

History of the United States II: 1865 to the Present

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HAH 322

Tuesday/Thursday: 10-11:20 a.m.

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Office hours: Thursday, 12-1 p.m. and by appointment

Course description

Leading questions and learning outcomes. How do we even begin to understand a broadly defined topic so open to varied and contesting interpretations as a “History of the United States from 1877 to the present”? Should we focus on the histories of elected officials and political elites, institutions and bureaucracies, the expansion (and contraction) of political rights, and other facets of the political process? What about the importance of ideas, arts, national culture, technology, mass communications, popular culture, and the various sub-cultural strains of a plural society? How important are the environment, epidemiology, pollution, and the management of natural resources to this history? How do we understand the changing dynamics of power, citizenship, and rights in a state built on the historical foundations of white supremacy, male domination, colonization, racial slavery, the dynamic of immigration and nativism, and heterosexual and cisgender privilege? To what extent is the history of the U.S. since 1877 a history of imperialism, military intervention, and global hegemony; or, as presidents from McKinley to Obama have argued, is the United States a unique evangelist of “freedom” in a global order? Should we consider the histories of industrial and financial capitalism, the ascendance of the corporation and labor unions, and the domination of global economic networks?

To what extent do these themes overlap and inform one another, thwarting our attempt to isolate and reduce these themes to discrete sub-disciplines or genres of historical inquiry like **political history**, **cultural history**, **social history**, **diplomatic history**, and **economic history**? What about more recent interdisciplinary and post-disciplinary scholarship under the broad heading of **cultural studies**, such as **women’s**, **gender**, and **sexuality studies**; **American studies**; or **African-American**, **Africana**, **Asian-American**, **Chicana/o**, **Latina/o**, **Jewish**, and other so-called “**ethnic studies**” of the relationship between race/ethnicity and identity? How can we better understand a “History of the United States from 1865 to the present” through the use of concepts and methods of sub-disciplinary forms of historical study as well as cultural studies in order to specify, clarify, and ultimately make the best use of the past?

In this course, we will take up these questions and their broader implications through close analysis of **primary sources**, secondary writing that critically interprets and reinterprets history (**historiography**), and active engagement in the lectures that frame and contextualize the course materials in a broader synthesis of global history. The most important task of this course is to carefully consider the evidence of primary sources and to critically engage the historical interpretations presented to you through readings and lecture. *History is not an assemblage of dead facts; history is a lively and contested discussion that exposes our relationship with the past and attempts to understand the past on its own terms.*

Course organization and approach to United States History. Chronologically, this course surveys the history of the United States from the Compromise of 1877, which effectively ended the Reconstruction of the post-bellum South and commenced the long “Jim Crow” era, until the present era, marked by the on-going wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the “Great Recession,” and the election of the country’s first African-American president, Barack Obama. The course is divided chronologically into three broad units of study. Covering the period from roughly 1870 to 1920, the **first unit** of study will focus on what historian Michael McGerr has characterized by a “**Progressive Movement**,” but more broadly this part of the course examines the era of Jim Crow and the early struggle against racial violence, the last of the “Indian Wars” and the end of American Indian sovereignty in the western U.S., the immigration-fueled growth of the industrial economy and labor politics, women’s activism and the Woman Suffrage movement, the making of the modern regulatory state during the Progressive Era, the technological emergence of mass culture (film and radio), U.S. military and colonial expansion into the Caribbean and the Pacific, and the First World War. In the **second unit** of study, covering the period from roughly 1920-1945, we will focus on what Ira Katznelson and other historians have described as the **New Deal State**, though this unit will also discuss the ascendance of mass communication and mass culture during the Jazz Age, the Great Depression, the Second World War, and the contested claim to post-war hegemony. The **third unit**, covering the period from roughly 1945 to the present, looks through the lens of the **African-American Civil Rights Movement** and the particular experiences of Ella Baker as described by Barbara Ransby, although this unit also assesses the broader context “Red Scare” and the Cold War, the resurgence of the cult of domesticity in the fifties, the New Left and the ascendance of the Counter-Culture, the Vietnam War, various race and ethnically based rights and radical power movements, the Sexual Revolution, Women’s Liberation, the LGBTQ movement, the Conservative Counter-Revolution and the “Culture Wars”, the end of the Cold War, and the global “War on Terror.”

In addition to discussing periods and events in United States history, we will also discuss historical categories of a) **broad socio-political organization** like the nation-state, electoral and judiciary processes, bureaucracy and other institutions, the military, international diplomacy, social movements, and domestic and public economies; b) **knowledge and cultural expression** like ideologies, philosophical concepts, scientific knowledge, literature, visual art, films, architecture, and music; and c) **social hierarchies** like race, ethnicity, class, religion, gender identity, erotic desire, and dis/ability. Students should also be mindful of less obvious categories of historical analysis, particularly the assumed division between the “human” and “natural” environment; the use and distribution of natural resources; as well as human embodiment, epidemiology, and ecology.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration->

[form](#). For more information please contact Kate Torres at [\(973\) 353-5375](tel:(973)353-5375) or in the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219 or by contacting odsnewark@rutgers.edu.

Gender Pronouns

This class affirms all forms of gender expression and identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct me on your gender pronoun or if you don't use a gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Required texts

Students are encouraged to purchase the books as soon as possible. Students will not be excused for failing to bring books to class or read assigned readings by the date on which they appear on the syllabus. Full-priced new as well as reduced priced used editions are available at the on-campus bookstore, Barnes & Noble at Bradley Hall 110. Students may also wish to purchase the books electronically, available for \$9.99 on both the Kindle and iBooks on-line bookstores. All other readings will be available via the course Blackboard page. **Please note that because students will have different editions, the course calendar will list the readings for the textbooks solely by chapter title. Nonetheless, students must include page or, if using e-books, location numbers on all written assignments.**

Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (Vintage, 1996)

Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (Oxford University Press, 2005)

Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (University of North Carolina Press, 2005)

Classroom policies

Attendance and absences. **Attendance is mandatory.** The instructor will use lecture time to contextualize and explain readings. Many lectures will introduce students to film clips, images, music, and other primary source media that cannot be obtained outside of class. Occasional illness (including illness of a child, parent, or other dependent), serious injury, transportation delays, and bereavement are inevitable. **However, it is not the instructor's responsibility to "catch you up." If you must miss a class meeting, please assume personal responsibility for work missed. Exchange contact information with a classmate to help you keep up with your lectures.** Given the time constraints and other classmates' needs, students should not expect the instructor to repeat or summarize a lecture via e-mail or during office hours.

Be on time. Students who are late will be documented. **Students will receive an unexcused absence for every four documented instances of tardiness.** Students who are more than half an hour late to class will be marked absent. Tardiness will only be excused with proper documentation.

Stay the entire time. The instructor will mark as absent all students who leave the class and do not return before its conclusion. Students who do so may only be excused in case of a medical emergency or with proper documentation.

The instructor will only excuse absences with proper documentation, and all students who miss classes must meet with the instructor during office hours in order to receive an excuse

regardless of documentation. Students who simply e-mail the instructor or provide no documentation will not be excused. Furthermore, students will lose half a letter grade (5 percentage points) of their FINAL COURSE GRADE after the fourth unexcused absence. Students who miss eight or more classes through any combination of excused or unexcused absences will not earn credit for the course. Such students should withdraw from the course.

***** Students who have documentation for absences should plan to speak to the instructor in the five minutes before or after class to explain the absence and share documentation. Except in the case of emergencies (like a bereavement that takes you out of the area or a severe, long-term illness), please do not e-mail the instructor if you are absent or plan to be absent. Some semesters, the instructor has as many as 300 students and such e-mails take up a tremendous amount of administrative time.***

E-management and organization. Students must participate in all aspects of the course, including Blackboard assignments. Students must have a working Rutgers username and password, as well as the coordination of e-mail and Blackboard usage. The instructor will frequently send e-mail reminders and assign material on Blackboard. **Students are responsible for keeping up with and contributing to any on-line components of the class, including regularly checking e-mail.**

Student conduct and use of electronic devices. Please be respectful of your peers, your instructor, and the university setting. Students should avoid the following: cell phone use and texting during class (except for students with children and/or other dependents), using laptops to surf social media and other irrelevant websites, sleeping in class, persistently talking or whispering while the instructor or other students are speaking, blatant disruptions, and ad hominem attacks on other students or the instructor, including attacks couched in racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, discrimination based on ability, and religious intolerance. Students who are severely disruptive may be asked to leave; such students will be marked absent for the day and will not be allowed to return until they have visited with the instructor during office hours. **Students who wish to use their laptops in class must sit in the first three rows of class and students who use laptops, tablets, or phones for any reasons aside from accessing class materials may be asked to leave. Please do not use cellphones to text or for any other purpose in class. It is highly disruptive and distracting for the instructor, other students, and especially you. Exceptions will be made only for students with children and other dependents.**

Course readings. Students must complete the readings before each class meeting, prepared to bring questions and comments for class. Students must purchase or otherwise obtain copies of the required texts. All other texts will be available on the course blackboard page. **Students are required to bring the readings to class in order to reference page numbers and other references to the readings in lectures.** Students will read an average of 40-45 pages per class meeting. Although on a handful of days we will exceed that limit, many days will consist of only 15-20 pages of readings. Some students may find the amount of reading difficult, and such students should make plans to dedicate extra hours in order to successfully complete the course readings. **The instructor suggests that students schedule or otherwise dedicate 3-6 class hours per week reading and studying for this course. The instructor expects students to complete all the assigned readings before the date they appear on the calendar, and students should expect the instructor to call on them and ask questions about the readings at any time. In addition to the readings listed on the course calendar,**

students are responsible for reading all supplemental materials, including the syllabus, the writing guide, and all prompts.

Late policy. All late work submitted without a documented excuse will be assessed a **50 point penalty**.

Course requirements

Participation (10%). Although on many days, the class will be centered on lecture and instructor-led exposition of the required readings, there will be a number of days throughout the semester in which students will be asked to lead and facilitate the discussion. One of the most critical aspects of this course is in-class participation. **Students must come to class each day with the assigned readings, prepared to discuss specific questions and issues raised by the readings.** Students that refuse to discuss the reading materials, repeatedly take the class discussion off-topic, engage in other disruptions, or fail to bring the readings into class risk harming their participation grade. So that we can fully integrate the text into our discussion, students will be asked to bring to each class a brief set of reading notes outlining the major points in the readings, including the type of source, the point of the argument, supporting evidence, etc.

Quizzes (30%). Students will complete 4-5 quizzes throughout the course of the semester, one or two of which will consist of take-home assignments that ask students to answer specific questions about the readings. In-class quizzes may or may not be unannounced, and only students with a documented excuse may make up quizzes for *lateness* or *absence*. Students will have about 20 minutes to complete the quizzes, which will consist of 10-20 matching or multiple-choice questions asking basic questions about the readings. Students should expect to be quizzed on any knowledge prior to the date of the quiz. Students who read and keep up with the lectures should have no problem earning high grades on quizzes.

Historiographical Essay (25%). Students will complete a historiographical essay consisting of no fewer than 1,800 words, a more detailed prompt of which will be made available on Blackboard. Historiographical essays will examine at least one of the three required books for this class. The essay will be due on Saturday, April 21, no later than 11:59 p.m.

Final Examination (35%). Students will complete a comprehensive in-class and take-home final at the time designated by the University.

Statement on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Any student who commits plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be asked to withdraw from the course. Violations will be reported to the appropriate university authorities and may result in further disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty includes unauthorized collaboration on homework assignments and, of course, cheating on in-class assignments.

All work submitted for grading must include the University's honor pledge and the student's signature. *"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this assignment."*

From the University's Policy on Academic Integrity for Undergraduate and Graduate Students

“Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source stored in print, electronic or other medium is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: "to paraphrase Plato's comment..." and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc. need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged.

In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one's general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some cases, be a subtle issue. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member.”

Calendar of Lectures and Readings

All readings marked with the symbol † will be scanned and posted on Blackboard.

All readings marked with the symbol * indicate slightly longer reading days, and students should plan their time accordingly.

Unit 1: From Reconstruction and the Gilded Age to the Progressive Era, 1865-1920

Week 1

January 17 “Reconstruction” from *Major Problems in American History, Volume I*†

January 19 Robert W. Larson, 1) “Part I: Red Cloud: The Warrior Years” and 2) “Part II: Red Cloud: The Reservation Years” in *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 47, No. 1, 2 (1997): 22-31 and 14-25; 3) Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History”†*

Week 2

January 24 McGerr, Preface and Chapter 1: “‘Signs of Friction’: Portrait of America at Century’s End” and McGerr, Chapter 2: “The Radical Center”

January 26 McGerr, Chapter 3: “Transforming Americans”

Week 3

January 31 McGerr, Chapter 4: “Ending Class Conflict” and Chapter 5: “Controlling Big Business”*

February 2 McGerr, Chapter 6: “The Shield of Segregation”

Week 4

February 7 McGerr, Chapter 7: “The Promise of Liberation” and Chapter 8: “The Pursuit of Pleasure”*

February 9 McGerr, Chapter 9: “The Price of Victory” and Conclusion

Week 5

February 14 “Imperialism and World Power,” *Major Problems in American History, Volume II*†

February 16 1) “America in World War I,” *Major Problems in American History, Volume II* and 2) Norvell and Tuttle, “Views of a Negro During ‘The Red Summer’ of 1919”†

Unit 2: The Making of the New Deal State

Week 6

February 21 Brinkley, Introduction: “The Concept of New Deal Liberalism,” Chapter 1: “The Crisis of New Deal Liberalism,” and Chapter 2: ““An Ordered Economic World””

February 23 Brinkley, Introduction: “The Concept of New Deal Liberalism,” Chapter 1: “The Crisis of New Deal Liberalism,” and Chapter 2: ““An Ordered Economic World””

Week 7

February 28 Brinkley, Chapter 3: “The ‘New Dealers’ and the Regulatory Impulse” and Chapter 4: “Spending and Consumption”

March 2 Brinkley, Chapter 5: “The Struggle for a Program” and Chapter 6: “The Anti-monopoly Moment”

Week 8

March 7 Brinkley, Chapter 7: “Liberals Embattled”

March 9 1) Brinkley, Chapter 8: “Mobilizing for War;” 2) Allan Bérubé, “Marching to the Beat of a Different Drummer” from *Hidden from History*†

SPRING RECESS

Week 9

March 21 Brinkley, Chapter 9: “The New Unionism and the New Liberalism”

March 23 Brinkley, Chapter 10: “Planning for Full Employment” and Epilogue: “The Reconstruction of New Deal Liberalism”

Unit 3: African-American Struggles from the Jim Crow Era to the Civil Rights Revolution

Week 10

March 28 Ransby, Introduction, Chapter 1: “Now, Who Are Your People?” and Chapter 2: “A Reluctant Rebel and an Exceptional Student”

March 30 Ransby, Chapter 3: “Harlem during the 1930s”

Week 11

April 4 Ransby, Chapter 4: “Fighting Her Own Wars” and Chapter 5: “Cops, Schools, and Communism”

April 6 Ransby, Chapter 6: “The Preacher and the Organizer” and Chapter 7: “New Battlefields and New Allies”

Week 12

April 11 Ransby, Chapter 8: “Mentoring a New Generation of Activists” and Chapter 9: “The Empowerment of an Indigenous Southern Black Leadership”

April 13 Ransby, Chapter 10: “Mississippi Goddamn” and Chapter 11: “The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party”

Epilogue: The Conservative Counter-Revolution

Week 13

April 18 Nixon Shock: Secret Wars, Domestic Espionage, and the Crisis of American Democracy
1) Richard Nixon, Resignation Speech; 2) Barbara Jordan, Statement on the Articles of Impeachment; 3) Meg Jacobs, “The Conservative Struggle and the Energy Crisis,” in *Rightward Bound: 193-209*; 4) Jimmy Carter, “The Crisis of Confidence”

April 20 Morning in America”/Mourning in America: Debating the Legacy of Ronald Reagan, the Conservative Revolution, and the Culture Wars
Reading: 1) Essex Hemphill, “Miss Emily’s Grandson Won’t Hush His Mouth;” 2) Ronald Reagan, Remarks to the National Association of Evangelicals, “Evil Empire” Speech (1983); 3) Michael Rogin, “‘Make My Day!’: Spectacle as Amnesia in Imperial Politics,” *Representations* 29 (1990): 99-123; 4) Maxine Wolfe, “AIDS and Politics: The Transformation of Our Movement;” 5) Patrick J. Buchanan, Keynote to the Republican National Convention (1992)

April 21 *Historiographical Essay Due*

Week 14

April 27 The Contested Meanings of Freedom, Cultural Warfare at Home, and Military Intervention Abroad from the End of the Cold War to the Global “War on Terror”
1) George H.W. Bush, Public Announcement on Kuwait “This Aggression ... Will Not Stand,” (1990); 2) Hilary Rodham Clinton, “Women’s Rights are Human Rights;” 3) Bill Clinton, 1996 State of the Union Address;

April 29 1) Melani McAlister, “A Cultural History of the War without End,” *JAH* 89:2 (2002): 439-455; 2) Condoleezza Rice, “The President’s National Security Strategy;” 3) Barack

Obama, Second Inaugural Address; 4) Donald J. Trump, Campaign Announcement, June 16, 2015; 5) Khizr Khan, Address to the 2016 Democratic National Convention (July 29, 2016)

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TBD ***Final Examination***