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More information on the class will be forthcoming via emails to enrolled students and updates to this syllabus.

Do not hesitate to be in touch at any time if you have any questions or concerns: krasovic@rutgers.edu

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Modern America, 1890-1945

Fall 2020

Tuesday & Thursday 10:00-11:20 am
Remote & Synchronous, from Wherever You Are

Professor: Mark Krasovic
Email: krasovic@rutgers.edu
Office Hours: Fridays, via Booking

Course Description

I don't believe that history repeats itself. But even in strange times like our own, it does often rhyme. This semester – as we continue to live through a pandemic, racial uprisings, and a heated presidential election season – we will explore how events in the U.S.'s Modern Era reverberate in our contemporary world. Through encounters with key historical sources – both primary and secondary – this class will explore the key cultural, social, and political developments that mark the decades around the turn of the twentieth century as “modern.” We will seek to understand those developments on their own terms, while also drawing connections between those years and today, whether via disturbing similarities (racism, nativism, rising inequality), more edifying ones (mobilizations against racism and fascism), cultural resonances (the ubiquity of visual culture and the sense of a shrinking world), or marked differences (more recent ways of organizing economic production in the U.S., the rise of the U.S. as a world power vs. what may be the early years of its decline). Our broad goals will be twofold: to practice critical reading and analytical skills on historical evidence, while gaining a firmer understanding of our own time by studying what are arguably its first decades.

Learning Objectives

In this course students will be given the opportunity to:

- Identify and analyze different types of evidence using critical thinking skills
- Think about the meaning of the word “modern,” its ambiguities and contradictions
- Construct multiple narratives that tell how the U.S. became “modern”
- Deepen their understanding of the early 21st century world by drawing connections back to the modern period

Some Nuts & Bolts for this COVID-Era Class

This class will be remote (online) and synchronous. Given that format, I expect that...

1. You will familiarize yourself with the basics of both [Canvas](#) and [Zoom](#) as soon as possible
2. You will attend class during the times posted above, just as you would if we were meeting on campus
3. You have access to a computer with a camera and a reliable internet connection

Please note: I want you to take this class and I want you to do well in it. So if you have any questions or concerns about these expectations, please be in touch!

All readings will be distributed via Canvas. There is nothing you need to buy.

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Course Requirements

Each week's work will be organized into "modules" on Canvas, consisting of reading/viewing and writing assignments.

My thinking is that, in a remote class, it is even more imperative than usual to check in with your progress through the semester via frequent **short writing assignments**. That said, those assignments will be short. These are often called "high-frequency, low-stakes" assignments. That is, the assignments will occur regularly, they will be fairly basic, and no single assignment will have a major effect on your final grade. Collectively, though, they will constitute a significant percentage of your final grade.

There will be simple **quizzes** interspersed throughout the semester. These will test your comprehension of the reading/viewing material. If you've done the reading and viewing, you won't have a problem with these.

For the **preparedness and participation** grade, students are expected to read the assigned texts before each class session. Simple attendance alone doesn't much help the participation grade, but missing too many classes can seriously hurt it (see class rules below). Students are required to come to class ready with questions or observations about the readings and to take part in the discussion to earn a good participation grade. We will devote much of our class time to interpreting the primary source readings. This in-depth analysis will compose the participation grade.

There will be a **final "exam"** assignment, for which you will choose one of several options. Those options are: a traditional exam comprising short essay questions on primary sources; a longer (3-4 page) essay making an argument about one primary source in particular; or an essay (3-4 pages) that demonstrates the roots of some contemporary reality in the Modern Era. More details on each of these options will be provided.

Short Writing	30%
Quizzes	20%
Final "Exam"	25%
Preparedness and participation	25%

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Class Rules

Studying history is often a politically and personally charged pursuit, and we will not shy away from tough questions about power, inequality, race, and immigration, to name a few. In fact, they may take on specially charged meaning in our current historical moment, and we need not steer our conversations away from making connections between the past and today. But I expect that all of us – myself included – will behave in a manner that assumes and shows respect for others' needs and desires to learn. By all means, disagree with me and with each other. But do so in a civil way that will promote, rather than hinder, learning. *Any behavior that in any way intimidates others from participating in class will be addressed and may count against your participation grade.*

Attendance is required. There will be no make-up opportunities for missed classes. I will take attendance in every class meeting. 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. After two 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.*

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.” *If you plan to claim a religious holiday as an excused absence, you must inform me of this fact within the first two weeks of class.*

Late assignments will not be accepted except in cases of proven emergency. Unless you have express permission from me, discussed with me *in advance*, and based on an acknowledged reason, late assignments will have their grades lowered one partial grade every day that they are late.

Policy on Academic Integrity (Cheating and Plagiarism):

Rutgers University treats cheating and plagiarism as serious offenses. Cheating is both a moral and an ethical offense. It violates both your own integrity and the ethics of group commitment: when you cut corners and cheat, you undermine those students who took the time to work on the assignment honestly. As a standard minimum penalty, students who are suspected of cheating or plagiarism are reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Pending investigation, further penalties can include failure of the course, disciplinary probation, and a formal warning that further cheating will be grounds for expulsion from the University.

All students are required to sign the Rutgers Honor Code Pledge. To receive credit, every assignment must have your signature under the following phrase: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this assignment.”

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You may only use the texts assigned in this syllabus to complete the work in this class. If I find that you have used other people's ideas (ex: 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.

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Class Schedule

[to be filled out with reading and writing assignments]

Week 1: Introduction to History and the Class via the Russian Flu of 1889

Week 2: Intellectual & Cultural Foundations: The Conquest of Time and Space

Week 3: Material & Economic Foundations: The Industrial and Corporate Orders

Week 4: Modern Racial Orders, Part I

Week 5: Modern Racial Orders, Part II

Week 6: Insurgencies

Week 7: The City

Week 8: Early Film

Week 9: Modern Art

Week 10: Cultures of Consumption and Affluence

Week 11: Crash and Depression

Week 12: Varieties of Radicalism

Week 13: The New Deal

Week 14: World War II

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Accommodation and Support Statement

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

For Individuals with Disabilities: The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS at (973)353-5375 or via email at ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals who are Pregnant: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-1906 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Absence Verification: The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (e.g., illness, personal or family emergency, etc.). Students should refer to [University Policy 10.2.7](#) for information about expectations and responsibilities. The Office of the Dean of Students can be contacted by calling (973) 353-5063 or emailing deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries: The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (e.g., broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link: <https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu>.

For English as a Second Language (ESL): The Program in American Language Studies (PALS) can support students experiencing difficulty in courses due to English as a Second Language (ESL) and can be reached by emailing PALS@newark.rutgers.edu to discuss potential supports.

For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are 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 of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-1906 or emailing TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University's Student Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Related Misconduct located at <http://compliance.rutgers.edu/title-ix/about-title-ix/title-ix-policies/>.

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For support related to interpersonal violence: The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance can provide any student with confidential support. The office is a **confidential resource** and does *not* have an obligation to report information to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based line available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support.

For Crisis and Concerns: The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a support plan to address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Students, faculty and staff may contact the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

For 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 you are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out *TAO at Rutgers-Newark* for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support: <https://tinyurl.com/RUN-TAO>.

For emergencies, call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) by calling (973) 353-5111.