**HISTORY 4388-001: Guns in U.S. History**

**Fall 2015/Course Syllabus**

**Tu-Th, 9:30a.m.-10:50p.m.**

**UH 07**

**Course will use Blackboard/Check it regularly for updates, grades, etc. At:** [**https://elearn.uta.edu/webapps/login/**](https://elearn.uta.edu/webapps/login/)

Dr. Gerald D. Saxon

Dept. of History

University Hall Rm. 320

[saxon@uta.edu](mailto:saxon@uta.edu)

817-683-5551 (call/text)

**Office Hours:**

Tu-Th, 11:00a.m.-12:30p.m.

And by appointment

**Required Readings/Texts:**

Larson, Erik. ***Lethal Passage: The Story of a Gun.***

Lott, John R., Jr. ***More Guns, Less Crime***, 3d ed.

Waldman, Michael. ***The Second Amendment: A Biography***.

Winkler, Adam. ***Gunfight: The Battle Over the Right to Bear Arms in America.***

**Required Links/Websites:**

Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. <http://www.bradycampaign.org>

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. <http://www.atf.gov>

Common Sense about Kids and Guns. <http://www.kidsandguns.org>

Gun Owners of America. <http://gunowners.org>

Mayors Against Illegal Guns. <http://www.mayorsagainstillegalguns.org>

National Firearms Museum. <http://nramuseum.com>

National Rifle Association. <http://www.nra.org>

Well Armed Woman. <http://www.thewellarmedwoman.com>

**Online Readings:**

“Arming America,” review of the criticism that Michael Bellesiles and his book *Arming America* sparked after it was published in 2000. Wikipedia website. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arming_America>

Saul Cornell, “The Second Amendment Under Fire: The Uses of History and the Politics of Gun Control,” posted Jan. 2001 on History Matters website. <http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5200>

“Glossary of Firearm Terms.” Wikipedia website. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glossary_of_firearms_terms>

Jeffrey C. Goldfarb, “After Newton: A Discussion about Gun Controls and Popular Culture,” posted Dec. 17-18, 2012 on Deliberately Considered website. <http://www.deliberatelyconsidered.com/?s=after+newtown>

Richard Hofstadter, “America as a Gun Culture,” *American Heritage* (vol. 21, issue 6, 1970). <http://americanheritage.com/content/america-gun-culture>

Adam Winkler, “The Secret History of Guns,” *The Atlantic* (Sept. 2011, posted on July 24, 2011). <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/09/the-secret-history-of-guns/308608/2/>

**Films on DVD:**

*A Girl and a Gun,* by Cathryne Czubek, 2013, DVD. UTA Library: HV 8059. G57 2013.

*Bowling for Columbine*, by Michael Moore, 2002, DVD. UTA Library: HV 7436. B69 2002.

**YouTube Music Links:**

Aerosmith, “Janie’s Got a Gun.” YouTube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RqQn2ADZE1A>.

Tori Amos, “Me and a Gun.” YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWxZW2zj7PQ>

The Beatles, “Happiness is a Warm Gun.” YouTube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qE2Vdcv9Q_o>.

Green Day, “21 Guns.” YouTube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r00ikilDxW4>.

Jimi Hendrix, “Hey Joe.” YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3JsuWz4xWc>

Miranda Lambert, “Gunpowder and Lead.” YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yyGAvulgWmw>

Lynyrd Skynyrd, “Gimme Back My Bullets.” YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xk83VHblPhE&feature=youtu.be>

Lynyrd Skynyrd, “Saturday Night Special.” YouTube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zUGd-VC3wk>.

Justin Moore, “Guns.” YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mMatCFZ0IZA>

Justin Moore, “This Is NRA Country.” YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHLN5P6LMOs>

Bob Seger, “Manhattan.” YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GXKELoVa4xM&feature=youtu.be>

Blake Shelton, “Granddaddy’s Gun.” YouTube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zFqdX-5W90U>.

Snoop Lion, featuring Drake and Cori B., “No Guns Allowed.” YouTube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqo9gPxT6A8>.

**YouTube News Links:**

“Gun Myths Gone in Five Minutes,” ABC News 20/20. YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=682JLrsUmEM>.

“Senator Ted Cruz Smacks Down Chuck Schumer on Gun Violence,” NBC Meet the Press. YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XDbE8m6vbgs>.

**Course Description:**

A Houston (Texas) residence where eight family members were killed, Chattanooga (Tennessee) Military Recruiting Stations, Charleston (South Carolina) Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Sandy Hook Elementary School, Virginia Tech University, Columbine High School, and Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas, are just some of the places where mass shootings have taken place recently, producing calls from some for stricter gun laws and protests from others that guns aren’t the problem, people are. Dating from their invention more than 400 years ago, firearms have continuously sparked a sharply polarized debate in the U.S. The terms of this debate have not changed much over the centuries even though the guns themselves have. For some, guns are a blessing used for sport, protection, and to defend individual rights, while for others they are a scourge and a major reason why violence seems to be on the rise in society. This course will examine the history of guns in the U.S. and how, for better or worse, they have thoroughly permeated American society. Another major topic the course will focus on is why we as a society remain so thoroughly captive to extreme positions in the gun debate (and other debates in the culture wars!) that require an almost complete suspension of common sense. With more than 300 million guns in private hands in the U.S., doing away with guns is an unrealistic impossibility. At the same time, it is also equally unrealistic to assume that there should be no restrictions on the types of firearms that may legitimately be privately owned.

To better understand the sociology of the gun culture in the U.S. and the reaction to it, the course will cover the following topics: the English roots to private gun ownership, colonial America’s emphasis on guns as a means of protection and food gathering, the reasons behind the Second Amendment of the Constitution, the impact of the frontier and militia culture on the U.S. right to bear arms, the rise of gun manufacturers in the country and the spread of relatively inexpensive weapons, the founding of the National Rifle Association and its evolution over time, legislative attempts at controlling guns and court rulings interpreting these legislative acts, the rise of urban America and the concurrent increase of gun violence including mass murders, and the gun debate as a symptom of the culture wars.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

There are ten desired learning outcomes for this course. By the end of the semester, students should:

\*Understand how guns have shaped U.S. History and how U.S. History has framed and shaped the ongoing gun debate.

\*Understand the historical roots of the Second Amendment and how it has been interpreted over time.

\*Understand how, why, and when the call for gun regulations began, how it has progressed and regressed, and how the push for such regulations has succeeded at times and failed at other times.

\*Understand the history and evolution of the National Rifle Association and its advocacy for gun rights.

\*Understand the development of the gun industry in the U.S. and its impact on the economy, product innovation, culture, and politics.

\*Understand how the gun debate has become another issue in the U.S. culture wars.

\*Develop the critical thinking skills necessary to evaluate the various positions expressed by the competing interests in the gun debate, including your own personal position (using facts rather than rhetoric).

\*Develop analytical, research, and writing skills to be used in preparing book reviews and a research paper.

\*Develop the skills necessary to give a lucid, well organized, and engaging oral presentation based on your research paper.

\*Learn to enjoy history as a subject relevant to your lives and important to understanding the world in which you live.

**Course Assignments/Grading:**

Your grade for the semester will be based on the following:

***Mid-Term Exam*** (counts 20% of final grade): There will be a mid-term exam administered on the lectures, discussions, reports, and readings covered in the first half of the course. The exam will include fifty multiple choice questions and two essay questions from which you will have to answer one. You will need a Scantron Form 882 and paper in order to take the exam. More details on the exam will be forthcoming later in the semester.

***Final Exam*** (counts 20% of final grade): The final exam will be given on the last class day, and will be the same format as the mid-term. It will not be comprehensive, but rather will cover only that material covered since the mid-term. Its format will be the same as the mid-term exam.

***Quizzes*** (count 10% of final grade): There will be four quizzes given over the course of the semester on your reading assignments. The average of your four quizzes will count as 10% of your final grade. The quizzes will be “pop tests” so they will not appear on the semester calendar/schedule.

***Book Reviews*** (count 10% each or 20% total of final grade): Each undergraduate student will be required to write **two** book reviews during the semester. The first will be on the Winkler book ***Gunfight.*** The second one will be on the Lott book ***More Guns, Less Crime***. The book reviews should be **no longer than** **3 pages typed, double-spaced,** and should discuss the main ideas presented by the author. **Please follow the Book Review Guidelines available on the course’s Blackboard site.**

***Research Paper*** (counts 25% of final grade). **Please refer to the Research Paper Guidelines on Blackboard.**

***Oral Presentation*** (counts as 5% of final grade).Each student is **required** to give a 15-minute oral presentation in class based on his/her research paper (you won’t receive agrade for your research paper unless you do an oral report). The presentation should use powerpoint slides and be carefully planned and well thought out. Believe it or not, fifteen minutes is not a long time (students tend to run long—way long!) so your presentation should be focused on the main points of your paper. **See the Research Paper Guidelines for more information about the oral presentation.**

**Make-up Tests and Late Work:**

Make-up tests will be given only to students who have a doctor’s excuse for missing the day of the original quiz or test. Please see me to make arrangements for any make-up tests. Any work that is turned in after the due will be penalized 5 points for each class day it is late.

**Graduate Students:**

Students taking the class for graduate credit will have to complete all assignments outlined in this syllabus in addition to other work to be determined by the instructor and student. Due dates for these additional assignments will also be decided by the instructor and the student as well as the weighting and grading of the assignments.

**Student Responsibilities:**

**Students are expected to attend class, be on time, and** **have cell phones turned off** **or else be in silent mode**. Laptops and Ipads can be used for classroom activities only, and MP3 players and Ipods are not allowed to be used. Students should demonstrate respectful behavior for their fellow students and the professor. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. **Guns are an issue that people on both sides of the gun debate are passionate about, so I expect you as college students to listen to all viewpoints and not call people names or be cruel in your remarks.** You can disagree with someone but in a dispassionate way and based on facts, not feelings. I reserve the right to ask any misbehaving students to leave the classroom, and I will reduce their grade in the class accordingly. Students are expected to complete all readings and assignments on-time and to turn in written assignments on the day they are due and in the manner in which the course materials mandate.

**Attendance:**

At UTA, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students’ academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance.

As the instructor of this section, I have established the following attendance policy. I will check attendance every day at the beginning of class and maintain attendance records for each student. Students who turn in all papers on time, arrive on time, and miss no classes during the semester (including one-on-one meetings) will be given an additional three points on their final course average at the end of the semester. Students who turn in all papers on time, arrive on time, but miss no more than two classes over the semester will be given an additional two points. Students who miss three or more classes will not have any points added. Also, two late arrivals to class will be counted as one absence in determining a student’s final grade. A late arrival is defined as coming into the classroom after I have checked roll. In short, spotty attendance and late arrivals will not hurt your final grade but they certainly won’t help it either.

**Academic Integrity:**

All students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

**Statement on Cheating and Plagiarism:**

It is the philosophy of UT Arlington that academic dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University. “Scholastic dishonesty includes but it is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.” (See Regents’ Rules and Regulations, Part One, Chapter VI, Section 3, Subsection 3.2, Subdivision 3.22). **In this class, students found guilty of plagiarism or other forms of cheating will receive a grade of “F” for the course.**

**Drop Policy:**

Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Student Support Services**:

UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

**Electronic Communication for UT Arlington:**

UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**E-Culture Policy for This Class:**

Students must consult their University email address regularly since this is the address I will use to contact you or to send messages to the entire class. **I accept papers and other writing assignments in class and NOT through email.** Exceptions may be granted in the event of emergencies. **Also, please make sure you are accessing Blackboard regularly since this is where I will be posting your grades, powerpoints, announcements, and study guides.**

**Disability Policy:**

UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 93112—The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens. As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide “reasonable accommodation” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty at the beginning of the semester and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining academic accommodations can be found at: <http://www.uta.edu/disability>. Also, you may visit the Office of Students with Disabilities in Room 102, University Hall, or call the OSD staff at 817-272-3364.

**Student Feedback Survey:**

At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Final Review Week:**

A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:**

Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in

**Library Assistance:**

Below are a number of helpful links for the UT Arlington Library.

Library Home Page <http://www.uta.edu/library>

Subject Guides <http://libguides.uta.edu>

Subject Librarians <http://www.uta.edu/library/help/subject-librarians.php>

Database List <http://libguides.uta.edu/az.php>

Course Reserves <http://pulse.uta.edu/vwebv/enterCourseReserve.do>

Library Tutorials <http://www.uta.edu/library/help/tutorials.php>

Connecting from Off-Campus <http://libguides.uta.edu/offcampus>

Ask A Librarian [http://ask.uta.edu](http://ask.uta.edu/)

Andy Herzog is the librarian assigned to the History Dept. He is a tremendous resource and can be very helpful with all of your History assignments. He can be reached at [amherzog@uta.edu](mailto:amherzog@uta.edu).

Special Collections, located on the 6th floor of the Central Library, is a major repository of books, manuscripts/archives, maps, photos, broadsides, etc., relating to Texas history in all periods. The materials have to be used in Special Collections and do not circulate, so you must schedule your research time to coincide with the department’s hours: Mon., 9:00a.m.-7:00p.m.; Tues.-Sat., 9:00a.m.-5:00p.m. Special Collections’ webpage can be found at: <http://libraries.uta.edu/SpecColl/>. The Special Collections staff is there to assist you so don’t hesitate to ask for help.

**When in Doubt:**

I am here to help you, so please ask me if you need assistance. I can be reached at the numbers/addresses above.

08/10/15