

Appendix 4a: Course Materials – U.S. History Since 1877

Modern American Civilization Since 1877

Summer 1998

HSTAA 303 YA, full term

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7 to 9:20 pm

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Office Hours: Smith 103-G

Tuesdays 6-7 pm, Wednesdays 6:30-7:30, after class and by appointment

This is a survey of the history of the United States from the end of Reconstruction to the 1990's, with particular focus on the period between World War I and the end of the Vietnam War. Although it is impossible for any historian to make a thorough coverage of the subject in a lifetime, much less a one-quarter course, this course will cover some broad themes and topics and will focus on political, social, and cultural history. Issues will include economic change, the evolution of American democracy, American popular culture, and the changing role of the United States in the world. Most of the class time will consist of lectures, but we will also devote time for discussions, research paper questions, reviews, and four films.

Required readings:

John Milton Cooper, Jr., The Warrior and the Priest -- Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt.

James W. Loewen, Lies My Teacher Told Me.

Paul K. Conkin, The New Deal (Third Edition).

Michael C. C. Adams, The Best War Ever -- America and World War II.

William Lederer and Eugene Burdick, The Ugly American.

Ralph B. Levering, The Cold War -- A Post-Cold War History.

Steven Gillon and Diane Kunz, America During the Cold War.

Assignments:

- 1) A 2-page review of one of the four films shown in class, due by the end of the quarter. 10%
- 2) Take-home midterm exam, handed out July 9 and due July 14. 20%
- 3) A 6-8 page research paper on a topic of your choice involving primary popular cultural sources; topics must be approved beforehand. Paper topic due July 9. 40%
- 4) Final exam, consisting of two essay responses, one on the second half of the course, the other comprehensive. 20%
- 5) Class participation and preparation, including faithfulness to reading assignments and readiness to discuss course materials. In addition, each student must visit me during my office hours at least once a quarter, so we can talk about any questions or concerns you have about course materials, assignments, or whatever you wish. 10%
- 6) Every student must sign a statement stating that he or she has read and understood the assignments and requirements for the course.

Grading:

Late papers will be penalized 0.3 points per day late, with a weekend counting as one day. The midterm and paper will be due by the beginning of class on their due dates. Class discussions will be based on assigned readings, which must be completed before attending class, and also on films and lectures. **Note: You must complete ALL the assignments to receive a passing grade.** If you have a question about the grade you have received, I ask that you wait at least 24 hours after receiving the grade before discussing it with me. I am always willing to provide more comments on your graded assignments if you wish.

Research Paper Assignment:

The purpose of the paper assignment is to think historically and critically about an issue of twentieth century American history in light of American popular culture of the period. Using a "pop culture" source with a large visual component (editorial cartoons, comic strips, comic books, motion pictures, advertising, poster art, photography, etc.), you will write a 6-8 page paper describing and analyzing the ways that authors, artists, directors, etc., represented a particular contemporary issue.

This is not an assignment to use evidence just as illustration, but to examine the evidence itself. What do the sources use as symbols or characters to represent larger issues? What does the author or artist want to convey to the reader or viewer, and what does the source tell the historian about how people thought about the subject at the time? How did the sources interpret contemporary events or recent history? The topic should be comparative and/or show a change or evolution over time, not just a "snapshot" of one moment suspended in time. Your choice of source and topic will be up to you, but you must get them approved by me. Just a few sample topics include:

Editorial cartoons about World War II before and after Pearl Harbor
Changing images of the Soviet Union during and after World War II
Images of political leaders (Teddy Roosevelt, FDR, Joe McCarthy)
Advertising and consumerism (car culture, the ideal home, environmentalism)
Comic strips and gender relations in the 1950's
Comic books and the Black Power movement of the 1970's
Photography and the civil rights movement
The evolution of films about the Vietnam War, 1975-1995
Science fiction and: the Cold War, atomic weapons, communism, etc.
World War I poster art before and after U.S. entry

Feel free to come to me for advice and suggestions about what topic to choose and where to go for sources. I will provide a list of sample sources in the first few weeks of the quarter. You should be able to find enough material for a 6-8 page paper through the UW libraries: in books, articles, microfilmed periodicals, special collections, and over the Internet. You should familiarize yourself with library searches if you have not already.

Guidelines for paper writing:

1) The paper must be a product of your own effort, and must have proper citations for paraphrases and quotations. Passing off other sources as your own constitutes plagiarism, and at best is poor scholarship, and confirmed plagiarism will result in a grade of 0.0 for the assignment. Footnotes and endnotes are not simply there to avoid plagiarism, however. They show the interested reader where to go for more information, and give credit where credit is due.

2) Pay attention to content, style, and grammar. For example, verbs must agree in number with subjects and pronouns with their antecedents. Avoid using passive voice, first or second person constructions, and contractions in formal writing. I mark off for grammatical, punctuation,

and spelling mistakes as well as unclear writing. Please **proofread** your paper at least once before turning it in. Grammar- and spellchecking tools are very poor substitutes for proofreading.

3) Use a style that is concise, positive, confident, and clear. Consider yourself an historian with something to contribute to our understanding of your topic. Write with authority backed up by evidence. The hearts of history instructors are extraordinarily warmed by reading papers that show some thought on the part of the writer. Use your own educated judgment when you make decisions, and make a direct argument. Consider your audience to be a peer who is not in the class. (For example, someone with general knowledge of an event, but who has not read the same books you have.)

4) Start with an introduction which generally defines the topic, lets the reader know what the paper will be about, and contains the thesis of the paper. Divide the paper into logical units, with specific examples to support all the paper's generalizations. All the points in the paper should flow from the original thesis. Include a conclusion that brings the paper back to the thesis and closes the paper for the reader.

5) The 6-8 page limit refers to the typed or word-processed text only, and DOES NOT COUNT a title page, illustrations, bibliography, endnotes page, etc. The paper must be double-spaced, with reasonable margins and font, without extra "padding."

6) In general, only quote primary sources, and do so sparingly, only when absolutely necessary. Use bloc quotes for quotes over 4 lines long, and be sure that the quote has a foot- or endnote.

7) Make use of rough draft opportunities, my office hours, and the History Writing Center in Smith 210-C as much as possible. Papers that have been reviewed and re-written are consistently better.

Lecture and Reading Schedule:

June 23	Introduction to course Industrialization, the Railroad, and the U.S., 1877-1900
June 25	Labor, Populism, Immigration, Race; Progressivism (Cooper, Preface and pp. 1-62; Loewen, Introduction and Ch. 5)
June 30	The New Diplomacy and the Changing Frontiers (Loewen, Ch. 7, Ch. 10)
July 2	A Man, A Plan, A Canal: Panama; Teddy Roosevelt's America (Cooper, pp. 63-136, Loewen, Ch. 1)
July 7	World War I; Mission vs. Isolation (Cooper, pp. 223-323)
July 9	The Twenties: Advertising, Prosperity, and Prohibition (Cooper, pp. 324-361) Film: <i>Wings</i> (selections) Paper topic due Midterm handed out
July 14	Crash and Depression; FDR and the New Deal (Conkin book) Midterm due

- July 16 Americans at War: At Home and Abroad
Film: *Why We Fight: Prelude to War*
(Adams, Foreword, Ch. 1-4)
- July 21 Dropping the Bomb, Cold War, and the "Lessons" of World War II
(Adams, Ch. 5-7)
- July 23 America's New Global Commitment; U.S. and the Third World
(Lederer & Burdick, first half; Loewen, Ch. 8)
- July 28 Postwar Boom and Cold War Insecurity
(Levering, pp. vii-xv, 1-98)
Film: *The Manchurian Candidate* (selections)
- July 30 1960-5: Promise and Problems of JFK and LBJ
(Levering, pp. 99-134)
- August 4 The Vietnam Experience
(Lederer & Burdick, second half; Loewen, Ch. 9 and Conclusion)
- August 6 Civil Rights and Reform
(Gillon/Kunz, Ch. 3 and 4)
Film: *Let That Be Your Last Battlefield* (television episode)
- August 11 1968: Turning Point
(Gillon/Kunz, Ch. 5)
- August 13 Nixon, Watergate, Carter, and the 1970s
(Levering, pp. 135-180, Gillon/Kunz, Ch. 8)
Paper Due
- August 18 Reagan, Bush, Clinton and A More Complex World
(Levering, pp. 181-190; Gillon/Kunz Ch. 10 and 11)
- August 20 **Final exam**