This course examines the social, economic, and political development of the United States from the end of the Civil War to the present. The main theme of the course involves the question of how Americans viewed themselves and their nation as the United States emerged as a political and economic superpower over the course of the 20th Century. We will begin during the 1870s, when the end of slavery, the conquest of the western territories, the arrival of “new immigrants,” and the rise of corporate capitalism all forced those living within the United States to rethink what it meant to be an American. We will then extend that question into the 20th Century, focusing on the changes to American identity brought by the two World Wars, the Depression, and the Cold War. The course will end in the post-Cold War period, when a new phase of immigration, the banning of race and gender discrimination, and the rise of global capitalism once again challenge Americans to define our roles in the nation and in the world.

Requirements: Weekly assignments for this course include three lectures (50 mins), one discussion section (50 mins), and 50-150 pages of reading. The purpose of discussion is to evaluate student’s understanding of lecture and reading materials so it is critical that they attend all lectures and complete the weekly assignment before their section meeting. Students are encouraged to ask questions during lectures, but they should also bring questions about lecture or reading material for discussion during sections.

Evaluation: Students will be graded according to their participation in discussion sections (20%), one short paper (20%), and three exams (20% each). Participation will be measured by a combination of attendance, preparation and contribution to discussions. Every student must answer one of the five short (5-7 pages) paper questions listed on the syllabus. They will be evaluated for content, argument and style. Exams will consist of two parts; identification of names, places or concepts defined in lectures and essays on lectures and required readings. Essays will be evaluated primarily according to content and argument, although sloppy writing can make it hard to appreciate strong evidence.
The midterm exams are not cumulative. The final will have one essay question that covers the entire course.

**Required Reading:** There are six required books for this course. They can be purchased at A Room of One's Own Feminist Bookstore, 307 W. Johnson St. (257-7888). They are all available in paperback and students can purchase used copies where they are available. Reserve copies are also available for 3 hour loan at College Library.


Mike Davis, *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the US City* (Verso, 2001)

**Academic Conduct:** Students will be held to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Instances of Academic Misconduct (including cheating and plagiarism) will be prosecuted according to the "Student Academic Misconduct Campus Procedures” of the UW System Administrative Code. Please familiarize yourself with those procedures and their definition of Academic Misconduct: [http://www.wisc.edu/students/conduct/uws14.htm](http://www.wisc.edu/students/conduct/uws14.htm)

**Abilities:** Students who need special accommodation due to a disability should contact me privately. Please also contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center [http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/](http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/) at 608-263-2741 (phone); 263-6393 (TTY); 263-2998 (FAX); FrontDesk@mcb.wisc.edu to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

**Week 1**  
**Re-Birth of a Nation**

January 22  
Introduction

January 24  
The Promise of Reconstruction

January 26  
The Cost of Reconciliation

Reading:  
Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 3-43

**Week 2**  
**American Empire**

January 29  
Conquering the West

January 31  
American Imperialism

February 2  
Immigration and Restriction
Reading: Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 44-80
Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, 1-77

**Week 3**  
The Gilded Age
February 5  The Rise of Wall Street
February 7  Populism
February 9  The Labor Problem

**Reading:** Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, 120-177, 236-254

**Short Paper #1 Due:** David Leviathan writes that “*How the Other Half Lives* was produced during the less predictable stages of the nation’s drive to organize the national economy and culture by an immigrant in the process of making himself an American.” Do you agree with this statement? What economic and cultural changes shaped the America that Riis wrote in? To what extent were they unpredictable? Finally, how did those changes shape Riis’ view of what made him an American? A perfect essay will have a clear thesis, and will be supported by specific examples.

**Week 4**  
The Age of Reform
February 12  Progressivism
February 14  Women’s Suffrage
February 16  Birth of Black Politics

**Reading:** Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 81-127

**Week 5**  
The Great War
February 19  The New Radicalism
February 21  The Great War
February 23  First Midterm Exam

**Reading:** Boyle, *Arc of Justice*, 1-169

**Week 6**  
Modern Times
February 26  “Birth of a Nation”
February 28  Great Migrations
March 2  The New Exclusion

**Reading:** Boyle, *Arc of Justice*, 170-346

**Short Paper #2 Due:** What explains the difference between Ossian Sweet’s experience in Detroit in the 1920s and Jacob Riis’ experience in New York four decades earlier? You answer should address not only the racial differences between the two men, but also the timing of their moves and the social, economic, and political changes occurring in the United States at each time.
Week 7  The New Deal Order  
March 5  The Great Depression  
March 7  Making a New Deal  
March 9  Limits of the New Deal  

Reading:  Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 128-237  

Week 8  World War II  
March 12  Mobilization and Migration  
March 14  The War Abroad  
March 16  The War at Home  

Reading:  Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial*, 1-133  

**Short Paper #3 Due:** In what respects were Japanese and German Americans treated differently during the Second World War and what accounts for those differences? Your answer should draw on Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial* and Gerstle, *American Crucible*, and should address the immediate causes of Japanese internment as well as the longer historical differences in treatment of European and Asian immigrants.  

Week 9  The Cold War  
March 19  Origins of the Cold War  
March 21  Hot Wars in the Cold War  
March 23  The Cold War at Home  

Reading:  Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 238-267  

Week 10  Affluent Society  
March 26  Reconversion and Stratification  
March 28  The Rise and Fall of Organized Labor  
March 30  Second Midterm Exam  

Reading:  Register, *Packinghouse Daughter*, 1-98  

Week 11  Spring Break  

Week 12  Cracks in the Order  
April 9  Women and Work in Postwar Society  
April 11  The Early Civil Rights Movement  
April 13  Birth of a Gay Identity  


**Short Paper #4 Due:** In what respects was Cheri Register’s life shaped by her status as a “packinghouse daughter,” and to what degree was she shaped by an effort to escape that status? How was her experience shaped by her race and gender?
### Week 13  **Challenging Liberalism**
- **April 16** The New Right
- **April 18** The New Left
- **April 20** The Vietnam War

**Reading:** Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 268-345

### Week 14  **The New World Order**
- **April 23** The Late Cold War
- **April 25** Crisis of the Global Economy
- **April 27** The End of History?

**Reading:** Mike Davis, *Magical Urbanism*, 1-82


### Week 15  **The Culture Wars**
- **April 30** The New Immigration
- **May 2** The “Family Crisis”
- **May 4** AIDS and Gay Liberation

**Reading:** Mike Davis, *Magical Urbanism*, 83-175

**Short Paper #5 Due:** Compare and contrast Americans’ reception of Mexican immigrants at the end of the 20th century with that of Eastern and Southern Europeans at the end of the 19th. What accounts for the similarities and differences?

### Week 16  **Globalization and its Discontents**
- **May 7** What is Globalization?
- **May 9** What Changed on 9/11?
- **May 11** Review

**Reading:** Gerstle, *American Crucible*, 268-345