The Great Depression of the nineteen thirties opened deep cracks in economic, political, and social structures in the United States and around the world. Its multiple, violent crises sheared through vast national and international institutions as well as millions of families and individual lives, producing not only profound scarcity, insecurity, and anxiety but also great opportunity and hope for change. Some of the plans and attempts to fill and bind those cracks failed completely. Other “New Deal” measures held through World War II to shape the foundation of the modern U.S.—its economic base, political alignments, and social and cultural patterns—and the postwar world order. This course will survey the watershed Depression decade, focusing at once on its development and evolution, its systemic and everyday consequences, and its influence on what followed, from World War II to the present.

REQUIRED BOOKS

David Kennedy, Freedom from Fear, Pt. 1: The American People in the Great Depression (New York, Oxford University Press, 1999)


ASSIGNMENTS and GRADING

1. The primary requirement of this course is active participation. That means: completion of reading assignments, engagement with lectures, presentations, and discussions, and the e-mail submission of one provocative, discussion-prompting question or thesis to me (sedgewick@usf.edu) by 7 PM every Sunday (except before exams). 20 percent of your grade, and therefore a necessary component of any A or B.

2. Two in-class ID exams, scheduled for 9/26 and 10/31. You will identify and explain the significance of important people, places, and things selected by me from the reading and lecture material. Each exam will make up 10 percent of your grade.
3. A ten-minute in-class multi-media presentation on one of the “artifacts” listed below, due on the date indicated by the schedule of classes. Choose an artifact that interests you and meet with me well ahead of time to discuss how to approach it. The goal of these presentations is to pump some blood into our understanding of the Depression decade, to experience it in a vivid sensory way, to bring history to life. 20 percent of your grade.

4. This presentation will become the seed of a six-page paper on the same artifact that will require both additional library research and extensive close analysis. Due 11/21, regardless of presentation date. 20 percent of your grade.

5. A final take-home essay, distributed at the end of class 11/30 and due in my inbox (sedgewick@usf.edu) by 9:30 AM on 12/5. Late papers will not be accepted. 20 percent of your grade.

**SCHEDULE of CLASSES**

**8/22: Defining Terms and Responsibilities**
Photos: Farm Security Administration Photos of Florida (http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/fsa/)

**8/24-29: The Origins and Causes of the Great Depression**
Required
Kennedy, 1-42

Artifacts
Retrospectives: F. Scott Fitzgerald, “Echoes of the Jazz Age” and “The Lost Decade”

Recurring Complementary Readings (to be selected and presented by me weekly)
Benjamin Roth, *The Great Depression: A Diary*
*Looking for the New Deal: Florida Women’s Letters in the Great Depression*

**8/31-9/7: The Scope of the Crisis and Early Efforts at Relief**
Required
Kennedy, 43-94

Artifacts
Song: Bing Crosby, “Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?”
Blockbuster: Charlie Chaplin, *City Lights*
Painting: Grant Wood, *American Gothic*
Pulp: Raymond Chandler, “Blackmailers Don't Shoot”
Blockbuster: *The Public Enemy*
9/12-14: The Election of 1932 and The Coming of the New Deal
Required
Kennedy, 94-159

Artifacts
Manifesto: Culture and the Crisis: Open Letter to the Intellectual Workers of America
Novel: Nathanael West, Miss Lonelyhearts
Superstar: Babe Didrikson
Song: “Happy Days Are Here Again”
Film: Gold Diggers of 1933

9/19-21: Consequences and Critics of the New Deal
Required
Kennedy, 160-244

Artifacts
Institution: The University of Tampa
Memoir: Richard Wright, American Hunger
Expose: Dorthea Lange and Paul Taylor, An American Exodus
Novel: John O’Hara, Appointment in Samarra
Leading Man: Cary Grant
Board Game: Monopoly

9/26: Mid-Term ID Exam

9/28: Ybor City and the Tampa Cigar Industry in the Thirties
Required
TBD

Artifact
Drama: Cruz, Anna in the Tropics
Memorial: Ben Shahn, the Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti
Crime of the Century: The Lindbergh Baby

10/3-5: “The Second New Deal”
Required
Kennedy, 244-287
Artifacts
Blues: Leadbelly, “New Black Snake Moan”
Documentary: Pare Lorentz, The Plow that Broke the Plains
Blockbuster: Frank Capra, Mr. Deeds Goes to Town
Landscape: Greenbelt, Maryland
Store: The Supermarket
Guide: Dale Carnegie, How to Win Friends and Influence People

10/10-12: Labor's Long Campaign
Required
Kennedy, 288-323

Artifacts
Blockbuster: Charlie Chaplin, Modern Times
Drama: Clifford Odets, Waiting for Lefty
Painting: Arthur Durston, Industry
Novel: John Steinbeck, In Dubious Battle
Song: Woody Guthrie, “Ballad of Harry Bridges”
Speech: John L. Lewis, “Labor and the Nation”

10/17-19: A Closer Look
Required
Robin D.G. Kelley, Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists in the Great Depression

Artifacts
Song: Billie Holiday, “Strange Fruit”
Paintings: Jacob Lawrence, Toussaint L'Ouverture
Novel: Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God

10/24-26: “The Roosevelt Recession”
Required
Kennedy, 323-362

Artifacts
Perfect Pair: Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in Shall We Dance?
Dream Car: Buick Y-Job
Drama: Thornton Wilder, Our Town
Song: Irving Berlin, “God Bless America”
Superhero: Superman

10/31: Mid Term ID Exam
11/2: Film: *The Grapes of Wrath*

11/7-9: The World in Depression

*Required*

Kennedy, 381-425

*Artifacts*

Autobiography: Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*

Film: Leni Riefenstahl, *Triumph of the Will*

Fights: Joe Louis vs. Max Schmelling I and II

Martial Art: Karate

Painting: Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*

Genius: Albert Einstein

11/14-16: Prosperity, War, and the Foundation of the Postwar Order

*Required*

Kennedy, 363-380

*Artifact*

Radio Play: *War of the Worlds*

11/21: Film: *Citizen Kane*

Analytical research essays due at the start of class, 11/21.

11/23: No Class: Thanksgiving

11/28: Epilogue: The Great Depression and the Great Recession

*Required*

TBD

11/30: Review

Final Essay Question Distributed.

12/5: Final Essay Due in my inbox by 9:30 AM (sedgewick@usf.edu). Late papers will not be accepted.