History 3800
History of the Present

Instructor: Dr. Todd Moye (he/him/his/Dr./Prof.)
todd.moye@unt.edu
Office hours: M & W 11:00-12:00, and by appointment, Wooten 257

"If history were past, history wouldn't matter. History is the present…. You and I are history. We carry our history. We act our history."
—James Baldwin[1]

Course Description
Do historical events, processes, and institutions from the past affect the ways that Americans live and think today? Surely we would all agree that they do in some way, but how? In this course we will try to find out. We usually study history by examining an event or person or process and asking the question "What happened next?" In this course we will take a different approach, instead asking questions like:
"Why did this happen the way it did?"
 "In what context(s) did this take place?"
"How far back do we have to go to explain this phenomenon?"
 "How do historians understand and explain recent events?"
"How do arguments over history shape current debates and policies?

My goal in this course is to introduce you to the ways historians think and to have you think historically for yourself—to do the work of a historian and the work of an archivist (which enables the work of future historians). By the end of the course you should have improved your historical thinking and critical thinking skills, your argumentative writing skills, and your ability to apply these skills in ways that are relevant to your life. We will also work on an archiving project together and individually to create original knowledge for the historians of the future.

I have divided the semester into sections in which we will study the historical context of a present phenomenon or recent event: debates over the 1619 Project, "critical race theory," and African American history more generally; insurrections (including the events of January 6, 2021) in U.S. history; and the historical background of the #BlackLivesMatter movement. Together as a class we will decide what we want to study in the last section of the course. Throughout the course we as a class will also work

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[1] James Baldwin and Margaret Mead, *A Rap on Race* (Japan: Lippincott, 1971), 188.

collaboratively to create an archive to help future researchers understand what was important to the UNT community in 2023.

Communication

I will hold regular office hours for at least two hours per week on a first-come, first-served basis, and I will also be happy to schedule an appointment with you at any time outside of regular office hours on which we can both agree. (What are office hours? Click to find out.) I encourage you to visit me in office hours to discuss any aspect of this course, or whatever else is on your mind. Office hours are free—or rather, you've already paid for them. Take advantage of them. If you have a question that's easy to answer over email, please fire away. I will do my best to respond immediately.

I will also make periodic announcements (including, if necessary, changes to the course schedule) through the course's Canvas site. If I ever need to contact you directly, I will send an email to your @my.unt.edu account or Canvas account. It is your responsibility to check those accounts regularly and to monitor the Canvas site. If you need to contact me, please email the address above.

Readings

Our only **required** reading is Nikole Hannah-Jones et al., The 1619 Project: A New Origin Story, 2021; ISBN 9780593230572.
Glenda F. Gilmore and Thomas J. Sugrue, *The United States: A Nation in the Making, 1890 to the Present*, 2015; ISBN 9780393239522 is **recommended but not required**.

I will make additional assigned readings available via Canvas. Please see the Course Schedule in Canvas for weekly reading assignments.

Assignments and Grades

Your grade in the course will be determined as follows:

Class participation	10%
Response papers (3)	15% each
Research project	5% digital item or document analysis
	10% digital exhibit analysis
	15% contribution to archive
	15% final paper

Response Paper Format: Your response papers will be 1,000-1,250 word responses to prompts that force you to think critically and write persuasively about the assigned readings. For each paper assignment you will actually need to read and take notes on the assigned sources and think hard about the issues they raise even before you see the paper assignment. You will then need to focus your thinking on the questions I ask in the prompt and respond to them using clear, original, and persuasive arguments. (I'm sure I don't have to tell you that if you wait until the last minute and throw something together, or if you attempt to b.s. your way through an assignment, or if you choose to

answer questions other than the ones I ask in the prompt, you will not do well on a given assignment. Yes, grammar and spelling count.) Again, these assignments reward critical thinking and clear expression above all else.

All papers should be double-spaced and formatted in a way that does not challenge my eyesight. You will receive rubrics and more detailed instructions for the response papers closer to their due dates.

Research Project Format In lieu of a final examination, we will research and document the UNT community in our present, in the form of a digital archive which we will then donate to UNT's University Archive for preservation. This is your chance to create original primary sources, which we can anticipate scholars of the future will want to access when they try to make sense of the times we are living through. There are four components to this project:

1) Visit the UNT University Archive's online Covid-19 response collection and choose one digital item to analyze. Write a 500-750 word paper on the item's historical significance and how it might be used to tell a larger story about this subject. Due Sept. 13.
2) Visit the Smithsonian Institution's online exhibits. Choose one that interests you, analyze it, and write a 1,000-word exhibit analysis. What larger story do the exhibit curators tell here, and how did they use particular items to tell it? This paper is due Oct. 4.
3) Find or create at least 3 digital items that help document the UNT community in an original way, and upload them to the digital archive using Keeper by Nov. 15.
4) Finally, write a 1,000-1,250-word paper in which you sketch out the story you would tell to explain what our community looks like and what is important to it in 2023, and how you would use your digital items to tell it. This paper is due Dec. 6.

Your participation in classroom discussions, some of which will take the form of group work, will determine the remaining 10% of your grade in the course.

Final grades are computed on a 100-point scale: 90.0 – 100 = A, 80.0 – 89.9 = B, etc. I do not "curve" grades as such, but I will take improvement into account when assigning final grades.

Expectations
The attached Course Schedule lists weekly reading assignments, which you should complete before the first class meeting of that week. Our classroom discussions will obviously be more fruitful if everyone has completed the week's readings.

Again, your grade depends in part upon your ability to participate meaningfully in class discussions. The practice of history is about making and supporting arguments, but I do expect you to remain civil and respect the opinions of your classmates during these dialogues.

I do not have an official attendance policy, but you absolutely cannot expect to do well in this course if you miss class often; at the very least your class participation grade will suffer. I do reserve the right to implement an attendance policy during the semester should absenteeism become a problem.

I hope you will find that I work hard to prepare for class, make a point of arriving on time, do my best to return graded assignments promptly, treat my students with respect, and maintain a sense of humor. I ask no more or less than the same from you.

Texas law and UNT regulations make it clear that if you hold a license to carry you have the right to carry a handgun on campus, including in this classroom and my office, and no matter how misguided and counter-productive I believe these regulations to be, there is nothing I can do about them. However, I happen to believe that the free exchange of ideas is not facilitated by the presence of guns on campus, so you can be sure that you will not have to worry about my carrying a concealed weapon in your presence. I would consider it a personal favor if you extend me the same courtesy.

Please silence or turn your cell phone off before you enter the classroom, and please use laptops, tablets, and other devices for class purposes only.

A note regarding plagiarism and use of AI:

When you turn in an assignment in this course, you attest that the ideas and expressions in it are yours, unless they appear in quotation marks and are cited. If you use someone else's words and ideas without giving them credit, you're plagiarizing. If you copy and paste text from another website, you're plagiarizing. If you use a paraphrasing tool or AI to write an essay, you're plagiarizing.

I'm genuinely interested in the ideas you have in this course and want to help you hone them and express them as clearly as you can. That's why we're here. If you plagiarize you make that impossible.

Any assignment found to have been plagiarized will receive a 0, and I will only allow you to make it up after we've discussed it in person.

The UNT Libraries have assembled these [helpful resources re. plagiarismLinks to an external site.](#) and how to avoid it.

UNT Policies

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University. If you are found to have plagiarized, cheated on an exam, or assisted someone else in cheating, you will receive a zero on the assignment.

(See: http://www.historians.org/pubs/free/professionalstandards.cfm#Plagiarism) More information on academic integrity can be found in the Undergraduate Catalog.

ADA Policy

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website https://disability.unt.edu/.

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's Code of Student Conduct (https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) to learn more.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail Eagle Connect.

Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website (http://spot.unt.edu/) or email spot@unt.edu.

Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating

violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.

Use of Student Work

A student owns the copyright for all work (e.g. software, photographs, reports, presentations, and email postings) he or she creates within a class and the University is not entitled to use any student work without the student's permission unless all of the following criteria are met:

- The work is used only once.

- The work is not used in its entirety.

- Use of the work does not affect any potential profits from the work.

- The student is not identified.

- The work is identified as student work.

If the use of the work does not meet all of the above criteria, then the University office or department using the work must obtain the student's written permission.

Academic Support & Student Services

Student Support Services

Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- [Student Health and Wellness Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center)

- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
- [UNT Care Team](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care)
- [UNT Psychiatric Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry)
- [Individual Counseling](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling)

Chosen Names

A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let the instructor know. Below is a list of resources for updating your chosen name at UNT.

- UNT Records
- UNT ID Card
- UNT Email Address
- Legal Name

Pronouns

Pronouns (she/her, they/them, he/him, etc.) are a public way for people to address you, much like your name, and can be shared with a name when making an introduction, both virtually and in-person. Just as we ask and don't assume someone's name, we should also ask and not assume someone's pronouns.

You can add your pronouns to your Canvas account so that they follow your name when posting to discussion boards, submitting assignments, etc.

Below is a list of additional resources regarding pronouns and their usage:

- What are pronouns and why are they important?
- How do I use pronouns?
- How do I share my pronouns?
- How do I ask for another person's pronouns?
- How do I correct myself or others when the wrong pronoun is used?

Additional Student Support Services

- Registrar (https://registrar.unt.edu/registration)

- [Financial Aid](https://financialaid.unt.edu/) (https://financialaid.unt.edu/)
- [Student Legal Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services)
- [Career Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center)
- [Multicultural Center](https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center) (https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center)

- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
- [Pride Alliance](https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance) (https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance)
- [UNT Food Pantry](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry) (https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry)

Academic Support Services

- [Academic Resource Center](https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources) (https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources)
- [Academic Success Center](https://success.unt.edu/asc) (https://success.unt.edu/asc)
- [UNT Libraries](https://library.unt.edu/) (https://library.unt.edu/)
- [Writing Lab (http://writingcenter.unt.edu/](http://writingcenter.unt.edu/))