

# History of the United States Since Reconstruction

Brian Casserly

HSTAA 303

Class Meeting Times M-F, 2.30-3.20pm, EE 045

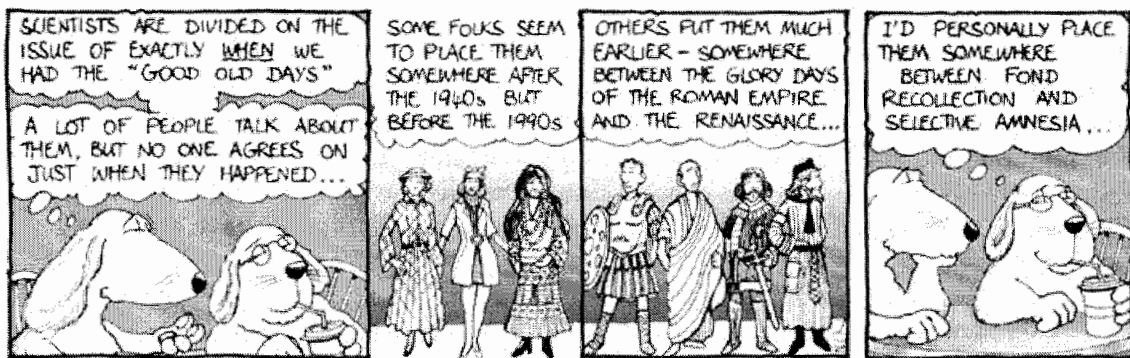
[bcasserl@u.washington.edu](mailto:bcasserl@u.washington.edu)

Office Hours (Smith 10): Tuesdays, 12-1pm

Fridays 1-2pm, and by appointment

Class Website <http://staff.washington.edu/bcasserl/>

NOTE: I reserve the right to make changes to this website and to the class syllabus and schedule as I feel are necessary



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## CLASS OBJECTIVES:

What is history? And why bother to study it?

History is an academic discipline that examines how our world has changed over time and seeks to explain why these changes occur and how they have impacted us. History helps us understand ourselves, our world, and why it is in the state it is in.

The study of history involves both **process** and **content**. As part of this class we will learn how to be historians and what it is that historians do. This will involve working with primary sources, the tools that historians use to understand the past. We will also explore how historians construct interpretations and analyses of the past. We will learn to think critically about both these sources and what they can tell us about the past and about the explanations that historians produce. It is important that we understand that interpretations of the past are not static. Professional historians expect that newly discovered artifacts, information, and newly released documents will change and alter our perceptions of the past.

In terms of content we will explore some of the social, political and economic developments in U.S. history from the end of Reconstruction to the recent past. We will look at how Americans responded to issues such as industrialization, immigration, war, and changing ideas about race, gender, and the environment. Most of the class time will consist of lectures, but we will also reserve time for discussions of reading assignments, movies, etc.

The class will focus on a number of key themes in American history:

- The impact of wars on U.S. politics, economy, society, and culture
- The growing role of the federal government in the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- The expansion of civil rights and changing ideas about who is entitled to American citizenship
- The development of the U.S. as a world power.

We will meet Monday-Friday from 2.30-3.20pm...class time will include lectures, discussion of readings, viewing movies, etc.

### **GRADING POLICY:**

To be successful in this course you will need to master the narrative of U.S. history as presented in lecture and readings. In addition, you will be asked to think like historians and evaluate material critically so that you can make informed and intelligent interpretations and analyses. My job is to help you acquire these skills and those you will need to write effective essays and exams. I am available to meet with you individually during my office hours to discuss any questions or problems you may have about any aspect of the course.

Your grades for the class will be determined by your performance on the various assignments for the class. The weighting of the grades will be distributed as follows:

Midterm Exam	15%
First Paper	15%
Second Paper	25%
Final Exam	20%
Participation in class	20%

Information on the papers and exams will be distributed later in the quarter. Check the [assignments](#) page on the class website.

### **READINGS:**

Readings are available for purchase at the University Bookstore and are on reserve at Odegaard Library.

The following books are required reading for the class:

- Retrieving the American Past* (RTAP), reading packet.
- Thomas Bell, *Out of This Furnace* (University of Pittsburg Press)
- Ernest R. May, *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC Sixty-Eight* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 1993)
- Philip Caputo, *A Rumor of War* (Henry Holt, 1996)

-Steven Lawson and Charles Payne, *Debating The Civil Rights Movement, 1945-1968* (Rowan and Littlefield, 1998)

There are also some required readings online or on electronic reserve...the online class schedule provides links to these.:

The following textbook is recommended but not required, and may be useful for those of you who are not familiar with the general narrative of U.S. history:

-Mark Carnes and John Garraty, *American Destiny: Narrative of a Nation* Vol. II, since 1865, (Longman, 2003).

### **PREPARATION FOR SUCCESS IN THIS CLASS:**

Your success in this class depends entirely on your willingness to engage with the material, participate thoughtfully in class, and satisfactorily complete assignments. If you fail to do this, you will find the class boring and tedious AND your final grade will be adversely affected.

You should expect to work at least two hours outside of class for each hour of class time.

Punctuality and attendance:

There is no substitute for attending lectures! This is not a distance learning class.

**Attending lecture and completing class readings and assignments is essential for success in this class.**

Come to class, come on time. Completion of reading assignments and active participation in discussions will help you to maximize your grade. If you have conflicts with class (participation in university sports, etc.) let me know in advance. If you miss class for a legitimate reason (illness, university sports, etc.) I will provide opportunities for you to make up the work you missed. It is your responsibility to contact me to arrange this and it is also your responsibility to obtain notes to classes you missed.

***NOTE: Completion of all assignments and participation in class is necessary to pass the course.***

*Policy on Disability Accommodation:*

If any student needs to have a disability accommodation for this class please contact me as soon as possible. You will need to complete the relevant university forms and present them to me within the first two weeks of the quarter.

**I encourage you to challenge the ideas you hear in lecture, in the readings, from me, and from other students. When challenging others' ideas please do so in a respectful and courteous manner. Keep your comments to the issues NOT the person!**

## Assignments

- **PAPERS:** There are 2 papers to be completed for this class. Further details will be provided later in the quarter. All papers are due in class on the date specified in the schedule.
- **EXAMS:** There will be a midterm and a final exam. These will take the form of identification items and essay questions. I will post review sheets before the exams. All exams will be held on the dates specified in the schedule. There will be no make-up exams except in the case of documented emergencies. Car problems, vacation plans, work schedules, etc. do not constitute documented emergencies.
- **CLASS PARTICIPATION AND SHORT ASSIGNMENTS:** Students are expected to participate in in-class discussions of the readings, lecture materials, movies shown, etc. Each week you will need to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading(s). It is vital that you complete the readings for class on time...if you don't you won't be able to participate in discussion. The readings will also be fair game for inclusion in both the midterm and final exams and there will more than likely be a section on the exams focusing specifically on primary sources we will read over the course of the quarter.

Unless otherwise specified, we will discuss readings for the week at Friday's class.

Each week a small group of students will be responsible for leading discussion of the readings. Every student will have at least one opportunity to take part in leading discussions. Your performance as discussion leaders will form part of your participation grade. Those students are required to meet with me early in the week to generate questions to guide the class's reading of that week's material. I will post to the class website the questions that the discussion leaders and I have generated a couple of days before we talk about the reading. These questions will form the basis of our discussion in class. You should think carefully about the readings and these questions when preparing for class.

I may also assign brief writing assignments or quizzes on the reading to be completed in class.

Part of your participation grade will also be determined by your performance on various short assignments. For example, I may have students write a one page paper on a particular topic or bring in a primary source that you have researched on a particular event or issue in modern American history.

## Class Schedule

I will make my lecture outlines available via electronic reserve. They will be posted after I give the actual lecture. Questions to guide your weekly reading will be posted on the class website every week.

### Week 1:

End of Reconstruction and its legacies, Westward Expansion

**Reading (available online):** Chinese immigrants in the West, Chief Joseph's speech, the KKK in the South, "Address of the Colored Convention to the People of Alabama."

### Week 2

"An Age of Anxieties"... immigration, urbanization and industrialization.

**Reading:** *Out of this Furnace*, 1-258

### Week 3:

Rural America in crisis, populism and progressivism, conservation, labor Radicalism.

**Reading:** RTAP, pages 4-46, Plunkitt, Populist Party and Progressive Party readings on electronic reserve.

### Week 4:

A new place in the world... America as "imperial" power... response to expansion, World War I and aftermath, Women and the first wave of feminism.

**Reading:** RTAP, pages 47-145

### Week 5:

**First Paper due in class on Monday**

The '20s... Popular culture, Depression and New Deal... birth of the New Deal Coalition and the liberal state.

**Reading:** RTAP, pages 147-181 and *Out of This Furnace*, finish reading the book.

### Week 6:

**The MIDTERM will be held on Monday**

The Challenge of War at Home and Abroad, Great Migration, Rosie the Riveter, Labor in WWII, Japanese American internment.

**Reading:** RTAP, pages 183-215, Atlantic Charter, Four Freedoms

### Week 7:

Superpower rising... Cold War, Containment and Anti-Communism... Cold War liberalism, military industrial complex and garrison state... Women and domestic containment.

**Reading:** Truman Doctrine, *American Cold War Strategy: Interpreting NSC 68*; Cold War comics (available online).

**Week 8:****Second Paper due on Friday**

Rights Revolution...Civil Rights, black power, feminism, gay rights, Great Society, immigration reform, Counterculture,

**Reading:** *Debating the Civil Rights Movement*; Arnold Hirsch, "Massive Resistance in the Urban North: Trumbull Park, Chicago, 1953-1966," *The Journal of American History*, 82: 2 (Sep., 1995), pp. 522-550 (available online).

**Week 9:**

Vietnam, Anti-war movement, Nixon and Watergate.

**Reading:** *A Rumor of War*

**Week 10:**

Carter, Reagan, Bush, End of Cold War, Rise of conservatism.

**Reading (available online):** Adam Rome, "'Give Earth a Chance': The Environmental Movement and the Sixties," *Journal of American History*, 90:2 (September 2003); Barry Goldwater's acceptance speech at the 1964 Republican convention; Peter Schrag, "The Forgotten American," *Harper's* August 1969; Ronald Reagan's "Evil Empire" speech; The Republican Party's "Contract with America", 1994.

**Week 11:****Final Exam**