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## HIST 233-01, Change and Continuity in the "American Century", Fall 2008

Item Type	Syllabus
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Publisher	Memphis, Tenn. : Rhodes College
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Download date	2026-06-14 01:47:49
Link to Item	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10267/3358">http://hdl.handle.net/10267/3358</a>

## HIST 233 US in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Saxe - Section 19527, Palmer 205, 12-12:50 MWF

E-mail - [saxer@rhodes.edu](mailto:saxer@rhodes.edu); Phone – 843-3249

Office Hours: 11-12, MF or by appointment 307 Clough

### Change and Continuity in the “American Century”

#### Course Description:

The 20<sup>th</sup> Century was a tremendous period of change for the United States, as the country became the world’s military and economic leader. This course will survey US history from 1900 to the present and will approach historical issues from a variety of perspectives. Economic and political developments will be addressed, but there will also be discussions of social and cultural changes over the course of the last century. Students will be encouraged to analyze how historical narratives are constructed and to offer their own understanding of historical events. In addition to completing the reading and written assignments for the course, students will be expected to be active participants in class discussions. At the semester’s end, students will be asked to draw conclusions about changes in the United States over the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and hypothesize about possible directions for the nation’s future.

#### Required Texts:

James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*

Alan Brinkley and Ellen Fitzpatrick, *America in Modern Times*

Jeffrey P. Moran, *The Scopes Trial*

Michael Schaller, *Right Turn*

Upton Sinclair, *The Flivver King*

#### Course Requirements:

##### **Exams**

First Exam, October 13 – 20% of final grade

Second Exam, December 12 – 25% of final grade

##### **Essays**

Short essays throughout semester – 10% of final grade

Essay 1, due in class September 29 – 15% of final grade

Essay 2, due in class December 5 – 20% of final grade

##### **Class Participation**

Active participation in class discussion – 10% of final grade. Students may also improve their participation grade by meeting with the professor during office hours or by appointment.

#### Course Policies:

Class attendance is mandatory. Students are allowed three absences without penalty. Students are required to find out what they missed in class on the day of their absence. If students miss more than three classes, they are required to meet with the professor to discuss their absences. Failure to do so will result in the lowering of a student’s final grade by one third grade point for every absence over three. Please consider this policy when planning for extracurricular activities (sports, mock trial, etc.)

Due dates and times for writing assignments are fixed. All assignments are due in class, not in the professor's mailbox. Late assignments will receive a failing grade. All assignments must be turned in to the professor. Failure to complete an assignment will result in a failing grade for the class. If you have questions about plagiarism, please talk to me directly.

The professor supports the Rhodes College Honor Code. To demonstrate commitment to the Code, each student must write "pledged" and sign his/her name on every assignment.

Course Calendar:

August 27

Introduction

August 29

Populism and the Crisis of Rural America

(Brinkley/Fitzpatrick, Ch. 1-3)

September 1 (Labor Day; no class)

September 3, 5

Changing America – America and Industry

**(Sinclair all)**

September 8, 10, 12

How "Progressive"? – The Progressive Era and Reform; The Color Line, 1900-1929

(Brinkley/Fitzpatrick, Ch. 5, 6, 120-131)

September 15, 17, 19

America Meets the World: Imperialism and World War I

(Brinkley/Fitzpatrick, Ch. 4, 132-145, Ch. 8)

September 22, 24, 26

Years of Plenty, Seeds of Disaster - The Roaring 20s

(Brinkley/Fitzpatrick, Ch. 9-12; **Moran, all**)

September 29, October 1, 3

Fighting Fear Itself – The Great Depression and the New Deal

(Brinkley/Fitzpatrick, Ch. 13-14)

**Essay 1 due in class, September 29**

October 6, 8, 10

The "Good War" - World War II and Its Effects

(Brinkley/Fitzpatrick, 15-17)

October 13

**First Exam**

October 15, 17  
Free Peoples of the World - Origin of the Cold War Abroad  
(Brinkley/Fitzpatrick, Ch. 18, 387-399, 454-462, 484-489)

October 20 (fall break)

October 22, 24,  
Better Dead than Red - Cold War at Home and the Consensus Culture  
(Brinkley/Fitzpatrick, 399-405, Ch. 20, 446-454)

October 27, 29, 31  
Building the Dream – The Great Society, The Liberal Consensus, and the African-American  
Freedom Struggle  
(Brinkley/Fitzpatrick, Ch. 21; **Baldwin, all**)

November 3, 5, 7  
Seeds of Breakdown – Black Power and Vietnam  
(Brinkley/Fitzpatrick, 478-483, 490-508, 531-7)

November 10, 12, 14  
The End of the Liberal Consensus –The Movements of the Sixties  
(Brinkley/Fitzpatrick, 509-530)

November 17, 19, 21  
US in Decline? – Watergate; the Rise of Conservatism; the End of the Cold War  
(Brinkley/Fitzpatrick, 537-565; **Schaller, Ch. 1, 2**)

November 24  
Renewal and Fracture - the Schizophrenic 80s  
(Brinkley/Fitzpatrick, 565-574; **Finish Schaller**)

November 26, 28  
Thanksgiving

December 1, 3, 5  
A Divided Nation? - America in the 90s  
(Brinkley/Fitzpatrick, 575-607)  
**Essay 2, due in class December 5**

December 8, 10  
Summing up the Century

Saturday, December 13  
**Final Exam, 1PM**