

SNAPSHOTS OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH: FROM JIM CROW TO THE PRESENT

Coordinator: Jay Fleishman

As America's most distinctive cultural region, the South adheres to a set of norms and institutions which somewhat set it apart from the rest of the country. This study group provides both historical and contemporary views of the South by looking at, among others: a tri-racial county in North Carolina, a famous textile workers' strike, race and class in two communities in the 1930's, Southern Baptists, the black church, historically black colleges, the 2016 presidential election in the South, the Southern economy, stock car racing, Southern manners, white Southerners as an ethnic group, and intellectual opposition to industrialization.

Readings and other Required Materials:

There will be a 400 page course pack, 30-35 pages of required reading per week (See syllabus below for selections) cost \$25-\$30.

Jay Fleishman grew up in a small, tri-racial North Carolina tobacco town in the '50's and '60's and has always been fascinated by race, class, and religion.

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Week 1: **The South: Where Is It? How Is It Different?** – Selections from (a)Richard Pillsbury, editor. *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture: Volume 3* and several works by John Shelton Reed including: *1,001 Things Everyone Should Know About the South*; *Surveying the South: Studies in Regional Sociology*; *Minding the South*.

Week 2: **Race and Class – I** -Race and power relations among whites, blacks, and Indians in a rural North Carolina county in the 1970's. Major Selections from the book by Karen Blu, *The Lumbee Problem: The Making of an American Indian People*. This book is about my home county of Robeson, North Carolina and is an analysis of the class and power relations among these three almost

numerically equal racial groups. Also selections from a more recent book on the Indians entitled *Lumbee Indians in the Jim Crow South: Race, Identity, and the Making of a Nation*.

Week 3: **Race and Class – II**--Class and caste relations in two Southern communities in the 1930's. Major selections from Allison Davis, Burleigh B Gardner, and Mary B. Gardner's *Deep South* and John Dollard, *Caste and Class in Southern Town*. The former is an ethnographic study of the caste and class structure of a town of 10,000 in southwest Mississippi from the 1930's. The latter is similar.

Week 4: Southern Manners: Is it simply manifestations of a "folk society" or is something else going on here? Robert Redfield, "The Folk Society" and Charles R. Wilson, "Myth, Manners, and Memory" from *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*.

Week 5: **The Southern Economy**: An Overview and Tobacco as a Case Study. V. S. Naipaul, "Smoke," from *A Turn In The South*. Also excerpts from Melissa Walker and James C. Cobb, *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture, Volume 2: Agriculture and Industry*.

Week 6: **Southern Politics and the 2016 Election**. Excerpts from Charles S. Bullock III and Mark J. Rozell, *The New Politics of the Old South*. Current political analysis from contemporary newspapers and magazines.

Week 7: **Religion in the South**: Southern Baptists; The Black Church. Harold Bloom, two chapters on "Southern Baptists" in *American Religion*. Excerpts from Alice Cullen Arnold, *The Black Church in the Post-Civil Rights Era*.

Week 8: **Working Class Popular Culture**: Stock Car Racing. Tom Wolfe, "The Last American Hero."

Week 9: **Historically Black colleges and universities**. Excerpts from Ron Stodghill, *Where Everybody Looks Like Me: At the Crossroads of America's Black Colleges and Culture*.

Week 10: **Organized labor** in the early years of the Southern textile industry. Textile workers and their ministers during a famous strike in 1928. Liston Pope, *Millhands and Preachers*.

Week 11: **White Southerners as an ethnic group**. Excerpts from Angie Maxwell, *The Indicted South: Public Criticism, Southern Inferiority, and the Politics of Whiteness*.

Week 12: **Southern exceptionalism: persisting or declining?** , Excerpts from Bryon E. Shafer and Richard Johnson *The End of Southern Exceptionalism*.