

History 17  
**The Modern United States, 1877-2008**

Spring 2008 – U.C. Merced  
TuThur 1:30-2:50 Classroom Building 105

“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

Instructor: Professor Sean Malloy (smalloy@ucmerced.edu)

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:

Thomas Zeiler, *Ambassadors in Pinstripes: The Spalding World Baseball Tour and the Birth of the American Empire.*

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:

Short paper (2-4 pages)	10%	due in section February 15
Midterm exam	25%	in class March 13
Paper (5-7 pages)	20%	due in section April 18
Cumulative final exam	30%	date and time TBA
Section grade	15%	consult with TA on grading criteria

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](http://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](http://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](http://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:

Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," American Historical Association, *Annual Report, 1893*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894, 199-201, 215-227.

## **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:

Albert J. Beveridge, "The March of the Flag," September 16, 1898.  
"The White Man's Burden versus the Brown Man's Burden," *The Literary Digest*, 1900.  
Frank Parsons, "The Preservation of the Republic: The Giant Issue of 1900," *The Arena*, June 1900, 561-565.

## **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:**

Theodore Roosevelt on "Americanism," October 12, 1915.

Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, New York: Charles Scriber's Sons, 1923, xxviii-xxxiii, 16-18, 48-55.

Randolph S. Bourne, "Transnational America," *Atlantic Monthly*, July 1916, 86-97.

## **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:**

Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-Of-The-Century New York*.

## **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, Commonwealth Club Address, September 23, 1932, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Genesis of the New Deal, 1928-1932*. New York: Random House, 1938, 742-757.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, Inaugural Address, March 4, 1933. [AUDIO]

Huey Long, "Every Man a King," *The Congressional Record*, March 1, 1934, 3450-3453.

Huey Long, "Barbeque" speech, December 11, 1934. [AUDIO]

Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Outlining the New Deal Program," May 7, 1933.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, Second Inaugural Address, January 20, 1937, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt: the People Approve, 1937*. New York: MacMillian Co., 1941, 1-6.

## **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.

Henry L. Stimson, "The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb," *Harper's Magazine*, February 1947, 97-107.

Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Examples*. New York: Basic Books, 1977, 263-268.

Gar Alperovitz, "Why We Dropped the Bomb," Barton J. Bernstein, ed., *The Atomic Bomb: The Critical Issues*. Boston: Little Brown, 1976, 399-404.

General Thomas S. Powers, *Design for Survival*, 1968.

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:

"Homosexuals in Government," *Congressional Record*, March 29-April 24, 1950.

Excerpts from Allen Ginsberg, "Howl," 1956.

Excerpts from Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men*. New York: Anchor Books, 1983.

## **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:

James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*.

CROPS:

Martin Luther King, "Address to Civil Rights Marchers in Washington," August 28, 1963. [AUDIO]

Malcolm X, "Message to the Grass Roots," November 9, 1963. [AUDIO]

## **Week 14: "Waist Deep in the Big Muddy": Vietnam, 1945-1973**

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

**April 24: *Hearts and Minds* (film)**

**Section Reading:**

CROPS:

Lyndon Johnson, "Peace Without Conquest," April 7, 1965.

Richard Nixon, "Address to the Nation on Vietnam," May 14, 1969.

John F. Kerry, statement before the Senate Committee of Foreign Relations, April 23, 1971.

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:

Barry M. Goldwater, *The Conscience of a Conservative*, 1960.

Young Americans for Freedom, "The Sharon Statement," 1960.

Ronald Reagan, "A Time for Choosing," October 27, 1964. [AUDIO]

David Johnston, "I've Been Working on the Doorbells," August 24, 1965.

Lisa McGirr, "The Conservative Worldview at the Grass Roots," *Suburban Warriors*, 147-186.

## **Week 16: The United States and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century World**

**May 6: Immigration Since 1965**

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

**Section Reading:**

CROPS:

“The National Security Strategy of the United States,” September 2002.  
George W. Bush, excerpt from the State of the Union speech, January 28, 2003.  
Robert C. Byrd, “The Arrogance of Power,” March 19, 2003.  
Peter Maas, “Good Kills,” *The New York Times Magazine*, April 20, 2003.  
Jeffery Gettleman, “Into the Heart of Falluja,” *New York Times Magazine*, May 2, 2004.