

HISTORY 105-06
INTRODUCTORY SEMINAR: AMERICA'S GILDED AGE AND PROGRESSIVE ERA
FALL SEMESTER 2008

Instructor: Matthew Hild

Office: Buckman Hall room 206

Office hours: Monday and Wednesday, 1:55-2:55 PM, Tuesday 2:00-3:00 PM, or by appointment

Telephone: (901) 843-3654 (office/voice mail) (901) 843-3662 (History Department)

e-mail: hildm@rhodes.edu

Required books:

Vincent P. De Santis, *The Shaping of Modern America, 1877-1920*, 3rd edition (2000)

Leon Fink, ed., *Major Problems in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 2nd edition (2001)

Course description: This is a writing-intensive course intended for first- and second-year students as an introduction to the study of history using primary and secondary sources. The course will utilize lectures, readings, and occasionally films to examine the social, political, and economic history of the United States during the period from the end of Reconstruction through World War I. Topics covered will include the currency question, Populism, the rise of big business, organized labor, immigration, imperialism, wars, and reform in one of the most turbulent periods in the nation's history.

Course objectives: In addition to gaining an understanding of the major themes and developments in the history of the United States during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, students should also develop their critical reading and listening skills, analytical skills, writing skills, and speaking skills.

Examinations, assignments, and grading:

Since this is a writing-intensive course, there will be five written assignments (about three double-spaced typed pages each) which will be done outside of class. Each of these assignments will require students to summarize and analyze in their own words one or more primary documents (all from the same chapter in any given assignment) from *Major Problems in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*. Students may (and in fact are encouraged to) draw upon relevant secondary material from *Major Problems* or *The Shaping of Modern America* in supporting their arguments in these essays. The first two essays will be graded as rough drafts, and students will have until the end of the following week to resubmit those essays for (hopefully) a higher grade.

There will be two exams in this course: a midterm exam and a non-cumulative final exam. These exams will consist of short-answer identification questions and an essay question.

Class participation (participating in class discussions or asking questions) will also count toward your course grade. More than three absences will adversely affect this component of your grade unless you have a documented excuse for your absences (illness, death in your family, or jury duty or subpoena). You must also have a documented excuse in order to take a makeup for a missed exam. Student athletes who will miss an exam due to an athletic event must inform the instructor of this at least one week before the exam.

Grading scale: Exams 20% each (40% total)

Written assignments 10% each (50% total)

Class participation 10%

A=92.50 or above; A-=89.50-92.49; B+=86.50-89.49; B=82.50-86.49; B-=79.50-82.49;
C+=76.50-79.49; C=72.50-76.49; C-=69.50-72.49; D+=66.50-69.49; D=62.50-66.49;
D-=59.50-62.49; F=59.49 or below

Classroom etiquette: All participants in this class (students and instructor alike) will be expected to refrain from rude or disruptive behavior in class, to keep their cell phones turned off in class, and to stay awake in class.

Academic honesty: All assignments and examinations in this course must be done in compliance with the Rhodes College Honor Code.

Disability services: Any student needing accommodations in this course for a disability should consult with the Office of Student Disability Services (901-843-3994, located in the modular building behind McCoy Theater).

This syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary. If any deviations are necessary, they will be announced in class.

Schedule of topics, reading assignments, exams, and assignment due dates:

Week 1

August 27: Course introduction

August 29: The end of Reconstruction

Reading assignment for Aug. 29: Handout (The Reconstruction Amendments)

Week 2

September 3: The Emergence of the Gilded Age

Reading assignment: Cashman, "Industrial Spring," in chapter 1 of Fink

September 5: The Rise of Industry and Big Business

Reading assignment: De Santis, preface and chapter 1

Week 3

September 8: Class discussion of reading assignment--chapter 2 of Fink

September 10: The Knights of Labor and the Great Upheaval

Reading assignment: De Santis, pages 104-111

September 12: The American Federation of Labor and the Homestead and Pullman Strikes

Written assignment # 1 due at the beginning of class on September 12

Week 4

September 15: Documentary film on the Homestead Strike

September 17: The New West

Reading assignment: Fink, chapter 3; begin De Santis, chapter 2 (portion on the West)

September 19: The New South

Reading assignment: Fink, chapter 4; finish De Santis, chapter 2

Revised written assignment # 1 due at the beginning of class on September 19

Week 5

September 22: The Rise of Urban America

Reading assignment: Fink, chapter 5

September 24: Gilded Age Politics

Reading assignment: De Santis, chapter 3

September 26: Class discussion of reading assignment--chapter 6 of Fink

Written assignment # 2 due at the beginning of class on September 26

Week 6

September 29: The Agrarian Revolt

Reading assignment: De Santis, chapter 4

October 1: The Crisis of the 1890s

Reading assignment: Fink, chapter 7

October 3: The "Strange Career of Jim Crow" Begins

Reading assignment: Fink, chapter 10

Revised written assignment # 2 due at the beginning of class on October 3

Week 7

October 6: Gilded Age Culture and Immigration

Reading assignment: De Santis, pages 80-104

October 8: Class discussion of reading assignment—documents in chapter 8 of Fink

October 10: NO CLASS—study for midterm exam! (Study guide will be distributed in class on October 8.)

Week 8

October 13 Midterm exam

October 15: Imperialism and the Spanish-American War

Reading assignment: De Santis, chapter 7

October 17: Class discussion of reading assignment—chapter 9 of Fink

Week 9

October 22 and 24: Documentary film on the Spanish-American War

Week 10

October 27: Progressivism: What, Why, and How

Reading assignment: De Santis, chapter 8

October 29: Class discussion of reading assignment—chapter 12 of Fink

October 31: Progressive Presidencies, part I: Theodore Roosevelt

Reading assignment: De Santis, chapter 9 plus Fink, pages 413-415 (President Theodore Roosevelt's Conservation Message)

Written assignment # 3 due at the beginning of class on October 31

Week 11

November 3: Class discussion of reading assignment—chapter 13 of Fink

November 5 : Progressive Presidencies, part 2: William Howard Taft

Reading assignment: De Santis, chapter 10

November 7: Progressive Presidencies, part 3: Woodrow Wilson

Reading assignment: De Santis, chapter 11

Week 12

November 10: Turn-of-the-century Technologies

Reading assignment: handouts (“New Light on Edison’s Light” and “Why Wilbur and Orville?”) plus re-read Fink pp. 234-235 (“A Day in the Life of Thomas Alva Edison”)

November 12: Class discussion of reading assignment—chapter 11 of Fink

November 14: Panama Canal documentary film

Written assignment # 4 due at the beginning of class on November 14

Week 13

November 17: Scientific Management and Mass Production

Reading assignment: handouts (two on F.W. Taylor and one on Henry Ford)

November 19: Class discussion of primary source handouts on labor in the Progressive Era

November 21: The Emergence of the United States as a World Power, 1899-1916

Reading assignment: De Santis, chap. 12

Week 14

November 24 Documentary film: The Birth of the American Mafia

Week 15

December 1: World War I

Reading assignment: De Santis, chapter 13

December 3: World War I on the American Home Front

Reading assignment: De Santis, chapter 14

December 5: Class discussion of reading assignment—chapter 15 of Fink

Week 16

December 8: Treaty of Versailles

Reading assignment: De Santis, chapter 15

Written assignment # 5 due at the beginning of class on December 8

December 10: Review for final exam (Study guide will be distributed in class on December 8.)

FINAL EXAM: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13, 8:30 AM