“I am not primarily interested in persuading you that I am right. The object is to help you make your own sense out of our history.”

– William Appleman Williams, American historian

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TAs: Bradford Johnston (bjohnston@ucmerced.edu), Eve Delfin (edelfin@ucmerced.edu)
Office Hours: COB 311, Tues. 3:00—4:30 and by appt.
Course Website: Available via UCMCROPS

Course Description

The goal of this course is to introduce you to the history of the United States 1877 to the present. As we have a very limited time in which to cover a wide range of events, class sessions will generally be organized around one or more of the following themes:

- Capitalism and its discontents. We will examine how economic developments, particularly capitalism and industrialization, have affected American politics, culture, and foreign relations.

- Empire, war, and revolution. We will examine how Americans conceived of their place on the world stage and consider what factors have historically shaped U.S. foreign policy. We will pay particular attention to the debate over U.S. economic, ideological, and territorial expansion overseas.

- Social movements and the challenges of multiculturalism. Following a tradition with roots going back to the American Revolution, this period was marked by populist unrest that challenged the organization of American society. We will examine the ways in which the struggles of women, immigrants, workers, and minority groups have helped shape U.S. history up to the present day.

- The role of government in American life. We will pay particular attention to evolving ideas about the role of the federal government and its relation to the American people.

In addition to learning about specific historical events and themes, this course is also designed to introduce students to the study of history as a discipline and a way of thinking. You will work with primary source documents (including two novels) that provide first hand accounts of the people and events that we are studying. You will also read, discuss, and write about works produced by professional historians. By the end of this course, you will have learned not only about the early history of the United States, but also about how to construct and analyze an historical argument.
Course Materials

Required books:

Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-Of-The-Century New York*
Nella Larson, *Passing*
John Okada, *No No Boy*
James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*

Online reader:

Some readings have been placed online and are available at our UCMCROPS website in the “Resources” folder grouped by week. Please print out these readings and bring them to your section for easy reference during discussion.

Audio:

Audio segments listed in the syllabus are available for listening in the Resources section of our CROPS website listed by the week of the class meeting.

Course Requirements and Grading

Grading breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short paper (2-4 pages)</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>due in section February 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>in class March 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper (5-7 pages)</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>due in section April 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative final exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>date and time TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section grade</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>consult with TA on grading criteria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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For general guidelines with respect to grading criteria (*e.g.* “What is an A paper?”), please consult the following reference:

www.newhum.com/for_teachers/grading_criteria/suggested_grading_criteria.html

Written assignments turned in up to 24 hours late will receive a 1/3 grade reduction (*e.g.* an A would become an A-). Work turned in between 24-72 hours late will be lowered a full grade except in cases of serious illness or emergency. Any work turned in after 72 hours late will not be accepted and will count as an F. Exams must be taken at the scheduled times.

Special Needs

I welcome students with learning or other disabilities into this class. I encourage you to speak to me and to Special Student Services (107 Kolligan Library) about your situation as soon as possible so that we can figure out the best way to promote your success in this course.
Writing Tutors

Students who would like help with their writing are encouraged to visit the Student Advising and Learning Center (SALC) in Kolligan 172. Please check their website (learning.ucmerced.edu) for details on tutoring and other academic assistance.

Academic Honesty

Students and professors are governed by the Academic Honesty Policy, which is available at the Students First Center at Kolligan Library and at studentlife.ucmerced.edu. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses which in some cases may be grounds for suspension or dismissal. Basic guidelines to avoid these problems are outlined below, but if you are in any doubt, please consult the instructor or your Teaching Assistant.

The in-class midterm and final exam are closed book. No notes, papers, or books should be open and all electronic devices should be turned off and placed under your chair. Study guides will be distributed before the in-class midterm and final exams. Questions on the midterm and final will be drawn directly from those on the guide (though not all questions on the guide will appear on the exam). You should not prepare collaborative answers or outlines for the questions on the study guide. If you have questions about the study guide, please consult the instructor or your Teaching Assistant.

Plagiarism in written work (such as the two assigned papers) is not always easy to define. As a simple guideline, if you submit your own work, you will avoid all serious types of plagiarism. If you use a direct quotation or borrow an interpretive idea from another work, you must cite it. If you paraphrase another document, you must cite it. The basic standard: If you use any idea that did not originate in our own mind, you must cite it.

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

Note: the reading listed under each week below should be completed by the time of your discussion section meeting for that week. Please bring books and printed copies of the online materials to your section each week.
Week 1: From Gettysburg to Pittsburgh, America 1877

January 22: Introduction to the Course

January 24: Industrial America and Its Discontents

Section Reading:

None. Please attend your section in order to meet your TA. You will also do a brief exercise in section on reading and using primary source documents. This would be a good time to get a head start on the reading for Week 2.

Week 2: The Gilded Age

January 29: The Urban Crucible

January 31: The Industrial West

Section Reading:

Books:
Zeiler, Ambassadors in Pinstripes, Introduction, Chapters 1-2 (pp. ix-72)

CROPS:

Week 3: Empire Abroad, Reform at Home

February 5: The Spanish-American War and the Debate Over Empire

February 7: Populists, Progressives, and the Reform Impulse

Section Reading:

Books:
Zeiler, Ambassadors in Pinstripes, finish (pp. 73-192)

CROPS:
Week 4: The Progressive Era

February 12: Progressivism’s Underbelly: Nativism

February 14: Progressivism’s Underbelly: Eugenics and Racism

Section Reading:

Brief paper (2-4 pages) based on the reading below due in section on February 15

CROPS:


Week 5: War at Home and Over There

February 19: What’s So Progressive about the Progressive Era?

February 21: Progressive Foreign Policy and World War I

Section Reading:

Nella Larson, Passing.

Week 6: Poverty and Prosperity in the 1920s

February 26: American Society in the 1920s

February 28: The Great Depression

Section Reading:


Week 7: A New Deal for the American People

March 4: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal

March 6: NO LECTURE – instructor away at conference

Section Reading:
CROPS:
Franklin D. Roosevelt, Inaugural Address, March 4, 1933. [AUDIO]
Huey Long, “Barbeque” speech, December 11, 1934. [AUDIO]
Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Outlining the New Deal Program,” May 7, 1933.

**Week 8: The U.S. on the Eve of World War II**

March 11: The New Deal Legacy

March 13: MIDTERM EXAM

Section Reading:

No Section This Week. Start on Okada, *No-No Boy* for next week.

**Week 9: The “Good War” at Home and Abroad**

March 18: The U.S. and World War II

March 20: The Home Front

Section Reading:

John Okada, *No-No Boy*

**Week 10: SPRING BREAK**
Week 11: The Nuclear Age

April 1: The Atomic Bomb and Its Legacies

April 3: *White Light/Black Rain* (film)

Section Reading:

CROPS:
- Cartoons and polls on the atomic bomb, August 1945.
- Table of Global Nuclear Weapons Stockpiles, 1945-2006.

Week 12: Weenie Roasts and Fallout Shelters

April 8: Economic, Cultural, and Demographic Trends in Postwar America

April 10: *Are You Popular?* (films)

Section Reading:

CROPS:

Week 13: 1960s Social Movements and Their Legacy

April 15: Eyes on the Prize: The African-American Civil Rights Movement

April 17: The Origins of the Modern Feminist Movement

Section Reading:

*Paper (5-7 pages) on the reading below due in section April 18*

Books:

April 22: The Militarization of the Cold War and the Road to Vietnam

April 24: *Hearts and Minds* (film)

Section Reading:

CROPS:

- Excerpt from Tim O’Brien, “The Things They Carried.”

Week 15: Cultural Wars on the Home Front

April 29: Queer as Folk: Stonewall and Beyond

May 1: The Rise of the Conservative Movement

Section Reading:

CROPS:


Week 16: The United States and the 21st Century World

May 6: Immigration Since 1965

May 8: The Bush Doctrine: 9/11 and After

Section Reading:

CROPS: