

History of Us: Researching African American History in Tuscaloosa

Teacher Information:

Teacher: Mrs. Chadwick
Phone: (205) 759-3720
Email: jwaid@tusc.k12.al.us
Planning Period: 4th 2:20PM-3:45PM

Teacher: Ms. Margaret Lawson
Email: malawson@crimson.ua.edu

Teacher: Dr. John Giggie
Phone: (205) 348-7100
Email: jmgiggie@ua.edu

Required Materials: All required readings are available as free PDFs or website links through our Google Classroom page.

Slavery in America, Equal Justice Initiative (PDF online)
Segregation in America, Equal Justice Initiative (PDF online)
Lynching in America, Equal Justice Initiative (PDF online)

Opening Note: This class is designed to run on HIGH levels of student participation, energy, and direction. For many of you this class may be the MOST interactive of your high school career! Students must come to class prepared to discuss the readings at-hand—be ready with highlighted passages, questions and comments about the texts, and ideas for class conversation. *We will often begin each class by going around the room asking for your thoughts on the readings for the day; you are expected to be ready to offer your insights and comments.* If we can do anything to help you in these preparations, please let us know!

Course Description: “History of Us” aims to create collaborative models for high school students to learn about and engage with local histories of African American history. The key component of the project will be students from Central performing high quality, original research about African American history in Tuscaloosa. By conducting primary source research through accessible online newspaper and genealogical databases and working closely with community partners, students will study the key moments in aspects of Tuscaloosa’s history, including slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction and Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights movement. Students will study the long struggle for democracy in their own community, tracking black citizens steady efforts to expand basic rights to include all Americans.

Central students will embed their work in a series of ongoing community-based projects that will help them become historians and local leaders in their own right. During the year, they will work with a broad-based coalition of educational, faith-based, business, and governmental partners along with EJI to host photo exhibits, digital media displays and mapping exercises, and a conference highlighting interviews with local civil rights leaders. By researching Tuscaloosa's African American history from slavery to the modern day, Central students will become contemporary leaders in a conversation about race, justice, and community.

History of Us: Course Overview

Unit 1: Memory and the American South

- Introduction & History of Central High School
- Slavery
- The Civil War
- Reconstruction and The New South

Unit 2: African American History & Alabama

- War & Democracy
- History of the Great Migration, Lynching, and Racial Democracy
- Alabama Law & Segregation
- Religion & Civil Rights
- Civil Rights History in Tuscaloosa (Local Leaders & Bloody Tuesday)

Unit 3: Archival Research on Local Histories

- Newspaper Research (Hoole Special Collections Library & Accessible Online Databases)
- Image Research (Alabama Department of Archives & History, Birmingham Public Library, Library of Congress)
- Genealogical Research (Ancestry.com & Oral Histories)
- Final Research Project

Course Objectives:

- 1) Students will be able to understand and use primary documents in the telling of history.**
- 2) Students will create new local history that centers the ongoing struggles for justice and democracy**
- 3) Students will become leaders in a community-wide conversation about Tuscaloosa's legacy of racial struggle and future of truth and democracy.**

Social Media & Digital Humanities Policy: As part of this course's emphasis on the principles of civic leadership and community engagement, students will participate in online assignments designed to celebrate students' research achievement, publicize their work, and draw attention to Tuscaloosa's rich and varied history. Course instructors will facilitate students efforts researching, selecting, and posting appropriate and culturally sensitive materials on social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, created for the "History of Us" class. All

posts will be reviewed and vetted by instructors before being placed online. No student will be able to post without instructor permission. Students pledge to use social media responsibly and as a tool to further community conversations about the meaning of racial justice. At all times, these posts will reflect the values of diversity, tolerance, and inclusion practiced by Central High School and the Tuscaloosa City Schools.

Attendance Policy:

Being present and on time to each class is crucial to your success in the classroom. Absences are unexcused unless otherwise permitted by the Central High School office. We expect everyone to be present each day and arrive on time. Tardies will be counted in accordance to the Central High School policies. Once you are in the classroom, leaving is not permitted unless in case of emergency. Coming to class prepared is not only vital for your best performance in our classroom but for each class you have and we will expect your preparedness every day.

Communication Protocol:

We will be using Google Classroom, and we expect each student to check it based on my direction each day. This is subject to change throughout the semester as we will most likely be adding other avenues of communication and assignments with other technological resources. If at any time, you or your parent/guardian needs contact us, email is the best possible way (given above). Also, calling the school number (given above) during Mrs. Chadwick’s planning period is acceptable as well. The line of communication is always open for questions and concerns.

Electronic Device Policy:

Cellphone, tablet and laptop access is not permitted unless otherwise specified during class time. If at any time this becomes a problem, we will confiscate the device until the end of class or the school day. When allowed, proper use of these devices is mandatory. Improper use will result in a referral to the office and/or confiscation for the rest of the day or school year based on the severity of the action.

Academic Policies and Procedures:

Assignments will either be handed in during class or turned in through Google Classroom. Late work will only be accepted with an excused absence or agreement to deduction of points based on my discretion. Plagiarism is defined as the practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing them off as one’s own and is strictly prohibited in the classroom and will result in a zero on the work Submitted.

Grading:

Class Participation – 15%

Analytical Blogs: 20%

Research Log & Metadata Collection Spreadsheet: 10%

Short Essays (3-5 pages, double-spaced): 20%

Social Media & Digital Humanities Research, Products, and Presentations: 35%

Major Assignments and Research Projects

Blog Posts: Every student is required to join in the class blog by offering responses to the observations and questions submitted by the lead bloggers. Your blog entries are due Sunday by 8:00pm. This form of writing is not meant to be a dump-and-run exercise, but instead an attempt to engage your classmates thoughtfully and repeatedly. Strive to submit a total word count of no less than 250 for each of your submissions, though a higher count is certainly welcome. I expect that you will submit multiple entries and engage your classmates. To encourage such participation, your grade on this part will be simple: submit three distinct responses for an A; two for a B, and one for a C.

Lead Blogger: Each blog post, two students will be in charge of kicking off the blog. They will post their observations and key questions (initially about 200 words) arising from the readings, and then the rest of the class will join in. These lead blogs are due no later than Friday by 5:00pm of the assigned week. Earlier would be better. Additionally, the lead bloggers will be in charge of running class conversation for that week's discussion topic.

Photo Essays: In response to an essay prompt for a unit, student's curate a series of five pictures that tell a story, evoke an emotion, or present an idea related to the topics they study in class. In this assignment, students use the power of social media to take control of the public landscape of their community in a virtual space. These photo essays can be comprised of photos taken by students themselves or photographs found in accessible online archives such as, Alabama Department of Archives & History, Hoole Special Collections Library, Library of Congress, etc. The first photo essay prompt is, "What does Central mean to you?" The second photo essay prompt is, "How do you tell the history of Slavery & the Civil War in Tuscaloosa?" The third photo essay prompt for this semester is "What is the Legacy of Racial Violence in Tuscaloosa?"

Oral Histories: During the work on the civil rights movement, students will interview local leaders of the modern struggle for racial justice. They will produce short audio clips of the interviews and conduct a public workshop on the history of the local movement, including Bloody Tuesday.

Primary Document Research Project: Students will learn how to conduct archival & genealogical research, metadata organization, and historical analysis as they seek to document the history of racial justice, violence, and reconciliation in Tuscaloosa. They will create a website that documents key turning points and events in local African American history, including recovering lives lost to slavery and lynching. By the end of this course students will be national experts about Tuscaloosa history and will be ready to move forward in the Spring semester where we will examine responses to the struggle for civil rights by writers, artists, musicians, educators, and activists.

RETURN THIS PAGE FOR A GRADE

Student Printed Name

Student Signature

Parent Phone Number

Parent Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Parent Email
