

050:291
Spring, 2014

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Office hours T and Th, 12:00-2:00

JERSEYANA

*"It used to be farms
stone houses on green lawns . . .*

[Garden State," by Allen Ginsberg]

*"New Jersey Turnpike
Ridin' on a wet night
Neath the refineries glow
Out where the great black rivers flow"*

["State Trooper," by Bruce Springsteen]

This course assumes that there is such a thing as New Jersey culture and that it differs from that of other American states in its ideas, values, and assumptions, its way of thinking of itself. Like any American Studies course Jerseyana is interdisciplinary, except that it focuses on life and society in one state rather than in the nation as a whole. Hence "Jerseyana" instead of "Americana." The course tries to get at New Jersey's essence through examining all that we can about the state, from its politics to its art to its point of view—which some would call "New Jersey attitude." 2014 is the 350th anniversary of New Jersey and will be celebrated statewide. In a sense, our class is part of that celebration.

BOOKS

These three books are principally available in the Barnes and Noble bookstore downtown on Somerset Street. I have asked the bookstore to seek as many used copies as possible. You are also certainly permitted to look for used copies in stores and on the internet. Abebooks.com, Alibris.com and Amazon.com are good sources for used books. Finally, while I am required to list the ISBN numbers of these books, any version of these books will be acceptable as long as they are not abridged.

1) Philip Roth, *Goodbye Columbus* ISBN 0-679-74826-1

2) Angus Kress Gillespie and Michael Aaron Rockland, *Looking for America on The New Jersey Turnpike*. Apologies for the cost when purchased new. Professor Gillespie and I make no money on this purchase. ISBN 0-8135-1955-1

3) John McPhee, *The Pine Barrens* ISBN 0-374-51442-9

OTHER READINGS

You will note that, scattered through the syllabus are many readings, mostly from magazines, that are on electronic reserve in the library. They appear there in the order in

which they appear in the syllabus, for ready reference. They are to be read for the day they will be discussed in class. You should print them all out now, keep them in a folder, and bring the one or ones to class with you on the days we will be discussing them. You will find something peculiar about these readings. They are mostly articles published by myself. This is intentional. I want to encourage you to develop your critical faculties and to challenge me at every point where we have a difference of opinion. In other words, I wish, wherever possible, to court controversy in the course and hope for spirited debate. Ours is not an esoteric subject; you already know a great deal about it. Thus, let us have a dialogue throughout the course. An important part of a college education is discovering that your professors are human and, thus, as flawed as anyone else.

To access the essays on electronic reserve, go to the Rutgers website, then to libraries, then to reserves. Put in my name. Put in the number of our course. Be sure you download only the items for our course, 01:050:291, Jerseyana Other courses of mine from the past and present may also be there on electronic reserve.

LEARNING GOALS

1. To discover those aspects of New Jersey society and culture unique to the state
2. To understand the geography, history, and politics of New Jersey
3. To look at New Jersey's long history of image problems and an inferiority complex and why these have been mitigated in recent years.
4. In connection with #3 why did New Jerseyans formerly often apologize for their state, while recently it has become cool to be from New Jersey?
5. Why has New Jersey long been almost a colony of New York and Philadelphia
6. What is the reason New Jersey is America's most densely populated state?
7. Why does New Jersey export more college students out-of-state than any of the other forty-nine states?
8. How is it that the Jets and Giants play in New Jersey but are called New York teams?
9. Why is New Jersey seen by some as a cultural wasteland when it has contributed an extraordinary and disproportional number of artists in all fields?
10. Why has New Jersey been called by some "the most typical American state and as one writer put it, "A Mirror on America?"
11. How did New Jersey become America's most ethnically diverse state?

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is mandatory, so you'd best always be in class. You can count on doing less well with any absence, certainly on the objective midterm and on the objective portion of the final examination. You can count on getting something wrong on the objective examinations every day you miss class. A poor attendance record will also affect your final grade in the course. Because emergencies sometimes occur, you should save any absences for such events or when you are seriously ill. Or when you have an important job interview. Further, be on time! All absences must be explained to me personally. In

addition, you are to report absences to the university by accessing the following site:
<http://sims.rutgers.edu>

One more point: we are lucky to have several distinguished guests, including a former New Jersey Governor. Absences those days will be considered extremely seriously.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Never assume that what I will have to say is “the truth.” I want to see regular participation by all of you. If you are shy, try to use this opportunity to get over it. Classes in the humanities are, in addition to their subject matter, to train students to speak articulately, think critically, and to write effectively. These are the skills essential to success, regardless of what career you may pursue. Class participation will definitely figure in the grade you receive in this course.

FINAL GRADE

Your grade in the course will depend on the following factors:

- 1) As already mentioned, attendance and class participation
- 2) The midterm examination
- 3) The term project—perhaps the most important factor
- 4) The final examination.

Laptops, Cell Phones and Special Accommodation

Laptops and cell phones are **never** to appear in our class. If you do. Even once, without my specific permission, your grade will be affected. However, if you bring me a note from the appropriate university office discussing learning difficulties, you will be allowed to use a laptop to take notes, though this privilege will be rescinded at the first occurrence that the laptop is used for any other purpose. Accommodations in terms of time on examinations, and the site at which these examinations may be taken, will be available to students providing a letter to this effect will be provided from that same university office.

TERM PROJECT

Your term paper concerns your New Jersey hometown or, if your family has moved around quite a bit, a New Jersey town you know well. If you are not from New Jersey I would suggest you focus on a New Jersey town you do know: New Brunswick.. This will be partly a research paper, partly an experiential one. On the research side you may find it useful working with the local history librarian in your town library, working with vertical files, consulting the book or books that have been written at some time or another on virtually any and every town in New Jersey, examining the lives of famous onetime local residents, looking into the history behind the town’s name, etc. On the experiential side, interviews with the mayor and/or town council members, with the chamber of commerce, with police, firefighters, longstanding local merchants, and long term town residents, including, possibly, your own family, will be helpful. Each term project should provide a map of the town and you should probably walk around your town so as to know firsthand its boundaries. Other illustrations, including photographs you take, can very much embellish your text. Length, not including illustrations about 10 pages.of text.

It is possible that I might consider a film about your town in lieu of a written term project. However, a caution: just walking around the town and pointing a camera will not do. A film must be as carefully crafted as a paper. It must tell the story of your town well, be edited handsomely, and be accompanied by appropriate music, have titles credits, etc. If you've never made a film before and have no experience doing so, you'd best do a paper. Finally, those wishing to do films must speak with me to gain permission. I will want, in conversation, to see how sophisticated you are about filmmaking.

Since you already know what your assignment is and are already somewhat familiar with the subject, there is no reason why you cannot begin work on your project immediately.

Whether you are doing a written project (the great majority of you) or a film (perhaps a few) your task is not just to provide a wealth of details about your town but to endeavor to capture *its essence*. What, in effect, is *its culture*? What makes it different from *other* towns? In short, you will be asking the same questions about your town as we are asking in our course about New Jersey. I want to be able to truly *experience* your town by confronting immediately what is its essential nature. To accomplish this, you must take your role seriously not only as a scholar but as an artist and a citizen. Remember: all towns are different, all towns have their own culture. You may need to step back a bit from your town so as to see it with fresh eyes.

Warning: plagiarism is a very serious offense, enough to not only get you an F in this or any other course but to get you bounced out of Rutgers altogether. Don't do it. Ever. Be sure to give credit where credit is due. Where you are quoting someone else's work, proper attribution is only good manners. Or where your ideas are wholly or, in part, from others, attribute properly, which is simply a way of saying "Thanks!" No one will ever think a writer is dumb because she/he got some of their ideas from others. We all get some of our ideas from others. And giving credit where credit is due does not diminish your work but shows that you are intelligent enough to examine what others have written before you on a certain subject. How many endnotes should you have in your term paper? As many as called for by the sources you have consulted. Some papers will have lots of endnotes. Others will have few. You don't get gold stars for the number of endnotes.

Bibliography? List all those works consulted. I will not be impressed by a long list of books and articles you have obviously not consulted because there is no evidence of your having done so in the body of your paper.

Note: The State Historical Commission has set up a website for discussion of New Jersey matters. Should you be interested in being in contact with them, the address is: <http://www.h-net.org/~njersey/> They also have a list serve should you wish to be on it.

Term Projects are due in class without fail on Tuesday, April 22 or before. Late projects, regardless of the reason, will be penalized. Term projects will be returned at the final examination. You may discuss your term project or anything else with me during my office hours, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:00-2:00. If you plan to see

me, please e-mail me at least 24 hours in advance in case I cannot be in my office (Ruth Adams 024) on that date because of a meeting. In other words, don't just drop by.

SYLLABUS

- Tuesday ,Jan. 21 INTRODUCTION
Lecture: 350 years of New Jersey History
- Thursday, Jan 23 350 YEARS OF NEW JERSEY HISTORY (continued)
- Tues, Jan.28 NEW JERSEY'S IMAGE AND THE JERSEY JOKE:GARDEN
OR GARBAGE STATE?
- Read for today (Electronic reserve) from now on items on reserve
will be indicated by an asterisk (*)
"New Jersey's Image" (*)
"What's So Funny About New Jersey?"(*)
- Thurs, Jan 30 GUEST SPEAKER: PROFESSOR LOUIS MASUR
- "From The Swamps of New Jersey to Wherever the Flag is
Flown: Bruce Springsteen and the American Dream"
- Tues, Feb. 4 GUEST SPEAKER
- Former Governor of New Jersey James Florio
- Thurs, Feb 6 THE WORLD'S GREATEST ROAD
- Read: first half of *Looking for America on the New Jersey Turnpike*
GUEST SPEAKER: Professor Angus Gillespie, co-author
- Tues. Feb. 11 WORLD'S GREATEST ROAD (continued)
Read: second half of *Looking for America on the New Jersey Turnpike*
Also read "The Real Thing" (*)
- Thurs. Feb 13 GUEST SPEAKER: DR. MARC MAPPEN
- "New Jersey: More Than the Sopranos"
- Tues, Feb. 18 THE GEOGRAPHY OF NEW JERSEY
- Read "The First Landlords" (*)
"The Forgotten Border" (*)
"For Ellis Island, A New Life" (*)

- Thurs. Feb. 20 NEW JERSEY FOLKLORE
 GUEST SPEAKER: Professor Angus Gillepie “The Jersey Devil”
- \Tues Feb. 25 POCKETS OF FOLKLIFE IN NEW JERSEY
 The Pineys
 The Ramapo Mountain People
- Thurs. Feb 27 NEW JERSEY “ATTITUDE”
 Read: New Jersey: Only the Tough Survive
 Film First part of *Jersey Girl*”
- Tues March 4 JERSEY GIRL (continued)
 Discussion
- Thurs. March 6 ETHNICITY IN NEW JERSEY
 Read: “Those People” (*)
- Tues. March 11 **MIDTERM EXAM**
 After the examination, we will discuss the course thus far
- Thurs. March 13 THE GREAT BRIDGE
 Read “The George Washington and the Brookly:, New Jersey and
 New York” (*) also “The G.W.B. and me” (*)
- SPRING BREAK, NO CLASSES, MARCH 18 OR 20**
- Tues. March 25 Discussion of Term Paper Project Topics
- Thurs, March 27 ATLANTIC CITY
 Read: “A Bad Gamble” (*)
 Film: *Atlantic City*
- Tues, April 1 ATLANTIC CITY (continued)
 Discussion
- Thurs. April 3 NEW JERSEY ADVENTURE

- Read: "Afoot in New Jersey" (*)
"Crossing Burlington"(*)
- Tues, April 8 NEW JERSEY ADVENTURE II.
Film: "Three Days on Big City Waters"
- Thurs. April 10 NEW JERSEY ROADS AND DINERS
Read: "The Double Deuce" (*)
"The Diner Capital of America" (*)
- Tues. April 15 RUTGERS AND NEW JERSEY
Read: "Leap Year" (*)
- Thurs. April 17 NEW JERSEY; CITY VERSUS SUBURBS

Read: Philip Roth, *Goodbye Columbus*
- Tues. April 22 THE GREAT CANALS OF NEW JERSEY

Read: "Adventures on the D & R" (*)
"Boatmen of the Hills" (*)
Films on the canals
- NOTE: Term papers due in class this day. They may not be e-mailed**
- Thurs. April 24 THE PINE BARRENS

Read: first half of John McPhee, *The Pine Barrens*
- Tues. April 29 MCPHEE (continued)
- Thursday, May 1 SUMMING UP THE COURSE: NEW JERSEY AND THE
FUTURE