

HSTAA 303
MODERN AMERICAN CIVILIZATION SINCE 1877
University of Washington
Spring 2008
MWF 1:30-2:50, Loew Hall 105
<http://faculty.washington.edu/momara/Courses.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-minute lecture followed by 30 minutes of discussion, small group activities, multimedia presentations, and in-class assignments.

READINGS

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

1. Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*
2. Richard Polenberg, *The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Brief History with Documents*
3. D.J. Waldie, *Holy Land: A Suburban Memoir*
4. Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff, *The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation*
5. David Farber, *Taken Hostage: The Iran Hostage Crisis and America's First Encounter with Radical Islam*

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK

1. Alan Brinkley, *An Unfinished Nation, Vol. II* (or any other brief textbook)

REQUIRED ARTICLES AND PRIMARY DOCUMENTS are available in electronic form on UW library e-reserves, indicated by an (ERES) on the schedule below.

Readings listed for a given week are expected to be completed by the FRIDAY 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 (30%), a final (30%), a 5-7 page research paper (25%), and a set of five in-class quizzes (15%).** 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 5**. A well-prepared student will be able to complete this exam in 1.5 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 Friday May 2.

The paper is due in the course's Collect It dropbox by the start of class on **Monday, June 2**. You will choose one of five news articles published in local newspapers that discuss a particular event in U.S. history since 1877. I will distribute copies of these articles in class several weeks in advance. Use the article 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 article for how its approach and tone reveals values and opinions about particular people, groups, or institutions. Discuss local and regional aspects of the article, 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.

Quizzes will be **given at random** five times during the quarter. These will be short, containing factual questions that test your familiarity with lecture points and readings. Each counts for 3% of your grade. If you miss a class and miss a 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 0.3 percent for every hour it is late. Incapacitation because of illness or another crisis must be documented with a note from a doctor, employer, or similarly authoritative source.

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

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 – The Gilded Age

Mon March 31 World's Fairs and the Idea of Modern America

Wed April 2 Cities, Railroads, and Corporations

Fri April 4 The Federal Government and the West
READING: *Sister Carrie*, Ch. 1-23

WEEK 2 – The Progressive Era

Mon April 7 Immigration and the Challenges of Pluralism

Wed April 9 Progressive Reform

Fri April 11 Race: The American Dilemma

READING:

1. *Sister Carrie*, Ch. 24-47
2. W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Ch. 1 &2 (ERES)

WEEK 3 – The World Becomes Modern

Mon April 14 Imperialism and War

Wed April 16 Technology and Efficiency

Fri April 18 Leisure and Mass Culture in the Roaring '20s

READING:

1. Woodrow Wilson, "Do Your Bit for America" (ERES)
2. Sen. Norris Statement of Opposition to War Declaration (ERES)
3. "The Rev. John Phelan Assesses Movies in Toledo, Ohio, 1919" (ERES)
4. "The World's Greatest Migration," 1928 (ERES)

WEEK 4 – The Great Depression and New Deal

Mon April 21 The Depression and its Consequences

Wed April 23 The New Deal and the American State

Fri April 25 Roosevelt's Legacy

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

WEEK 5 – The World at War

Mon April 28 The United States in World War II

Wed April 30 Wartime Economy and the Pacific West

Fri May 2 Dawn of the Atomic Age **TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DISTRIBUTED**

READING:

1. *Era of FDR*, 184-228
2. read "Historical Context" and browse ONE of the primary document collection categories at the Japanese American Relocation Digital Archive (<http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/jarda/>)
3. Henry Stimson to Truman, two memoranda on use of the atomic bomb (ERES)

WEEK 6 – Cold War Politics

Mon May 5 America in the World, 1945-1965 **TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DUE**

Wed May 7 The Cold War at Home

Fri May 9 Cold War Science and the High-Tech Future

READING:

1. NSC-68: United States Objectives and Programs for National Security (ERES)
2. Vannevar Bush, "As We May Think" (ERES)

3. Richard Kuisel, "Yankee Go Home: The Left, Coca-Cola, and the Cold War" (ERES)
4. Tracy Augur, "The Dispersal of Cities as a Defense Measure" (ERES)

WEEK 7 – The New American Landscape

Mon May 12 Urban Crisis
 Wed May 14 Suburban Migration
 Fri May 16 Liberals and Conservatives

READING:

1. *Holy Land*
2. William H. Whyte, "Are Cities Un-American?" (ERES)

START READING *The Race Beat*

WEEK 8 – The Fight for Equality

Mon May 19 Segregation and Integration
 Wed May 21 The Great Society
 Fri May 23 Vietnam and its Legacies

READING:

1. Barry Goldwater, Speech to the 1964 Republican Convention (ERES)
2. George Wallace, "Schoolhouse Door Speech" (ERES)
3. Bruce Schulman, *Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism*, 133-166, 191-197 (ERES)

KEEP READING *The Race Beat*

WEEK 9 – Making Sense of the 1960s

Mon May 26 NO CLASS - Memorial Day holiday
 Wed May 28 America in 1968
 Fri May 30 NO CLASS - to allow time to work on research paper

READING [COME PREPARED TO DISCUSS WEDNESDAY]: finish *The Race Beat*

WEEK 10 – The New World Order

Mon June 2 Watergate and Beyond **RESEARCH PAPER DUE 1:30PM**
 Wed June 4 Old Economy to New Economy
 Fri June 6 New World Order

READING: *Taken Hostage*

Mon June 9 **FINAL EXAM, 2:30-4:20PM**