thesis. What is the author trying to argue, what evidence do they use, and do you agree and disagree? It is not just a simple summary of the book.

Comparative Essay 15% of final grade

Students will write an essay comparing two holidays. The instructor will provide a list of approved holidays below. It will be a 900-1200 word long comparative essay that will examine two holidays, and the student will argue why and how these holidays were created and evolved overtime.

Approved Holidays

Veterans' Day and Memorial Day
Columbus Day and St. Patrick's Day
Mother's Day and Father's Day

Holiday Research Paper 30% of final grade

Throughout history we have created holidays to remember events. I want you to pick an event, organization, or a person in American History and create a holiday around it/them. You will write a paper outlining how and why the holiday developed, the ritual practices of the holiday, the cultural norms the holiday supports and what challenges the holiday faces. Using historical evidence you will convey the importance of your new holiday.

Please let the instructor know your person of interest by Week 4 via email.

The final draft essay will be 2,000-3,000 words and be worth 20% of the final grade. The rough draft is worth 10% of the final grade.

There will be period research checks throughout the semester (orally or written)

Important Reminder

Late Papers will not be accepted unless with a valid excuse, and could still incur a late penalty of 10% of the grade for each class late.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. You must follow to honesty codes set forth in the student handbook. Plagiarism is a serious offense. This or any other violation of the university's Code of Student Conduct can result in penalties that can include failing the assignment, an F in the class and/or expulsion from the university. For the official definition of what constitutes plagiarism, see the Student Handbook.

All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university's Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university's standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

The instructor reserves the right to use electronic resources to detect plagiarism.

FORMATTING

Essays must comply with the following formatting guidelines. Writing assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date indicated. Essays must be submitted as hard copies (electronic copies of papers will not be accepted).

Your papers must be typewritten, with 12 pt. font in Times New Roman and double-spaced lines. The header of your paper should be single-spaced and in the following format:

Your Name
Paper, HIS 343
Dr. Timothy Hemmis
janedoe@yahoo.com
Due Date

Your paper should have 1" margins on the top and bottom and 1.25" margins on the left right margins. Evidence must be cited using footnotes. Use of alternate forms of citation, such as the MLA format, is not acceptable. Finally, your essays must be stapled (no "dog ears," paper clips, or binders) and the pages numbered! If you have questions about the proper format of your essay, please see me during my office hours.

The essay must include evidence from the text, and you must cite that evidence using footnotes. Use the following examples as models:

First citation:

¹ Alfred F. Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999), 45.

Subsequent citations:

⁵ Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party*, 74.

Unexcused/ Late Work or Absences from Exams:

The only valid excuses for missing an exam or failing to turn in a paper or homework on time are illnesses requiring medical care, required university activities, religious holidays, or a personal emergency of a serious nature. To be excused without penalty, documentation is required. In certain other circumstances, I will allow you to turn in an assignment early or take an exam in advance, but you must see me as soon as possible. Do not wait until the last possible minute.

Academic Accommodations:

At Texas A&M University-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier-free education. The Office of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the university's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations please contact the Office of Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

For more information please visit our Access & Inclusion web page [<https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/access-inclusion.html>].

Incomplete Policy

Students that find themselves facing an unexpected, life altering circumstance before the drop deadline should drop the course. Should a student encounter an unexpected, life altering circumstance after the drop deadline, that student may be eligible for an incomplete so long as all work due before the circumstance has been submitted and the student has a reasonable chance to pass the course should the work be completed as soon as the circumstance resolves itself. No student should expect to receive an incomplete.

Important information for Pregnant and/or Parenting Students.

Texas A&M University-Central Texas supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and related guidance from US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs' Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. Students should seek out assistance as early in the pregnancy as possible. For more information, please visit the Student Affairs web page [<https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/index.html>]. Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these requirements and guidelines online, please visit the website [<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf>].

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and gender—including pregnancy, parenting, and all related conditions. A&M-Central Texas is able to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to pregnant and parenting students. All pregnant and parenting students should contact the Associate Dean in the Division of Student Affairs at (254) 501-5909 to seek out assistance. Students may also contact the University's Title IX Coordinator.

Technology Requirements

This course will use the A&M-Central Texas Instructure Canvas learning management system. Logon to A&M-Central Texas Canvas [<https://tamuct.instructure.com/>] or access Canvas through the TAMUCT Online link in myCT [<https://tamuct.onecampus.com/>]. You will log in through our Microsoft portal.

Username: Your MyCT email address. Password: Your MyCT password

Canvas Support

Use the Canvas Help link, located at the bottom of the left-hand menu, for issues with Canvas. You can select “Chat with Canvas Support,” submit a support request through “Report a Problem,” or call the Canvas support line: 1-844-757-0953.

For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

Other Technology Support

For log-in problems, students should contact Help Desk Central

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Email: helpdesk@tamu.edu

Phone: (254) 519-5466

[Web Chat](http://hdc.tamu.edu): [http://hdc.tamu.edu]

Please let the support technician know you are an A&M-Central Texas student

Cell Phones

In accordance with College policy, the use of all personal electronic communication devices in this class (or laboratory) is prohibited. Students are required to turn off or silence their personal electronic communication devices during this class. Also there will be no photography allowed in class of slides, unless a student ask permission from the professor.

Office Hours

I am available in my office hours to answer your questions and look over drafts before paper your papers are due.

Academic Support Services

Tutoring is available to all students, both on-campus and online. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Room 111. Please contact Academic Support Programs if you are interested in tutoring at (254) 501-5830 or by e-mailing c.garza@tamuct.edu.

***This syllabus is a mutual contract between the professor and student and the student and professor. It will not be altered lightly, however if circumstances make it necessary, the changes will be made as far in advance as is possible.

Course Schedule

Week 1 Class Introduction and Holidays as Rituals Aug 26 and 28

Reading Assignment: Read the Syllabus and Etzioni, Amitai, and Jared Bloom: Chapter 1

Week 2 Labor Day (Sept 2 and 4)

NO CLASS on SEPT 2

Celebrate: Chapter 12

Week 3 The Fourth of July and Patriot Day (Sept 9 and 11)

Raymond Smilor, "Creating A National Festival: The Campaign for a Safe and Sane Fourth, 1903-1916," *Journal of American Culture* 2, no. 4 (Winter 1979): 611-22.

EXTRA CREDIT : CENTRAL TEXAS MILITARY HISTORY SYMPOSIUM : Sept 13 2019

Week 4 Martin Luther King Jr Day and Emancipation Day, (Sept 16 and 18)

Week 5 (Sept 23 and 25) Easter and Passover

Week 6 Sept 30 and Oct 2) Mother's Day and Father's Day

Week 7 (Oct 7 and 9) Mardi Gras and Midterm

Midterm Exam: Oct 9

Week 8 (Oct 14 and 16) Columbus Day and St. Patrick's Day

Week 9 (Oct 21 and 23) University Holidays, Birthdays, and Ramadan

Comparative Essay is due on Oct 23rd.

Week 10 All Hollow's Eve and Dia De Muertos (Oct 28 and 30)

Joel Best and Gerald T. Horiuchi, "The Razor Blade in the Apple: The Social Construction of Urban Legends," *Social Problems* 32, no. 5 (June 1, 1985): 488-99.

Week 11 (Nov 4 and 6) Election Day and Valentine's Day

Rough Draft

Week 12 Armistice's Day (Nov 11 and 13)

NOV 11th NO CLASS to celebrate Veteran's Day

Final Draft Paper is due

Week 13 (Nov 18 and 20) Thanksgiving

Elizabeth Pleck, "The Making of the Domestic Occasion: The History of Thanksgiving in the United States," *Journal of Social History* 32, no. 4 (Summer 1999): 773–89.

Week 14 (Nov 25 and 27) Christmas in 18th/19th Centuries

Shauna Bigham and Robert E. May, "The Time O' All Times? Masters, Slaves, and Christmas in the Old South," *Journal of the Early Republic* 18, no. 2 (July 1, 1998): 263–88.

ONLINE class Only on the 27th to celebrate Thanksgiving!

Week 15 (Dec 2 and 4) Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah

Pleck, Elizabeth. "Kwanzaa: The making of a Black Nationalist Tradition, 1966-1990." *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 20, no. 4 (Summer, 2001): 3-28.

Week 16: Final Exam