

History of the United States II: 1865 to the Present
21:512:202:H5 ON-LINE COURSE
Instructor: Christopher Adam Mitchell
Email: chmitche@rutgers.edu or chmitche@icloud.com

Course description

How can we even begin to understand a broadly defined topic so open to varied and contesting interpretations as a “History of the United States from 1865 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 1865 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 **“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 learning outcomes

Students will learn to define and discuss critical issues from this historical field through a combination of podcasts, student-facilitated class discussion forums, short writing assignments, and both a mid-term and comprehensive final examination. Students will learn to identify and interpret primary source evidence, summarize and analyze the arguments and supporting points of secondary assessments by historians, and synthesize these basic elements in class discussion and historiographical writing. Through an analysis of primary sources and evaluation of historical writing, scholarship, and representation, we will explore some of the basic concepts in the history and historiography of the United States, including:

- The Reconstruction Era, the political possibilities of emancipation for African-Americans, and the crisis of racial violence and the emergence of Jim Crow segregation
- The Gilded Age and the dominance of corporations in an era of prolonged economic crisis
- American Imperialism in the Caribbean, the Pacific, and the Southwest
- Progressive Era politics that transformed the relationship between the state and ordinary people around working conditions, consumption, and social policies aimed at enforcing “progress” through race, class, gender, and sexual conformity
- Progressive Era working-class, immigrant, African-American, and women’s activism
- Interwar social and political conflicts around race, immigration, and sexuality, especially during Prohibition
- The rapid industrialization of the United States economy and the national and global effects of the Great Depression in the 1920s and 1930s
- The transformation of the state in the era of the “New Deal” and World War II mobilization
- Meanings of liberalism, conservatism, and communism in the context of American political ideology in the post-war era
- Cold War competition with the Soviet Union and military conflicts in Korea and Vietnam
- The centrality of race, class, gender, and sexuality to Americans’ perceptions of citizenship and difference since World War II
- The ways in which the post-World War II economy transformed patterns of work and consumption
- The Civil Rights movement and its influences on racial identity politics and Women’s and Gay Liberation
- The conservative counter-revolution and the impact of AIDS
- The end of the Cold War and the emergence of the War on Terror

Course organization and approach to United States History. Chronologically, this course surveys the history of the United States from the end of the Civil War, which effectively inaugurated 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 aftermath of

the “Great Recession,” and hard right turn toward economic and social nationalism under the present administration. The course is divided chronologically into three broad units of study. Covering the period from roughly 1865 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 Native American 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.

Required texts

Used and discounted editions are available at New Jersey Books, 167 University Avenue in Newark, and students are strongly encouraged to patronize this independent business, which has been an integral part of our campus community for more than forty years. Full-priced editions are available at the on-campus bookstore, Barnes & Noble at Bradley Hall 110. Students may also wish to purchase the book 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)

Before you continue reading this syllabus, please understand the following:

1 **This syllabus is akin to a contract between student and instructor, and you need to read it carefully in order to understand the expectations of each role.** The student is responsible for attending to the coursework and maintaining the reading and assignment schedule listed in the syllabus, while the instructor is tasked with insuring that the class keeps up with the reading and assignments schedule. The instructor is responsible for providing assignments, podcasts, and supplementary materials with clear instructions, guidelines, and goals. If necessary, the instructor must also upload readings to Blackboard in a timely manner. Students must download, borrow, purchase or otherwise obtain all required readings listed on the syllabus. Additionally, students are responsible for following all written directions on prompts for assignments and supplementary materials. Students are also responsible for reviewing rubrics used to evaluate assignments. If the syllabus needs to be altered for any reason, the instructor will inform you specifically in writing. Otherwise, it is your responsibility to read the syllabus and stay on top of the calendar of readings and assignments.

2 **Make sure that you understand and participate in the digital components of class, especially Blackboard, especially if this is an on-line course.** Check your email on a regular basis so that announcements and messages from the instructor reach you in a timely manner. If you need to communicate with the instructor via email, please make sure that you state your full name, the class in which you are enrolled, and whatever question or issue you need the instructor to address. If you have a problem that cannot be addressed over email, then you need to come into the instructor's office hours.

3 **Please email me if you have questions about assignments, including requests to look over rough drafts and attempts to complete the coursework. However, do not email me coursework for this class and expect it to be accepted and evaluated as an official submission. All work must be posted to Blackboard. Your email will be deleted and you will not earn credit for that assignment.** Included in your coursework are quizzes, shorter assignments, papers, journals, and/or take-home exams, all of which must be submitted through Blackboard. Again, students will not earn credit if they email assignments or submit them in any way other than the instructions require. *Again, you may email me if you have questions about any assignment, but please do not expect to be graded for submissions sent to my inbox.*

4 **Unless directed by the instructor or the assignments, please do not use sources not listed on the syllabus or from outside of podcast material and podcast notes.** If you are required to do research, assignments will give you specific directives and the instructor will go over standard research methods. **If this is not a class with a research paper or another assignment that asks you to look for outside sources, then please do not, under any circumstances, use sources from outside of the class.** The

course materials were selected with great care, and the vast majority of undergraduate students (and even many graduate students) may not know how to select the best sources for papers, exams, and other assignments without extensive instruction. The purpose of the class is for you to critically read and respond to the readings, and if you are using outside sources you may be avoiding this foundational task. If this course has a research component, then only include sources from outside the class that are required by specific assignments. *The use of Wikipedia.com or any other on-line encyclopedia as well as Sparknotes, Shmoop, or any other study guide website as a source on an assignment will result in automatic failure of any assignment and a request to resubmit the work at a late penalty.*

5 Grades are generally assessed according to a rubric, and students who attend to the prompt and demonstrate the greatest knowledge and analysis of the details in the readings and podcasts will obviously do better. Please make sure that you read all assignments carefully, since the rubric will be generated from the questions and expectations stated on all assignments. The instructor may not always have time to comment extensively on essay assignments, so students should avail themselves of the rubric in order to understand how they earn and lose credit on assignments. The instructor will always be available for consultation about any evaluation in class for any reason, and rubrics are generally viewable via Blackboard and/or Turnitin.

Disability Accommodations

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' 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 the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219, by phone at 973-353-5375 or by email at odsnewark@newark.rutgers.edu.

Components of the Digital Classroom

E-management and organization. Students must participate in all aspects of the course, including Blackboard assignments. Students must also regularly check their email to

attend to any class- related business over the course of the session. The digital classroom requires continual electronic communication between instructor and student, and failure to communicate regularly via email will not count as an excuse for missed/late assignments or disorganization. *The instructor is not responsible for registering you for a username or gaining access to Blackboard, and students are responsible for any and all material and instructions posted on Blackboard.*

Students must have a working Rutgers username and password, as well as the coordination of e- mail and Blackboard usage.

Podcasts. The instructor will use Blackboard to post podcasts and slides from podcasts, both of which are materials that students need to be familiar with in order to participate in classroom discussions and to complete quizzes, assignments, and examinations. 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, and students should expect to listen to podcasts as they are posted each week.**

Student conduct in on-line forums. Please be respectful of your peers, your instructor, the classroom community, and the university setting. Our classroom community will not tolerate 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 the forum; such students will be marked absent for the day and may lose credit in more substantive ways.

Late policy. All non-documented late work will immediately be assessed a 5% (five-point) penalty. After the first twenty-four hours, late submissions will be assessed a 10% (10-point penalty) for each rounded 24-hour period. Students who fail to submit their work after five days/120 hours will be assessed a 50-point penalty, but they may submit their work at any time before the conclusion of the semester for partial credit.

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 podcasts.** This is an intensive summer course of study, and students will read an average of 40-50 pages per class meeting. Although on a handful of days we will exceed that limit, many days will consist of only 20-25 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. Again, this is a summer course, and the amount of reading we will cover in six weeks is ordinarily covered in about three months during a regular semester, so please plan your time accordingly. **The University and the instructor suggest that students schedule or otherwise dedicate 5-10 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 found on Blackboard.**

On-line Forums (30%) This on-line course will require students to participate in a virtual classroom setting via the course Blackboard page, which will occur no fewer than once and no more than twice in a week. Students will submit comments, questions, and critiques about the readings in the discussion forum. The instructor will write a prompt or set of leading questions and students will be assessed based on their responses. Students are also encouraged to use the discussion forum to raise questions and issues with the readings. On several days in the session, students will download a series of podcasts and slides to contextualize and explain the readings.

Short written assignments (25%). Students will complete about an assignment per week for this course in order to develop writing skills that focus on “close reading” or analysis of one or two texts, synthesis of multiple texts and ideas, and evaluations of how authors use primary sources and secondary arguments to develop their ideas.

Mid-term Examination (15%). Students will complete a mid-term examination conducted on-line and due by no later than 11:59 p.m. on July 29.

Final Examination (30%). Students will complete a comprehensive final examination conducted on-line and due by no later than 11:59 p.m. on August 14.

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.

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

- July 8 † “Reconstruction” from *Major Problems in American History, Volume I*
 July 9 † 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”
 July 10 McGerr, Preface and Chapter 1: “‘Signs of Friction’: Portrait of America at Century’s End”
 July 11 McGerr, Chapter 2: “The Radical Center”
 July 12 McGerr, Chapter 3: “Transforming Americans”

Week 2

- July 15 McGerr, Chapter 4: “Ending Class Conflict” and Chapter 5: “Controlling Big Business”
 July 16 McGerr, Chapter 6: “The Shield of Segregation”
 July 17 McGerr, Chapter 7: “The Promise of Liberation” and Chapter 8: “The Pursuit of Pleasure”
 July 18 McGerr, Chapter 9: “The Price of Victory” and Conclusion
 July 19 “Imperialism and World Power,” *Major Problems in American History, Volume II*†

Unit 2: The Making of the New Deal State**Week 3**

- July 22 † 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”
- July 23 **Mid-term Examination**
- July 24 Brinkley, Introduction: “The Concept of New Deal Liberalism,” Chapter 1: “The Crisis of New Deal Liberalism,” and Chapter 2: “‘An Ordered Economic World’”
- July 25 Brinkley, Introduction: “The Concept of New Deal Liberalism,” Chapter 1: “The Crisis of New Deal Liberalism,” and Chapter 2: “‘An Ordered Economic World’”
- July 26 Brinkley, Chapter 3: “The ‘New Dealers’ and the Regulatory Impulse” and Chapter 4: “Spending and Consumption”

Week 4

- July 29 Brinkley, Chapter 5: “The Struggle for a Program” and Chapter 6: “The Anti-monopoly Moment”
- July 30 Brinkley, Chapter 7: “Liberals Embattled”
- July 31 1) Brinkley, Chapter 8: “Mobilizing for War;” † 2) Allan Bérubé, “Marching to the Beat of a Different Drummer” from *Hidden from History*
- August 1 Brinkley, Chapter 9: “The New Unionism and the New Liberalism”
- August 2 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 5**

- August 5 Ransby, Introduction, Chapter 1: “Now, Who Are Your People?” and Chapter 2: “A Reluctant Rebel and an Exceptional Student”
- August 6 Ransby, Chapter 3: “Harlem during the 1930s”
- August 7 Ransby, Chapter 4: “Fighting Her Own Wars” and Chapter 5: “Cops, Schools, and Communism”
- August 8 Ransby, Chapter 6: “The Preacher and the Organizer” and Chapter 7: “New Battlefields and New Allies”
- August 9 Ransby, Chapter 8: “Mentoring a New Generation of Activists” and Chapter 9: “The Empowerment of an Indigenous Southern Black Leadership”

Week 6

- August 12 Ransby, Chapter 10: “Mississippi Goddamn” and Chapter 11: “The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party;” † 2) Richard Nixon, Resignation Speech; 3) Barbara Jordan, Statement on the Articles of Impeachment; 4) Meg Jacobs, “The Conservative Struggle and the Energy Crisis,” in *Rightward Bound: 193-209*; 5) Jimmy Carter, “The Crisis of Confidence;”
- August 13 † 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) Maxine Wolfe, “AIDS and Politics: The

Transformation of Our Movement;” 4) Patrick J. Buchanan, Keynote to the Republican National Convention (1992); 5) George H.W. Bush, Public Announcement on Kuwait “This Aggression ... Will Not Stand,” (1990); 6) Hilary Rodham Clinton, “Women’s Rights are Human Rights;” 7) Bill Clinton, 1996 State of the Union Address; 8) Melani McAlister, “A Cultural History of the War without End,” *JAH* 89:2 (2002): 439-455; 9) Condoleezza Rice, “The President’s National Security Strategy;” 10) Barack Obama, Second Inaugural Address

August 14 *Final examination due no later than 11:59 p.m.*