History 1302: US History since 1865

Dr. Beth Robinson
Spring 2015

Section 010
T 7:00-9:30pm
CI 112

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Office Hours: TBA

Course Description
This course examines the social, economic, and political development of the United States from the end of the Civil War to the present. The main theme of the course involves the question of how Americans viewed themselves and their nation as the United States emerged as a political and economic superpower over the course of the 20th Century. We will begin during the 1870s, when the end of slavery, the conquest of the western territories, the arrival of “new immigrants,” and the rise of corporate capitalism all forced those living within the United States to rethink what it meant to be an American. We will then extend that question into the 20th Century, focusing on the changes to American identity brought by the two World Wars, the Depression, and the Cold War. The course ends in the post-Cold War period, when a new phase of immigration, the banning of race and gender discrimination, and the rise of global capitalism once again challenge Americans to define our roles in the nation and in the world.

NOTE: After Spring Break, Professor David Blanke will take over instruction of the course. He will cover all of the material leading up to the final exam.
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Office Hours: TBA

Student Learning Outcomes
Students who successfully complete this course will:

- demonstrate critical thinking by combining, changing, or reapplying existing information, gathering and assessing information relevant to a question, and analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information;
- develop communication skills by interpreting and expressing ideas through writing, oral, or visual communication;
- demonstrate personal responsibility by evaluating historical choices and actions, and relating consequences to decision making;
- develop social responsibility by identifying intercultural competence and civic responsibility in past regional, national, and global communities.

Required Texts
**If you choose to order it through online outlets, you may use any edition, but make sure you get Volume 2 (the second half of US history).

3) Additional required texts—namely, primary documents—will be posted on the course Blackboard page.

**Course Requirements**

1. **Attendance.** One or two absences for serious illness or other genuine emergency may be unavoidable, but more than two absences can be severely disruptive both to your own learning and to the intellectual development of the other members of the class. If you anticipate missing several class meetings, you should consider dropping the course. I do not post or share my notes or slides.

2. **Participation.** The format of this class is designed to generate thoughtful debate and discussion. Students are expected to have read material closely and to come to class prepared to raise and answer questions, to contribute thoughtfully to discussions, and to listen and respond to the contributions of others in a respectful manner. Occasionally, class time will be used for short writing assignments.

3. **Reading.** The goal is to read material closely and carefully, and to have completed all reading before class. I have deliberately kept the amount of assigned reading reasonable with the expectation that the reading is done thoroughly and thoughtfully.

4. **Writing.**
   
a. **Response Papers**
   From Week 2 until Week 6, each Sunday, students will turn in a “response paper” that analyzes primary historical documents. For this short assignment (1-2 pages), you will evaluate what the document is, who wrote it and why, and what it tells us about ideas, limits, and definitions of freedom during the period we are studying. These will be submitted to Blackboard as .doc/x or .pdf files.
   A longer response to *Women Strikers Occupy Chain Store* will be assigned.
   
b. **Exams**
   You will take two in-class exams. All of the assigned readings, films, and lectures will be covered in the exams. Exams will typically involve a mix of short answer and essay questions. Please bring blue books.

**Attendance and participation (20%)**

**Short writing assignments (25%)**

**Midterm (25%)**

**Final Exam (25%)**

**Course Policies**

**Late Work/Make Ups**
I will not accept any late reading responses. Please give yourself plenty of time to familiarize yourself with Blackboard before the first due date. If you are going to miss an exam you must get in touch with me at least one week prior to the exam to explain your situation and, if warranted, work out a time that you might make it up.
Schedule of Topics and Readings

*The schedule is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.*

**Week 1: January 28**
Introduction, Reconstruction and Jim Crow
READ: Foner, Ch. 15

**Week 2: February 4**
American Empire and the Gilded Age
READ: Foner, Ch. 16
DUE: Response Paper #1

**Week 3: February 11**
The Age of Reform
READ: Foner, Ch. 17 & 18
DUE: Response Paper #2

**Week 4: February 18**
The Great War
READ Foner, Ch. 19
DUE: Response Paper #3

**Week 5: February 25**
Modern Times and Hard Times
READ: Foner, Ch. 20 & 21
       Frank, *Women Strikers Occupy Chain Store, Win Big*
DUE: Response Paper #4

**Week 6: March 4**
The American Century
READ: Foner, Ch. 22
DUE: Response Paper #5

**Week 7: March 11**
Midterm Exam

**Week 8: March 18**
Spring Break – No Class

**Week 9: March 25**
The Cold War at Home and Abroad
READ: Foner, Ch. 23 & 24

**Week 10: April 1**
Viet Nam
READ: Foner, Ch. 25
Week 11: April 8
The Modern Civil Rights Movement and the 1960s

Week 12: April 15
The 1970s and Rise of the New Right
READ: Foner, Ch. 26

Week 13: April 22
Postmodern America
READ: Foner, Ch. 27

Week 14: April 29
U.S. and the Middle East, 1973-present
READ: Foner, Ch. 28

Week 15: May 5
Conclusions