COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine the history of the United States in the late 20th and early 21st century, using 9/11 as a point of departure and central thematic focus. Students will learn about key developments in political, cultural, and social history, including the roots of the U.S. War on Terror in global dynamics of the late Cold War; the impact of terrorism on urban life and immigration policy; changing media and communications technologies; the rise of Islamophobia and the targeting of those who “look Middle Eastern” on the streets; and the shifting politics of remembrance and memorialization. In addition, students will learn to grapple with debates among historians about the relative emphasis on continuity versus change in the labeling of specific events—or dates—as “turning points.”

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, students should specifically be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate knowledge of some of the fundamental concepts and theories of historical events and ideas related to U.S. history in the late 20th and early 21st century.
- Evaluate political, diplomatic, and cultural exchanges and perspectives in the context of social, political, religious, and intellectual traditions.
- Read and critically analyze primary sources, and analyze historical problems and interpretations connected to the history of the U.S. and the world.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Grading: You must complete all assignments to pass this class. Grading will be as follows:

- Class Participation – 20%
- Weekly Discussion Board Posts – 30%
- Midterm – 25%
- Take-home Final Project – 25%

Participation
Participation in the context of this course does not simply mean showing up to class. You are asked to be active in and engaged with class discussions. Participation will be assessed on the quality of contributions to class discussions. High-quality participation demonstrates the following:

- Understanding of the historical context as gleaned from lectures and readings
- Completion of each week’s readings and other assignments
- A willingness to engage in critical assessment of course texts and lectures

Students are expected to attend class and to be punctual. Excessive absences or late arrivals will result in a significantly diminished class participation grade.

**Weekly Discussion Board Responses (due Mondays at 10AM)**

On both Mondays and Wednesdays, you will need to come to class having read (or watched/listened to) the assigned text. On Mondays, you are also required to post to the Canvas discussion board in response to a prompt provided. Your response is due at 10AM. You must submit 5 out of 6 times before spring break and 5 out of 6 times after spring break, per the schedule below. If the quality of your responses is lacking, I will let you know. *I reserve the right to add scheduled or unscheduled quizzes if I determine that too many students are not completing reading assignments on time.*

**Midterm**

There will be an in-class midterm on Mon, Mar 4.

**Final Project (due via Canvas on Mon, May 6 at 5PM)**

**Option 1:** Visit the 9/11 Museum in New York City on your own time, taking notes on your visit (and taking and uploading a selfie in front of the museum). Write a detailed proposal, 6 to 8 pages in length (12-point type, double-spaced, 1-inch margins) for a new permanent exhibit, explaining why it should be added. You should draw on what you’ve learned in the course but don’t need to include citations. One free ticket to the Museum will be provided for each student in the class who chooses this option; you must visit the (indoor) museum, not just the (outdoor) memorial. You will need to take notes during your visit (a worksheet will be provided to help you) because photography is not allowed in the historical exhibition. If you choose this option, you must also take and upload a selfie taken in a public area of the museum. The Museum is at 180 Greenwich Street in lower Manhattan, across the street from the World Trade Center PATH station.

- Directions via PATH from Newark Penn Station (30-35 mins): [https://maps.app.goo.gl/y7XPScRRBrWRjm4k6](https://maps.app.goo.gl/y7XPScRRBrWRjm4k6)
- General directions: [https://www.911memorial.org/visit/about/getting-here](https://www.911memorial.org/visit/about/getting-here)
- Info on visiting: [https://www.911memorial.org/visit](https://www.911memorial.org/visit)

**Option 2:** Choose one of two novels set in the aftermath of 9/11 (either *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* by Mohsin Hamid or *The Zero* by Jess Walter). Write a 10-page paper (12-point type, double-spaced, 1-inch margins) that situates your chosen work of fiction in historical context using texts read for this class. If you choose this option, you will need to include quotations from the text you choose and from at least 3 other assigned readings from the syllabus. You are responsible for purchasing or borrowing a copy of the novel you choose in
plenty of time to write the paper. You may wish to use the EZBorrow or UBorrow services from the Rutgers University Libraries (https://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/find-borrow/interlibrary-loan-borrow-other-libraries), which let you borrow a book through a network of lending partners, but take into account that a typical wait time for books to arrive is 3 to 5 business days for EZ-Borrow or 7 days for UBorrow.

**Class Rules:**
I expect students to behave in a manner that shows respect for the civic community: for others’ needs and desire to learn. Any behavior that might be disruptive to other students, making it difficult for them to hear or distracting them from the lecture, or in any way intimidates them from participating in class, will be counted against the participation grade.

This means, in concrete terms:

- no talking in private conversations (even in whispers),
- no cell phone use or any other form of texting,
- no use of computers or laptops for any purpose except to take notes or review assigned readings under discussion,
- no working on other course homework.

**Attendance Policy:**
Attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to attend every class, arrive on time and stay for the duration of the class. *Excused vs. Unexcused absences:* The Rutgers-Newark Undergraduate catalog (http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nwk-ug_current/pg576.html) states: “The recognized grounds for absence are illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions.”

I will take attendance at the beginning of every class. After three unexcused absences, your overall course grade will be lowered by a partial grade (from B+ to B, for example) for every further unexcused absence. Any student who misses eight or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will have missed more than a quarter of the class time and will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw from the course to avoid an F.

If you arrive late, after I have taken attendance, I will give you half credit for being in class. This means that two late arrivals will count as one unexcused absence. I realize that delays are sometimes inevitable, and I would rather that you come to class late than not at all. To accommodate that, I will give you three free late passes – after the third late arrival, the late policy as stated above will kick in, with no exceptions. Leaving early without prior permission will count as an unexcused absence.

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• Understanding of the historical context as gleaned from lectures and readings
• Completion of each week’s readings and other assignments
• A willingness to engage in critical assessment of course texts and lectures

Students are expected to attend class and to be punctual. Excessive absences or late arrivals will result in a significantly diminished class participation grade.

Readings
There are no required books. All required readings will be available either on Canvas or through the Rutgers University Libraries (http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/). However, if you choose Option 2 for the Final Project, you are responsible for either borrowing or purchasing a copy of the novel you write about in plenty of time for you to complete the assignment (see above).

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES
*discussion board responses due (you must submit 5 times out of 6 before spring break and 5 times out of 6 after spring break)

Week 1: Can a Single Day Be a Historical Turning Point?
Wed, Jan 17
• Introduction

Week 2: What Was 9/11?
*Mon, Jan 22
• Susan Sontag, three essays on 9/11 (2001 and 2002)
Wed, Jan 24
• David Harvey, “Cracks in the Edifice of the Empire State” (2002)
• Nancy Miller, “‘Portraits of Grief’: Telling Details and the Testimony of Trauma” (2005)

Week 3: The Aftermath
*Mon, Jan 29
• Moustafa Bayoumi, “Preface” from How Does it Feel to Be a Problem?: Being Young and Arab in America (2008)
• “Sanctioned Bias: Racial Profiling Since 9/11” (ACLU report, 2004)
Wed, Jan 31
• Joanne Meyerowitz, “September 11th Revisited: The Troubled History of Victim Compensation” (2023)

Week 4: Context: The Cold War
*Mon, Feb 5
Wed, Feb 7

Week 5: Context: Energy and Geopolitics Since the 1970s
*Mon, Feb 12

Wed, Feb 14

Week 6: Context: The 1990s
*Mon, Feb 19

Wed, Feb 21

Week 7: The Politics of Patriotism
*Mon, Feb 26

Wed, Feb 28
- Read a bunch of David Rees, “Get Your War On” strips—at least one month’s worth: http://www.mnftiu.cc/category/gywo/war1/ (the site is a bit hard to navigate; after reading the landing page, you need to manually type in war2, war3, at the end of the URL as you move through)

Week 8: Midterm
Mon, Mar 4
- **In-class midterm**

Wed, Mar 6
- **NO CLASS**

**SPRING BREAK**

Week 9: Surveillance and Detention
*Mon, Mar 18
- Ivan Greenberg, “The FBI and the Making of the Terrorist Threat” (2011)
Week 10: The Iraq War
*Mon, Mar 25
- George W. Bush, State of the Union address (2002)
- Iraq War documents (2003 Byrd speech, 2004 Estrada narrative)
- McQuaid, “When the Levee Breaks” (2020, review of Katrina)

Wed, Mar 27
- J. Martin Daughtry, “Fragment 2” and “Fragment 5” from Listening to War: Sound, Music, Trauma, and Survival in Wartime Iraq (2015)

Week 11: Conspiracy Theories
*Mon, Apr 1
- Listen to “How 9/11 Broke Our Brains” (2021),
https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/otm/segments/911-broke-our-brains-on-the-media

Wed, Apr 3

Week 12: Legacies of Islamophobia
*Mon, Apr 8

Wed, Apr 10
- Donald Trump’s call for a “Muslim ban” (2015)

Week 13: 9/11 and the Material
*Mon, Apr 15
- Daniel Harris, “The Kitschification of Sept. 11” (2002),
https://www.salon.com/2002/01/26/kitsch_2/

Wed, Apr 17
- Roger Stahl, “Have You Played the War on Terror?” (2006)

Week 14: Looking Back
*Mon, Apr 22
- Spend some time looking at “Health Effects of 9/11: An Online Exhibition” (especially the Activism and Research pages), https://www.cdc.gov/wtc/exhibition/
Wed, Apr 24

Week 15
Mon, Apr 29
- Last class/review

Take-home final project: due Mon, May 6 at 5PM

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Citizenship and Community
We will be reading and discussing material on which we may not all agree; some of the themes and imagery we encounter in the sources may seem offensive or otherwise controversial. In this context especially, it is crucial for us to combine the free expression of ideas with respect for each other. This is your community and your class; each one of you has a responsibility to that community.

This course covers some difficult, sensitive subjects. Students who choose to take the course may well encounter historical texts, depictions, images, actions, and ideas that they find upsetting. Please remember that it is okay to feel offended. We will discuss in class how to sensitively address such feelings without whitewashing the past or present.

Names and Pronouns
An important part of creating a respectful learning environment is knowing and using the name you use, which may differ from your legal name, as well as the pronouns you use (for example, I go by he/him/his). Please feel free to let me know your name and/or the pronouns you use at any time.

Academic Integrity:
As an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University’s educational and research missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community. The entire Academic Integrity Policy can be found here: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/

You may only use the texts assigned in this syllabus to complete the assignments in this course. Resist the urge to use ChatGPT or any other AI resource. Resist the urge to cut and paste either literally or figuratively by using other people’s ideas. If I find that you have used an AI resource or other people’s ideas (e.g., Wikipedia, Amazon reviews, book jacket descriptions, etc.), I will not accept the assignment because I will not be able to consider it your own work. You will get a failing grade (0 points) for that assignment and will not be able to make it up, and I will have to report the incident to the Office of Academic Integrity.
Your health and well-being matter, and Rutgers has put in place a number of resources that are intended to help students through the challenges that might emerge during these times. Information on many of these resources appears below. Please let me know immediately if you are experiencing circumstances that are negatively impacting your academic performance. I also strongly encourage you to contact your academic advisor.

**Accommodation and Support Statement:**
Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

- **Absences:** All students are responsible for timely notification of their instructor regarding any expected absences. The Division of Student Affairs can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (illness, personal or family emergency, etc.) Students should refer to the University’s Course Attendance policy (10.2.7), for complete expectations and responsibilities. The office can be contacted at: (973) 353-5063 or deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

- **Disabilities:** The Office of Disability Services (ODS) works with students with medical, physical, and/or mental conditions who encounter disabling barriers in order to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations for access. Students who have completed the process with ODS and have approved accommodations are provided a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) specific to each course. To initiate accommodations for their course students must both provide the LOA to and have a conversation with the course instructor about the accommodations. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS: (973) 353-5375 or ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

- **Temporary Conditions/Injuries:** The Division of Student Affairs can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request for assistance at: https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu.

- **Pregnancy:** The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist students with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the office at (973) 353-1906 or TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

- **Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment:** The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the office at: (973) 353-1906 or TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using: https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?RutgersUniv&layout_id=69. For more information, students should refer to the University’s Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures located at https://uec.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/60-1-33-current-1.pdf.

- **Interpersonal Violence:** The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance (VPVA) can provide any student with confidential support. The office does **not** have a reporting obligation to Title IX. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based helpline available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support. Students do not need to be a victim/survivor of violence; any student can receive services, information and
support. **Crisis and Concerns:** The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a plan of support and address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Connect with the CARE Team by using the following link: https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?RutgersUniv&layout_id=11 or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

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- **Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-Being:** The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. Students should reach out to the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment: counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or (973) 353-5805. If students are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out Sanvello for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support. Visit https://my.rutgers.edu/, click on Sanvello: Wellness @ RUN, and log in with your netid to begin your journey toward wellness.

- **Emergencies:** Call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) at (973) 353-5111.

**Learning Resources:**
- Rutgers Learning Center (tutoring services). Tutoring available in a variety of math, science, technology, and business courses. Contact the Learning Center to determine whether tutoring is available for a specific course. Room 140, 110 Warren Street (973) 353-5608 https://rlc.rutgers.edu/contact-us https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/learning-center

- Writing Center (tutoring and writing workshops) (973) 353-5847 nwc@rutgers.edu https://sasn.rutgers.edu/student-support/tutoring-academic-support/writing-center

**Technology/Internet Resources for Students:**
- https://myrun.newark.rutgers.edu/covid-technology-resources
- https://mytech.newark.rutgers.edu/tl