

HSTAA 303
MODERN AMERICAN CIVILIZATION SINCE 1877

University of Washington

Spring 2009

MTW 1:30-2:50 -- BAG 261

<http://faculty.washington.edu/momara/HSTAA303/HSTAA303.html>

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This is a survey course of the United States from the end of Reconstruction to the present, focusing on the relationship between state and society, economic and technological change, and struggles for civil and economic rights. The course covers pivotal events, transformative public figures, and social and cultural forces shaping the modern U.S., its relationship with its own citizens, and its changing role in the world.

The class meets three times per week for a 50-70 minute lecture followed by discussion, small group activities, multimedia presentations, and in-class assignments.

READINGS

BOOKS (all in paperback; available for purchase at the Bookstore and on 2-hour reserve at Odegaard Undergraduate Library)

1. Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* (required)
2. Richard Polenberg, *The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Brief History with Documents* (required)
3. Bruce Schulman, *Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism: A Brief Biography with Documents* (required)
4. Alan Brinkley, *An Unfinished Nation, Vol. II* (recommended)

COURSE READER OF REQUIRED ARTICLES AND PRIMARY DOCUMENTS available at the Bookstore via Campus Copy.

Readings listed for a given week are expected to be completed by the Wednesday of the week they are listed on the syllabus, unless otherwise indicated.

ASSIGNMENTS

Your grade for the class will be based on four elements: a midterm (25%); a final (30%); a 5-7 page research paper (25%); three in-class timed writing assignments (15%); and two in-class pop quizzes (5%). All of these assignments will draw upon both the class lectures and the required reading material.

The **midterm** is a take-home exam due at the start of class on Monday, May 4. A well-prepared student will be able to complete this exam in 1½ hours; consulting books and lecture notes is permitted. It is chiefly an essay exam, with a few identification questions. The exam questions will be distributed in class on Wednesday.

The **paper** is due at the start of class on Monday, June 1. You will choose one of five primary documents from local sources that relate to an event or events in U.S. history since 1877. I will distribute copies of these documents in class several weeks in advance. Use the primary source document as a starting point for a discussion of how this event reflects the broader cultural, political, or economic context of an era in modern American history. Analyze the document for how its approach and tone reveals values and opinions about particular people, groups, or institutions. Discuss local and regional aspects of the document, if any. The paper should draw upon other library sources beyond the class readings in making its argument, and you are strongly encouraged to review library microfilm collections to identify related news articles that support your analysis.

Timed writing assignments will be given in class at random three times during the quarter. In these, you will have 20 minutes to write a well-considered answer to a question drawn from the week's readings. Length and style should be similar to a standard essay question on a blue-book exam.

Quizzes will be given at random three times during the quarter; only the highest two grades will count toward your final grade. These will be short, containing factual questions that test your familiarity with lecture points and readings. If you have an unexcused absence from class and miss a writing exercise or quiz, you cannot make it up.

The **final exam** will be given on Monday, June 9, from 2:30-4:20. It is chiefly an analytic essay exam, with some shorter identification questions.

I do not give extensions. Your grade on an assignment will be reduced by one grade point every five minutes it is late (i.e. turning in midterm or paper after the start of lecture will decrease your grade). Incapacitation because of illness or another crisis must be documented with a note from a doctor, employer, or similarly authoritative source. Scheduled absences due to prior university obligations or significant family events should be discussed with me as early in the term as possible.

In all assignments you are expected to adhere to the standards of academic integrity outlined by the University of Washington Student Conduct Code. For clarification of these standards and disciplinary penalties, see <http://depts.washington.edu/grading/conduct/honesty.html>.

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 – The Gilded Age

Mon March 30	World's Fairs and the Idea of Modern America
Tues March 31	Railroads and Corporations
Wed April 1	The Federal Government and the West

READING: *Sister Carrie*, Chapters 1-23

WEEK 2 – The Progressive Era

Mon April 6	The City
Tues April 7	Immigration and the Challenges of Pluralism
Wed April 8	Race: The American Dilemma

READING: *Sister Carrie*, Chapters 24-47
The Rev. Josiah Strong, "Perils of the City" (R)

W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Ch. 1 &2 (R)

WEEK 3 – The World Becomes Modern

Mon April 13 Imperialism and War
Tues April 14 Technology and Efficiency
Wed April 15 Leisure and Mass Culture in the Roaring '20s

READING: Gary Gerstle, "Theodore Roosevelt and the Divided Character of American Nationalism" (R)
Woodrow Wilson, "Do Your Bit for America" (R)
George Norris, Statement of Opposition to War Declaration (R)

WEEK 4 – The Great Depression and New Deal

Mon April 20 The Depression and its Consequences
Tues April 21 The New Deal and the American State
Wed April 22 Roosevelt's Legacy

READING: *Era of FDR*, 1-36, 39-43, 68-88, 114-160

WEEK 5 – The World at War

Mon April 27 The United States in World War II
Tues April 28 Wartime Economy and the Pacific West
Wed April 29 Dawn of the Atomic Age **TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DISTRIBUTED**

READING: *Era of FDR*, 184-228
Henry Stimson, Press Release on the Dropping of the Atomic Bomb, August 1945 (R)
Richard Kirkendall, "The Boeing Company and the Metropolitan-Military-Industrial Complex, 1945-1953" (R)

WEEK 6 – Cold War Politics

Mon May 4 America in the World, Part I **TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DUE**
Tues May 5 America in the World, Part II
Wed May 6 The Cold War at Home

READING: Telegram, George Kennan to George Marshall ("The Long Telegram") (R)
John Foran, "Discursive Subversions: Time Magazine, the CIA overthrow of Musaddeq, and the Installation of the Shah" (R)
Christian G. Appy, "Eisenhower's Guatemalan Doodle, or: How to Draw, Deny, and Take Credit for a Third World Coup" (R)

WEEK 7 – The New American Landscape

Mon May 11 Urban Crisis
Tues May 12 Suburban Migration
Wed May 13 Cold War Science and the High-Tech Future

READING: William H. Whyte, "Are Cities Un-American?" (R)
Elaine Tyler May, "Cold War – Warm Hearth: Politics and Family in Postwar America" (R)
Margaret Pugh O'Mara, "Uncovering the City in the Suburb" (R)

WEEK 8 – The Fight for Equality

Mon May 18 Liberals and Conservatives
Tues May 19 Segregation and Integration
Wed May 20 The Great Society

READING: *Lyndon B. Johnson*, 1-124, 191-197
Kevin Kruse, "The Politics of Race and Space: Desegregation, Privatization, and the Tax Revolt in Atlanta" (R)

WEEK 9 – Making Sense of the 1960s

Mon May 25 *NO CLASS - Memorial Day holiday*
Tues May 26 Vietnam and its Legacies
Wed May 27 America in 1968

READING: *Lyndon B. Johnson*, 125-166, 213-247

WEEK 10 – The New World Order

Mon June 1 Watergate and Beyond **RESEARCH PAPER DUE**
MOVIE NIGHT, 5:30-7:30: *All the President's Men*
(watch with the class or rent on your own)

Tues June 2 Old Economy to New Economy
Wed June 3 New World Order

READING: E.J. Dionne, "The Lost Opportunity" (R)
Tom Wolfe, "The Tinkerings of Robert Noyce" (R)
Lawrence Wright, "The Counter-Terrorist" (R)

Mon June 8 FINAL EXAM, 2:30-4:20PM