

History 233  
The United States in the Twentieth Century  
Fall 2008

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Office Hours: Thursday 1:00-3:00 or by Appointment

**Course Description:**

The twentieth century was a period of profound cultural, political, and economic change in the United States. What was once mainly a rural nation emerged as the world's leading industrial and military superpower. Through analysis of secondary and primary sources, films, and group discussion, students will explore the transformation of the United States political economy and its impact on American culture. How do historians explain the transformation of American liberalism? How did the major social conflicts of the twentieth century change American perceptions of race, class, and gender in society? How did prosperity and consumerism influence American values and beliefs? By studying these questions and others this class intends to provide students with a greater awareness of the complexity of American history and culture and the experiences of "ordinary" Americans.

**Course Objectives:**

- History is the study of change over time. And, while this course will not focus on rote memorization, gaining factual knowledge about the major events, people, and ideas that shaped this period in history is essential to understanding how and why these changes occurred.
- Much of our understanding of history relies on our ability to interpret past events. Students will be required to learn the theories and explanations historians have used to explain the social, political, and economic changes taking place in the nineteenth century.
- By critically analyzing others points of view, theories, and challenging their ideas and conclusions students will be encouraged to develop their own vision of history by reading and discussing primary and secondary sources.
- Students will be graded on their ability to demonstrate their knowledge of the period, understanding of historical theories and theses, and ability to think critically in writing and orally.

**Required Readings:**

Kevin Boyle. *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age.*

New York, 2004.

Lizabeth Cohen. *A Consumer's Republic: the Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*. New York, 2003.

Timothy Egan. *The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived The Great American Dust Bowl*. Boston, 2006.

Barbara Ehrenreich. *Nickel and Dime: On (Not) Getting By in America*. New York, 2001.

\* Students will also be required to read and analyze primary sources. These readings can be found either online, the instructor's public file, or in moodle. See the course outline for a listing of the assignments.

#### Suggested Readings:

Alan Brinkley and Ellen Fitzpatrick. *America in Modern Times Since 1890*.

This American history text book will be placed on reserve in the library to facilitate the learning of general knowledge. Students should refer to the text book to familiarize themselves with the people, events, and ideas that influenced major time periods in American history.

**Course Requirements:** All assignments are mandatory.

Mid-Term (20%); Final Exam (25%); Paper # 1 (20%); Paper #2 (20%); Class participation, attendance, and two primary source essays (15%).

Mid-Term: Essay exam based on lectures, films, required readings, and discussions.

Final Exam: Take-home essay exam based on lectures, films, required readings, and discussions.

Papers: Students will be required to write two 6 page papers on the required readings. The topic will be provided by the instructor in advance.

All out of class written work must be typed, double-spaced, and in 10 or 12 point font and documented according to the Chicago Manual of Style. Papers are due at the beginning of class.

Primary Source Essays: Two 3 page essays. Each student must choose two topics (one before the mid-term and one after the mid-term) and write a three page analysis of the primary source reading material assigned. These essays are due by Friday at 5:00 on the week the readings were assigned. In these essays, students will briefly summarize the documents or oral interviews and explain their relevance to American history, compare

and contrast documents when available, and discuss their significance to how they advance our knowledge and interpretation of American history.

**Class participation:** All students are required to participate in class discussions. In addition, students will be required to make weekly posts to online forums via Moodle.

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory. If students miss more than three class periods a mandatory five point deduction will be applied to the student's final grade for every absence over three. Students are also required to meet with the instructor if they miss more than three classes. It is the students' responsibility to inform the instructor of any excused absences, illnesses, and/or medical emergencies that require them to miss class. Please note a doctor's appointment, etc. does not count as an excused absence.

**Deadlines and Make-up Exams:** All deadlines are final and not negotiable. No make-up exams will be allowed unless arranged well in advance with the instructor. If you fail to meet a deadline because of a medical or family emergency you must contact the instructor via email ([pageb@rhodes.edu](mailto:pageb@rhodes.edu)) within 24 hours or, in cases of extenuating circumstances, as soon as possible. All papers are due at the beginning of class and not in the instructor's mailbox or by email and no late papers will be accepted unless arranged in advance with the instructor.

**Honor Code:** All work turned in for this course is to be completed in accordance with the Rhodes College Honor Code. To demonstrate your commitment to the Code, each student must write "pledge" and sign his/her name on every assignment. If you have any questions about plagiarism you should talk to me directly.

Students who require special arrangements due to physical or learning disabilities should contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions, problems, or concerns about this course.

**Schedule of Assignments:** The following schedule of assignments is subject to change. Students are responsible for keeping track of all deadlines and any changes/additions made throughout the semester.

## Week One

8/27: Course Introduction

8/29: Adjusting to a New Industrial Age

Assignment: "Opportunity," in *The Gilded Age* in the Instructor's Public File; Boyle, *Arc of Justice*, 1-43.

## Week Two

9/1: Labor Day. No class.

9/3: The Age of Industrial Violence

Assignment: Chicago Anarchists on Trial: Evidence from the Haymarket Affair. See the People's Exhibits and Defense Exhibits under Trial Transcripts, and the Autobiography of August Spies under Special Presentations. For general knowledge read the Haymarket Chronology and the Dramas of Haymarket under special presentations as well.

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award98/ichihtml/hayhome.html>

Addition readings (not required):

<http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/mmh/HomesteadStrike1892/default.cfm>

9/5: Class does not meet

Assignment: American Radio Works: Remembering Jim Crow. Under Resources listen to the audio for Parts I-III at

<http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/remembering/>

Week Three

9/8: The Age of Jim Crow in the American South

Assignment: Boyle, Arc of Justice, 44-69; W. E. B. Du Bois, "Of Booker T. Washington and Others," in Instructor's Public File; Booker T. Washington, "the Atlanta Compromise," at <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/39/> and Richard Wright, "the Ethics of Living Jim Crow," at <http://newdeal.feri.org/fwp/fwp03.htm>

9/10: Expansionism at the Turn of the Century

Assignment: Selected Readings on the Annexation Debate (Instructor's Public File)

9/12: Origins of Progressivism

Assignment: Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*

<http://www.yale.edu/amstud/inforev/riis/contents.html> (Read Chapters 12, 15, and 20 and Skim the remainder of the book) and the Urban Experience in Chicago: Hull House and Its Neighbors, 1889-1963 at <http://www.uic.edu/jaddams/hull/urbanexp/> explore the site and under teachers resources read the following primary documents Jane Addams, "First Days at Hull House," Chapter 5, "The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements," Chapter 6, "The Problem of Poverty," Chapter 8, and "Pioneer Labor Legislation," Chapter 10 in *Twenty Years at Hull House with Autobiographical Notes*.

Suggested Readings (not required) If you have not read Upton Sinclair's classic novel *The Jungle* than please see <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/140/140-h/140-h.htm> to familiarize yourself with the text.

#### Week Four

9/15: Reforming the System

Assignment: The Triangle Factory Fire see the Story of the Fire, Documents, Photos and Illustrations, and List of Victims at <http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/trianglefire/>

9/17: Reforming democracy

Assignment: Selected readings on woman's suffrage (Instructor's Public file)

9/19: World War One and the Collapse of Progressivism

Assignment: Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points at <http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/source/fourteenpoint.htm>; Samuel Gompers, "Labors Service to Freedom," at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/nfhhtml>; Emma Goldman Papers at <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Goldman> see "No Conscription" in Primary Sources under Documents; Emma Goldman's Address to the Jury, Address of Harold Contant, Assistant U.S. Attorney, and the Courts Charge in Excepts from "Trial and Speeches of Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman" in Selections from Emma Goldman's Writings Published Essays and Pamphlets; Boyle, *Arc of Justice*, 70-101.

#### Week Five

9/22: The Consumer Culture of the 1920s

Assignment: Clash of Cultures in the 1910s and 1920s at <http://www.history.ohio-state.edu/projects/clash> see The New Woman (be sure to click on highlighted links to view documents); Boyle, *Arc of Justice*, 102-196.

9/24: The Cultural Wars of the 1920s

Assignment: Clash of Cultures in the 1910s and 1920s at <http://www.history.ohio-state.edu/projects/clash> see Immigration Restriction and the Ku Klux Klan and The Scopes Trial (be sure to click on highlighted links to view documents); Boyle, *Arc of Justice*, 196-259.

9/26: Race and Civil Rights in the North

Assignment: Boyle, *Arc of Justice*, complete entire book, 260-346.

**Paper #1 Due in class**

## Week Six

9/29: The Crisis of Capitalism

Assignment: Begin reading the *Worst Hard Time*.

10/1: Relief and Recovery

Assignment: FDR's First Inaugural Address at History Matters at <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5057/> and "On the Bank Crisis," "Outlining the New Deal Program," and "On the Purpose and Foundation of the Recovery Program," FDR Fireside Chats at <http://www.fdr.library.marist.edu/firesi90.html>

10/3: A New Deal Order

Assignment: Cohen, A Consumer's Republic, 1-61: Dear Ms. Roosevelt The Letters at <http://newdeal.feri.org/eleanor/er3a.htm>

## Week Seven

10/6: America Culture during the Great Depression

Assignment: Studs Terkel, Hard Times at [www.studsterkel.org](http://www.studsterkel.org) (listen to 3 interviews and be prepared to summarize and present your findings in class) and Cotton Pickers, Migrant Workers, and FSA Migratory Labor Camp in Documenting America in Photograph Series at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsahtml/fadocarner.html>

10/8: Living through the Great Depression

Assignment: Eagan, *The Worst Hard Time* (entire book)

10/10: Class does not meet. Study for Mid-term Exam

## Week Eight

10/13: **Mid-Term Exam**

10/15: The United States and the World

10/17: A New World Order

Assignment: Selected Readings on the Decision to Drop the Atomic Bomb (Instructor's Public File); The Enola Gay and the Smithsonian in the Enola Gay Archive see Concept #3, Hatch Letter's to Harwit, and Harwit Memo at <http://www.afa.org/media/enolagay/chrono.asp> and "Smithsonian Substantially Alters

Enola Gay Exhibit after Criticism,” New York Times, October 1, 1994, at <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A07E2DA1439F932A35753C1A962958260>;

Additional suggestion readings:

The Japanese American Legacy Project at [www.densho.org](http://www.densho.org)

Week Nine:

10/20: Fall break. No class.

10/22: War at the Home Front

Assignment: Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic*, 62-109; Rosie the Riveter WWII American Homefront Project at <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/KOHO/Projects/rosie/> (Choose three oral interviews and be able to present and summarize your findings in class); Also see WWII, Segregation Abroad and at Home at <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/aaohml/exhibit/aopart8.html>

10/24: Defending Democracy Abroad

Assignment: Ideological Foundations of the Cold War at [http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/coldwar/](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/coldwar/) (Be sure to read the “long telegram,” the “iron curtain” speech, and “the sources of soviet conduct.” You do not need to read NCS 68). Also see Address of the President of the United States: Recommendation for Assistance to Greek and Turkey, March 12, 1947,” at [http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/doctrine/large/index.php](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/doctrine/large/index.php)

Week Ten

10/27: Defending Democracy at Home

Assignment: “Facts on the Black List in Radio and Television,” “For Justice and Peace by the Wives of the Hollywood Ten,” and “Screen Guide for Americans,” in the Michigan State University Library Digital Collection: Hollywood Ten at <http://www.2lib.msu.edu/branches/dmc/collectionsbrowse.jsp?coll=26&par=1>

Addition readings (not required): Joseph McCarthy The Red Scare at <http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/dl/McCarthy/McCarthydocuments.html>

10/29: American Culture in the 1950s

Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic*, 111-166.

10/31: The Civil Rights Movement

Assignment: Eyes on the Prize, Primary Sources, at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/index.html> Click on the highlighted links for more information about the events.

#### Week Eleven

11/3: The Dream of a Great Society

Assignment: Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic*, 193-257.

11/5: American liberalism in the 1960s

Assignment: Digital Collection: Students for a Democratic Society, see America and the New Era, Liberal Analysis and Federal Power, and the National Vietnam Examination at <http://www2.lib.msu.edu/branches/dmc/collectionbrowse.jsp?coll=19&par=1> and the Port Huron Statement at [http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML\\_docs/Resources/Primary/Manifestos/SDS\\_Port\\_Huron.html](http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Resources/Primary/Manifestos/SDS_Port_Huron.html)

11/7: The Fog of War

#### Week Twelve

11/10: The Fog of War

11/12: Lesson from the Vietnam War

Assignment: Selected Readings on the Vietnam War (Instructor's Public File)

11/14: The Crisis of American Power at Home and Abroad

Assignment: Watergate Revisited at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/watergate/splash1a.htm>; Documents on the Middle East at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/index.html>

#### Week Thirteen

11/17: Consumerism and American Culture in the Post-War Era

Assignment: Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic*, complete the entire book, 292-345.

11/19: The Rise of the American Right

Assignment: Selected readings on the rise of the American Right (Instructor's Public File)



11/21: Living in the Post-Industrial Age

Assignment: Robin Kelley, Race Rebels (Instructor's Public File)

Week Fourteen

11/24: The United States and the Post-Cold War World

11/26: No class. Thanksgiving Holiday.

11/28: No class. Thanksgiving Holiday.

Week Fifteen

12/1: In Search of a Living Wage

Assignment: Nickel and Dimed (entire book)

**Paper # 2 Due in Class**

12/3: Final Comments

Final Exam: See the Schedule of Exams at [www.rhodes.edu](http://www.rhodes.edu) for the deadline of your final exam.