

U.S. History, 1890-1945
(Problems and Readings in American History 1912-1945)
26:510:583
Fall 2014

Class Location: Conklin 448
Class Meeting Times: Mondays, 5:30-8:10
Professor: Dr. Beryl Satter
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During the first half of the twentieth century the U.S. transitioned from a Victorian producer culture to a modern consumer culture. This entailed dramatic shifts in U.S. racial ideologies, gender relations, immigration trends, patterns of capital investment and corporate organization, labor, leisure, and sexuality. During these same years Americans engaged in two major periods of political reform (the Progressive Era, 1890-1920, and the New Deal, 1933-38), and participated in two world wars. To understand how historians have interpreted these complex changes and events, we will read studies that utilize a wide variety of approaches, including biography, political history, labor history, legal history, transnational history, intellectual history, social and cultural history, and histories of race, gender, class, and sexuality.

Course Books

- Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Florence Kelley and the Nation's Work: The Rise of Women's Political Culture, 1830-1900* (Yale University Press, 1995)
- Paul Ortiz, *Emancipation Betrayed: The Hidden History of Black Organizing and White Violence in Florida from Reconstruction to the Bloody Election of 1920* (University of California Press, 2005)
- Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Harvard University Press, 2010)
- Kornel Chang, *Pacific Crossings: The Making of the U.S.-Canadian Borderlands* (University of California Press, 2012)
- Andrew Cohen, *The Racketeers' Progress: Chicago and the Struggle for the Modern American Economy, 1900-1940* (Cambridge University Press, 2004)
- Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (Oxford University Press, 2008)
- George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*
- Julie C. Ott, *When Wall Street Met Main Street: The Quest for an Investor's Democracy* (Harvard University Press, 2011)
- Lynn Dumenil, *The Modern Temper: American Culture and Society in the 1920s* (Hill and Wang, 1995)
- Mai Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton University Press, 2004)
- Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge University Press, 1990)
- Mary Poole, *The Segregated Origins of Social Security: African Americans and the Welfare State* (University of North Carolina Press, 2006)
- Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (Vintage Books, 1995)

These books are available for purchase at New Jersey Books, 167 University Avenue (corner of University and Bleeker). NJ Books' phone number is 973-624-5383. They are also available for purchase at the Rutgers University Bookstore in Bradley Hall, 110 Warren Street Newark, NJ 07102, phone 973-353-5377. They are also on reserve at Dana Library.

I've assigned occasional additional short readings (articles or sections of books). These are on Blackboard (under "Course Documents"), or in JSTOR or other online databases.

Course requirements

1) Class Participation (will be taken into account and can raise or lower final grade)

-To encourage class participation, every student must bring at least one question about the week's reading to class EVERY WEEK. You must email me your question or questions by noon of the day we are reading that book. We will also go around the table at the start of each class so that each person can verbally present one question. Try to present questions that engage with the book's key arguments and help us wrestle with the book's insights (avoid narrow questions about specific facts or any questions that elicit "yes or no" answers). I will take the quality of your questions into account when the final grade is tabulated.

2) Two short papers (5-7 pages, typed and double-spaced, approximately 250 words per page) that review and analyze the reading for one week of the course.

-The first book review is due by Oct. 27; the second is due by Dec. 8.

-The papers are due on the day the book you review is discussed in class.

-The first review focuses exclusively on the book you are reviewing. The second review (after Oct. 27) should compare the main book you are reviewing to at least one of the books we covered in the first half of the class (till Oct. 27).

**You must email me *several* questions about the book you have reviewed by noon of the day we are reading that book. These questions should arise from your book review. Your questions, along with the questions that the rest of the class will present verbally, will help form the basis of class discussion.

-Each review (along with typed questions about the book) is worth 25% of your grade.

3) Final exam, in form of take-home review essay on the course readings. Exam due date to-be-announced. Final exam is worth 50% of your grade. Past exam questions are posted on Blackboard under "Previous Exams." If you come up with a theme you'd like to write about – that is, if you'd like to write your own exam question -- please show me the question by no later than Dec. 1. If I OK your question – if it is broad enough to engage the major themes of at least half of the books we've read for the course -- I will add it to the list of potential exam questions.

Syllabus

Part 1: Gilded Age and Progressive Era America, 1877-1920

Mon. Sept. 8: Introduction

-Richard Marius, "Book Reviews," and Mary Lynn Rampolla, "Book Reviews and Critiques," on Blackboard (under "Course Documents")

-Kathryn Kish Sklar, *Florence Kelley and the Nation's Work*, pp. xi-90

Mon. Sept. 15: Northern White Progressivism and the Settlement House Movement

-Sklar, *Florence Kelley and the Nation's Work*, pp. 93-315

Mon. Sept. 22: Southern African-Americans Confront the Nadir, 1877-1920

-Paul Ortiz, *Emancipation Betrayed*

*Gail Bederman, "'Civilization,' the Decline of Middle-Class Manliness, and Ida B. Wells's Antilynching Campaign (1892-94)," in *"We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible: A Reader in Black Women's History"*, Darlene Clark Hine, Wilma King, and Linda Reed, eds. pp. 407-432 (originally published in *Radical History Review* 52:5 (1992): 5-30), on Blackboard (under "Course Documents")

Mon. Sept. 29: Progressivism and Racism in the Urban North

Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness*

Part II: Labor and Capital

Mon. Oct. 6: Transnational Capital and Transnational Resistance

Kornel Chang, *Pacific Crossings*

Mon. Oct. 13: Craftsmen versus Corporations: Organized Labor and Organized Crime

Andrew Wender Cohen, *The Racketeer's Progress*

Mon. Oct. 20: World War I: Volunteerism and Coercion

Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*

Part III: The End of Victorian America

Mon. Oct. 27: The Gay Male World, 1890-1940

George Chauncey, *Gay New York*

Mon. Nov. 3: A Nation of Stockholders

Julie C. Ott, *When Wall Street Met Main Street*

Mon Nov. 10: The 1920s

Lynn Dumenil, *Modern Temper*

*Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," *American Historical Review* 89 (June 1984): 620-47 (on Blackboard).

Mon. Nov. 17: The Legal Creation of "Illegal Aliens"

Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*

Part IV: The Great Depression and the End of Reform

Mon. Nov. 24: Labor in Depression-Era America

Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal*

Mon. Dec. 1: Race and New Deal Liberalism

Mary Poole, *The Segregated Origins of Social Security*

*George Lipsitz, *Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*, pp. 1-46 (on Blackboard)

Mon. Dec. 8: The New Deal and the End of Reform

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