

HISTORY 2013 - Section 012
History of the American People, 1877 to the Present
FALL 2009
Meeting Time: TR 12:30-1:50 PM
LOCATION: W. J. Walker 303

Instructor: **Prof. Alessandro Brogi**

Office: 403 OLD MAIN

Office Hours: T 9:00-10:30 p.m., Th 2:15 p.m.-3:00 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays also by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides an overview of American history from the Gilded Age to the present, including all the major social, political, and foreign policy issues. A major course objective will be for students to develop skills for the critical evaluation of historical evidence and arguments. For example, one way to do this is to find elements of continuity and change throughout the period under examination. Students will also be invited to challenge labels commonly attached to certain “eras” of US history (such as “the Roaring Twenties” or “the Complacent Fifties”). Given the extreme relevance of the debate on America’s image abroad, some attention will be devoted to how other countries have viewed developments in American society, politics, and foreign policy. Finally, this class is also intended to show how knowledge of 20th century history helps us to understand the present - so yes, ladies and gentlemen, for once a class called “to the Present” will actually get there.

Core Courses in History: Goals

History is the study of the past. As an academic discipline, History embraces every aspect of the human experience, including warfare, political institutions, the economy, religious practice, technology, and artistic endeavor. History asks students to analyze empire and revolution, genocide and humanism, enslavement and liberation, sexuality and gender and to do so from the perspective of both social scientific and humanistic inquiry. There is no field more diverse than History and none more individualistic. History can be as long ago as the excavated texts and artifacts of ancient China or as recent as mass-produced newspapers from the twentieth-century American West.

Objectives of Core Courses in History:

By the end of the semester, you will have an understanding of the following issues:

- * The role played by diversity in shaping human experience
- * The operation of large-scale forces responsible for causing change over time, such as politics, economics, technology, and religion
- * The challenges mounted by an increasing reliance on technology
- * The changes caused by the increasing interconnectedness of today's world

REQUIRED TEXTS:

A) **Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty: An American History* Vol. 2 (ISBN 0-393-92784-9)**

B) **INFOLINK material:** Four essays from Carl J. Guarneri. *America Compared: American History in International Perspective*. Vol. II: Since 1865; a copy of the book will be made available on reserve and internet copies of the essays through the Library's **infolink**.

- 1) Robin W. Winks, "American Imperialism in Comparative Perspective," pp. 139-153
- 2) Robert Sklar, "Americans, Europeans, and the Movies," pp. 227-243
- 3) Frances Fitzgerald, "The Vietnam War as a Clash of Cultures," pp. 337-351
- 4) George M. Fredrickson, "Resistance to White Supremacy in the United States and South Africa," pp. 354-369.

C) **INFOLINK material:** set of SHORT readings drawn from Gerald Michael Greenfield and John D. Buenker (eds.) *Those United States: International Perspectives on American History* (Vol. II: *From the Gilded Age to the Present*)

- 1) Werner Sombart, "America is Capitalism's Land of Promise," pp. 9-15
- 2) Kurt R. Spellman, "American and European Visions of Peace," pp. 117-121
- 3) Urs Schwartz "The United States' Peculiar Conduct of War" pp. 197-201
- 4) Asada Asado, "Japanese vs. American Perceptions of the A-Bomb" pp. 201-205
- 5) D. W. Ellwood, "The Marshall Plan and American Affluence" pp. 213-217
- 6) Tom Mboya, "Africa and Afro-America" pp. 224-227
- 7) Rob Kroes, "Rap Music and American Street Culture" pp.287-290
- 8) Ray Mosley, "The Clinton-Lewinski Affair" pp. 290-292

PLEASE NOTE: Given the large size of this course, there will not be any discussion session; instead there will be some **pop-quizzes (four)** drawn from both lecture material and the supplemental reading available on INFOLINK. Exams will be based on material from the textbooks as well as from the lectures.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

TWO lectures plus quizzes and videos: occasionally, one of the weekly lectures will be shortened to allow for quiz time.

Attendance will **not** be taken, but students will be held **responsible for all the materials** covered in them. You should **notify** the instructor of a **prolonged absence** (at least two consecutive lectures) as soon as possible to determine what you've missed. So while not enforced, attendance does matter.

HOW TO DO THE READINGS: You must keep up with the assigned readings. Materials from the readings on **INFOLINK must be done**, sorry no choice on that. Material from **Foner's book COMPLEMENTS** the lecture material: if you attend regularly, you may read the book with more ease, perhaps even skimming some pages. Viceversa, the book also helps you follow the lectures better: I suggest to read the book chapters assigned for each week by Tuesday, so you come to class prepared. Foner's book can also be a useful tool in your review sessions before each test: in that case you may want to give it a more thorough reading. So the amount of reading

depends on several factors: how much background knowledge you already have on these topics, how closely you follow the lectures, and how well you strategize your study sessions, picking topics you think you might have the option of answering in the exams (more tips on the possible essay questions for the exams will follow in the course of the semester).

TESTS: ONE MID-TERM, ONE FINAL, AND FOUR QUIZZES.

The mid-term exam will consist of a number (four or five) of **short identification questions (IDs)** (you will be given a choice among ten IDs) and **one essay** (ca. three-four pages on a large blue-book) (you will be given a choice between two essay questions). The final will consist of **five or six IDs, and one essay** (also about 3-4 pages of a large blue book) all with choice. The final is **NOT comprehensive** but it will cover the entire second half of the lecture and reading material, that is, from the mid-term to the end of the lecture series.

The quizzes are all in the **multiple choice** format (generally one choice out of four, with **partial credit** given to wrongs in a scale from 3 to 8 points, depending on how much the wrong answer approximates the right one, which counts 10 points). Ten of such multiple questions will appear on each quiz, generally divided between 5 or 6 questions on lecture material and 4 or 5 on the Infolink supplemental reading.

GRADING:

Mid-term: 30-40 % of the course grade

Final exam: 40-50 %

Quizzes: 10-20%

NB: these percentages are shown as “range” between a lower and a higher percentage because the mid-term, the final, and the quizzes grades will be weighed so as to give the highest possible credit to a student’s performance. For ex.: if you received a B in your mid-term while your overall performance in the quizzes is worth an A-, the mid-term will count 30% toward your final grade and your quizzes grade will count 20%; viceversa, if you have an A- in your mid-term and a B average in your quizzes, the mid-term will count 35-40% and the quizzes will count 10-15%. I will pay special attention to **consistent improvement**: so, for example, if you started with the first two quizzes in the C+ range but then receive a B/B+ in the midterm and a full A in the final, your third and fourth quizzes are fine, and you also have good participation/attendance in class then you’ll end up with an A in the class.

MAKE-UPS

Students who have to miss an exam should notify the instructor in advance, providing a satisfactory excuse; make-ups will be scheduled at the instructor’s convenience. In exceptional cases, the student may notify the instructor of the need to reschedule after he/she missed the exam, but this notification should be received via e-mail or in person no later than three days after the missed exam. Failure to do so will result in failing grade for the exam. Make-up exams offer less choice of questions than regular exams.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

University rules require me to inform you that academic misconduct, which includes cheating on exams and plagiarism (from *both* the internet and printed sources) can result in an ‘F’ grade in the course and, in the worst cases, in dismissal from the University. See the Catalog of Studies

for further information.

FURTHER NOTES:

Students with disabilities should contact the Center for Educational Access to find out about their rights and obligations.

Do not arrive late.

Turn off all cell phones at the beginning of class.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Disclaimer:

The instructor reserves the right to make any changes to this syllabus, particularly of the following schedule All changes will be announced in class.

Week 1- August 25-27

Readings: *Give Me Liberty*, pp. 544-568, 589-596

Lectures:

Introduction. Modern America: Its Meanings.

The Gilded Age: Its Meanings. Business and Labor

Week 2 - September 1-3

Readings: *Give Me Liberty*, pp. 568-588, 608-616

Lectures:

Cities, Immigrants, That Awful Smell, Lifestyle - Post-Reconstruction South (Or the South "From Riches to Rags")

West and Indian Wars - The Politics of Stalemate and the Exciting Presidencies of the Gilded Age (1877-1890)

Week 3 - September 8-10

Readings: *Give Me Liberty*, 597-608, 637-677

Lectures:

What Foreign Policy? (1865-1890) - The Populist Revolt (1890-1900)

Progressivism (1900-1917)

Week 4 - September 15-17

Readings:

1) *Give Me Liberty*, pp. 617-636, 678-714

2) **Infolink:** "American Imperialism in Comparative Perspective" From *America Compared*, pp.139-154.

Lectures:

Progressivism: Conclusions - American Imperialism (1898-1914)
The Great War and American Neutrality - Over There: American Intervention - Over Here: Curbing Dissent - The End of Progressivism

Week 5 - September 22-24

Readings:

- 1) *Give Me Liberty*, 714-718, 719-748, 799-802
- 2) **Infolink:** Kurt R. Spillman, "American and European Visions of Peace"
- 3) **Infolink:** "Americans, Europeans, and the Movies" From *America Compared*, pp. 227-244

Lectures:

Versailles and the "Battle for Peace" The Lessons of World War I: Foreign Policy, 1919-1937 -
Roaring Twenties? "Normalcy" in Politics and Society - America's Cultural Renaissance

Week 6 - September 29-October 1

Readings: *Give Me Liberty*, pp. 748-755, 756-775

Lectures:

- The Stockmarket Crash - The Great Depression
- The Elections of 1932 and FDR's First One Hundred Days - The First New Deal

Week 7 - October 6-8

Readings: *Give Me Liberty*, pp.776-795, 796-804

Lectures:

- The Second New Deal. Life and Culture in the 1930s
- The Road to World War II: FDR's Interventionism

Week 8 - October 13-15

Readings: *Give Me Liberty*, pp. 804-832

Lectures:

- World War II: The "Good War" (Abroad and at Home)
- Thursday OCTOBER 15: MID-TERM EXAM (bring Blue-Books) (cover all material to the end of World War II)**

Week 9 - October 20-22

Readings:

- 1) *Give Me Liberty*, pp. 832-837, 838-854
- 2) **Infolink:** Urs Schwartz "The United States' Peculiar Conduct of War"
- 3) **Infolink:** Asada Asado, "Japanese vs. American Perceptions of the A-Bomb"
- 4) **Infolink:** D. W. Ellwood, "The Marshall Plan and American Affluence"

Lectures

- The Spoils of Peace - All You Wanted to Know about the Origins of the Cold War But Never Dared to Ask (part 1)
- Origins of the Cold War (part 2). Who Lost China? - Korea: The Now Remembered

War _____

Week 10 - October 27-29

Readings: *Give Me Liberty*, pp. 854-868, 871-899

Lectures:

- Truman's Fair Deal - The Affluent Society - McCarthyism
- Ike's "New Look:" Eisenhower's Foreign Policy - The Emergence of the Third World
- Ike: Holding the Line at Home (what the hell did that mean?) - JFK and his Best and Brightest

Week 11 - November 3-5

Readings:

- 1) *Give Me Liberty*, pp. 8869-870, 899-911, 912-927, 929-933
- 2) **Infolink:** "Resistance to White Supremacy in the United States and South Africa," *America Compared*, pp. 354-369.
- 3) **Infolink:** Tom Mboya, "Africa and Afro-America"
- 4) **Infolink:** Rob Kroes, "Rap Music and American Street Culture"

Lectures:

- JFK's New Frontier - On the Brink: Crises in Cuba and Berlin
- Civil Rights Movement: The Origins - The Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and Beyond

Week 12 - November 10-12

Readings:

- 1) *Give Me Liberty*, pp. 933-941, 965-968 (book is weakest on Vietnam)
- 2) **Infolink:** "Vietnam as a Clash of Cultures," From *America Compared*, pp. 337-351

Lectures:

- LBJ's Great Society (when the U.S. truly started Welfare) - Vietnam: America's Longest War (1945-1968)
- Vietnam: It's not Over yet (1969-1975) - Nixon, Kissinger, and Detente

Week 13 - November 17-19

Readings: *Give Me Liberty*, pp. 934-956, 957-965, 969-975

Lectures:

- The Student Movement - The Counterculture - Feminism -
- Nixon at Home - Watergate - Ford Presidency - Elections 1976

Week 14 - November 24

Readings: *Give Me Liberty*, pp. 975-991

Lecture for November 24:

- Carter: The Lean Years and the End of Détente - The Reagan Revolution at Home and Abroad

THANKSGIVING BREAK ONLY ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26

Week 15 - December 1-3

Readings:

- 1) *Give Me Liberty*, finish the book
- 2) **Infolink**: Ray Mosley, “The Clinton-Lewinski Affair”

Lectures:

- The Reagan Revolution Abroad and the End of the Cold War - Bush Sr. and Gulf War I
- “It’s the Economy Stupid!”
- In Search of a Grand Strategy: Clinton, and the New World Order

Week 16 - December 8

Lecture:- Bush II and the War on Terrorism - Clinton, Bush and the New Reform Agendas (From the Left and From the Right)

FINAL EXAM
CHECK SCHEDULE ON ISIS
(two-hour exam - same classroom)
(Based on All Material from 1945 to the Present)

