

THE UNITED STATES IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

During the early 1900s, Americans celebrated the prospect of a new century with world's fairs and international expositions that displayed emblems of modernity like the automobile and the telephone. At the same time, Wild West shows appealed to crowds with nostalgia for things pastoral, like cowboys and Indians on horseback, tipi camps, and bison. World's fairs and Wild West shows dramatized a rift in the American mind, between an urban industrial future, global in scope; and a preindustrial past of local accountability. As the century unfurled, Americans would grapple with the problems of a new age-- world wars and undeclared wars, economic depression, an emerging welfare state, and social revolution. Letters, novels, autobiographies, oral histories, and film provide a route into these themes, through the lived experience of Americans from the recent past.

Course Objectives

As well as familiarizing you with key developments in twentieth-century United States history, our purpose is twofold:

- 1) To practice critical thinking, by challenging you to develop original arguments supported by evidence and explanation. Do not write "what the professor wants;" write *how* the professor advises; that is, develop cogent arguments backed by evidence.
- 2) To engage you in History methodology, through critical analysis of firsthand sources.

Required Texts

Upton Sinclair, *The Flivver King* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr Publications, 1984).

Studs Terkel, *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression* (New York: The New Press, 2005).

Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1976).

Sloan Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (New York: Four Walls, Eight Windows, 2002)

Bret Easton Ellis, *Less Than Zero* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998).

Coursepack: A collection of xeroxed articles and primary sources, available online. Click on 'Academic Departments.' Select 'History.' Select 'Garceau.' Select 'Public folder.' Select 'History 233.' You will find the readings listed by author and abbreviated title in the "History 233" folder.

Effective Planning

Your performance in this class will be strengthened by good planning and preparation:

- On days marked **Discussion, come to class prepared**; that is, having done the readings listed for that day. Participation in discussion will make up 25% of your grade. I will call on you every class to discuss the topics at hand.
- Note that on October 2 and 9, and November 13 and 29 you will be responsible for having read a whole book. Note that October 30, November 6, and November 27 also have lengthy reading assignments. Plan accordingly, so that you show up fully prepared.
- We have a midterm exam on the 1890s-1930s scheduled for October 18th, and an in-class essay on World War II scheduled for November 1st. A short paper is due November 29th, with a group presentation on the same topic in class that day. Plan accordingly so that you are not writing major papers on the same night that you prepare for each of these assignments. The Registrar will schedule the day and time of our final exam.
- When reading, listening to lectures, or viewing films, **take notes**. You will create a valuable record of ideas, evidence, and questions which you can use during discussion, as well as when studying for exams.

Course Requirements

- 1) Consistent attendance and participation. At Rhodes, we have the advantage of small classes in which everyone can participate in discussion. This also means I cannot recreate a discussion with your participation, if you were absent. In other words, missed classes cannot be “made up.” Over three absences will lower your average by one letter grade.
- 2) Completion of assigned work, on time. Exams or presentations missed without a verifiable medical reason will earn a grade of zero.
- 3) All work for this course should be pledged under the Honor Code. Use of exams, outlines, or study notes prepared by another student is **plagiarism**. Plagiarism is a violation of the Honor Code, and will result in an automatic ‘F.’

Assignments

- 1) Informed participation in scheduled discussions. That means you refer specifically and cogently to material within the texts we have read. Feel free to raise questions about the readings too; often this moves discussion forward. (20%)
- 2) An in-class essay exam on the period from the 1890s through the 1930s. (20%)
- 3) An in-class essay on World War II. (20%)
- 4) A short paper and 10-minute group presentation on the Ellis novel and the film, “Wall Street.” (20%).
- 5) A final essay exam in which you address the larger themes in the course. (20%)

COURSE OUTLINE

Th Aug 23 Introduction to the Course

THE PARADOXES OF PROGRESSIVISM

T Aug 28 Modernity, Anti-Modernism, and The Indian Question

Lecture:

Grant's Peace Policy, the Dawes Act, E.S. Curtis, and Indian Innovations

Discussion:

Sally Jenkins, "The Team That Invented Football," *Coursepack*, 60-70.

Peter Iverson, "When Indians became Cowboys," *Coursepack*, 16-31.

Th Aug 30 The UnReconstructed South

Lecture:

Sharecropping, Convict Leasing, Segregation, and Black Institution-Building

Discussion:

A Sharecrop Contract, *Coursepack*, 8-10.

Ida B. Wells-Barnett, "Anti-Lynching Campaign in Tennessee," *Coursepack*, 89-94.

Booker T. Washington, "Atlanta Address," *Coursepack*, 1-4.

Henry McNeal Turner, "The American Negro and His Fatherland," *Coursepack*, 25-30.

T Sept 4 Rags-to-Riches Capitalism and the Public Interest

Discussion:

Robert Heilbroner, "The Master of Steel: Andrew Carnegie," *Coursepack*, 54-67.

Maureen Flanagan, "The Battle Against Monopoly Capitalism," *Coursepack*, 141-59.

Upton Sinclair, "The Jungle" (excerpt), *Coursepack*, 142-49.

Th Sept 6 **Lecture:** Patronage vs. Meritocracy

Discussion: "George W. Plunkitt Explains Politics," *Coursepack*, 32-35.

T Sept 11 New Womanhood: Why the Vote Failed to Bring Equality

Discussion:

Elisabeth Perry, "Why Suffrage for American Women Was Not Enough," *Coursepack*, 186-93.

Film: "Around the World in 72 Days: The Story of Nellie Bly"

Th Sept 13 Imperial Ambitions

Lecture: Imperialism as 'Frontier' at the Turn of the Century

Discussion:

David Kohler & James Wensyel, "The Phillipine Insurrection," *Coursepack*, 106-19.

T Sept 18 World War I

Lecture: What Precipitated World War I?

Discussion: "Diary of an Unknown Aviator," *Coursepack*, 138-40.

Th Sept 20 The Great Migration

Discussion:

Letters From the Great Migration, *Coursepack*, 123-25.

Letters From the Great Migration (2), *Coursepack*, 1-3.

William Tuttle, "Bound for the Promised Land: The Black Migration North," *Coursepack*, 107-18.

W.E.B. DuBois, "The Niagara Movement," *Coursepack*, 311-12.

T Sept 25 Secular Modernity and Rural America

Discussion:

William T. Youngs, "The Scopes Trial and the American Character," *Coursepack*, 121-48.

Darrow Objects to 'Read Your Bible' Banner, *Coursepack*, 139-42.

Political Cartoons About the Trial, *Coursepack*, 171-79.

Th Sept 27 The Scopes Trial and the New Woman

Discussion:

John D'Emilio & Estelle Freedman, "The Sexual Revolution," *Coursepack*, 168-78.

Kathy Peiss, "Cheap Theater and the Nickel Dumps" *Coursepack*, 139-62.

Jeffrey Moran, "The Scopes Trial and the New Woman," *The Scopes Trial*, 199-204.

- T Oct 2 Mass Production and Mass Consumption
Discussion:
Upton Sinclair, *The Flivver King* [read the whole book].
- Th Oct 4 Professor Garceau at Western History Association Conference in Denver.
Begin reading Studs Terkel, *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression*.
- T Oct 9 The Great Depression
Discussion:
Studs Terkel, *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression*.
- Th Oct 11 The New Deal
Lecture: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal
Discussion:
Working Peoples' Letters to New Dealers, *Coursepack*, 154-59.
- Oct 13-16 **Fall Break**
- Th Oct 18 **Midterm Exam**
- T Oct 23 World War II in Perspective
Lecture:
U.S. Diplomacy: From Isolation to the Second Great War
- Th Oct 25 The Homefront During World War II
Discussion:
Film, "Rosie the Riveter."
Begin reading Fussell, *Wartime*.
- T Oct 30 The Soldiers' War
Discussion:
Paul Fussell, *Wartime: Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War*, chapters 1-4, 6-7, 9-11, 13, 17, and 18.

Th Nov 1	In-Class Essay on World War II
T Nov 6	Segregation and Terror in the Postwar South Discussion: Anne Moody, <i>Coming of Age in Mississippi</i> , chapters 10-14.
Th Nov 8	Postwar Civil Rights Activism Lecture: The Montgomery Bus Boycott
T Nov 13	Postwar Suburbia and Corporate Culture Discussion: Sloan Wilson, <i>The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit</i> . [read the whole book]
Th Nov 15	Privilege and Protest on College Campuses Discussion: Film, “Berkeley in the Sixties.”
T Nov 20	The War in Southeast Asia Discussion: Film, “Two Days in October.”
Nov 21-25	Thanksgiving Break
T Nov 27	Inside the Vietnam War Discussion: Michael Herr, <i>Dispatches</i> : chapter 1, “Breathing In;” and chapter 4, “Illumination Rounds.”
Th Nov 29	The Post-Watergate World Short Papers/ Group Presentations: Bret Easton Ellis, <i>Less Than Zero</i> [read the whole book]. Film, “Wall Street” [the first one, not the recent remake].
Day/Time TBA	Final Exam

* * * * *