

HISTORY 397: AMERICAN HISTORY 1914-1945

SPRING 2013

Instructor:

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Course Description: The period between 1914 and 1945 ranks among the most transformative periods in American history. In the span of three decades, America fought two world wars, suffered through the worst economic depression in the nation's history, and became a world superpower. Constitutional amendments granted women the right to vote, enacted and then repealed Prohibition, and facilitated the creation of the New Deal welfare state. It was also a period of turmoil and contradictions. African Americans challenged Jim Crow discrimination, even as Congress passed restrictive immigration laws and the eugenics movement flourished. In the 1930s the future of both capitalism and democracy looked bleak. Liberalism, represented by FDR's Democratic Party, faced criticism from the left and the right. And yet FDR won election four times and engineered a major realignment of the nation's voters. Amidst these dramatic social, economic, and political changes, modern America was born. Today we are still living with the legacies of this era. This course aims to place contemporary political debates in historical context. A familiar set of questions will guide our approach to the past: How active a role should the American government play in the lives of its citizens? In the nation's economy? Can the government serve powerful interests and the people at the same time? Does religion have a place in American politics? Finally, does America have a duty to democratize the world? And can it truly lead if it does not live up to its own values at home? The course will strive to train students to read, write, and think historically. While rooted in the discipline of history, this skill set has value beyond the study of history or even the humanities.

Assignments and Grading:

Participation: 20%

Midterm: 20%

Weekly Reading Responses: 10%

Biography Paper Proposal/Annotated Bibliography: 5%

Biography Paper: 20%

Final Exam: 25%

Participation: Students are expected to come to each lecture and section prepared. This includes arriving on time and ready to participate. Although attendance will not be taken in lecture, consistent absences will be noted and adversely affect your grade. Attendance and participation is required for all discussion sections and unexcused absences will result in a lower grade. TAs have full discretion to determine participation in their sections as they see fit and may include reading quizzes. Participation is 20% of the final grade.

Weekly Reading Responses: Students are required to write a total of 7 weekly reading responses throughout the semester or approximately one every other week. Students are free to choose which weeks to write responses but must complete 3 before the midterm. Responses should be 800 words and follow the format explained on the course page at Learn@UW. The responses will be worth 10% of the final grade.

Midterm: The midterm is a take home exam in the seventh week of the semester. It will consist of two short essay questions. Questions will be handed out in class on _____ and they will be due the following Wednesday before class begins. Once lecture starts, exams will be considered late. The midterm is worth 20% of the grade.

Biography Paper/ Research Proposal: Biography is at once one of the most basic and most complex genres of historical writing. For the major research paper students will select a historical personage and situate that individual's life in the larger themes of the course. This is NOT a book report or a simple summary of a person's life. Students will be expected to raise research questions, craft arguable thesis statements, and support these arguments using a variety of historical evidence. Students are encouraged to talk to the professor or teaching assistants for help in picking out a topic. Topics will be vetted in the research proposal phase. The research proposal is due during the fifth week of the semester and is worth 10% of the final grade. Students will submit a paragraph that summarizes the topic and questions the paper will attempt to answer, provide an annotated bibliography, and identify at least two primary documents that the students will use as evidence (a detailed template will be available). Final papers (worth 20% of the final grade) are 6-8 pages in length and are due during the fourteenth week of the course.

Final Exam: The final exam will consist of three essay questions to be handed out in class on May 8th and will be due one week later on May 15th. Two shorter questions (800 words max) will be devoted to material covered in the second half of the course. One longer question (1500 words max) will be cumulative and require an answer that draws on the entire span of the course. Hard copies of your responses should be turned into to the TAs in person by 5 p.m. on Wednesday May 15.

Required Course Texts:

Anthony J. Badger, *FDR: The First 100 Days* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2008).

Kevin Boyle, *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Civil Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age* (New York: Henry Holt, 2004).

Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (New York: Vintage, 1983).

Lizabeth Cohen, *Making A New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939*, 2nd Edition (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

John Milton Cooper Jr., *The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1985).

John Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Press, 1987).

David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

Edward J. Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

The above texts can be purchased at the bookstore. All other readings will be available in course packet or online in digital form on the Learn@UW course site.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Unit 1: America and the World in the Progressive Era

Wednesday (Jan 23): Course Introduction/ Overview

No reading.

Friday (Jane 25): Global Networks of the Progressive Era

Cooper, *The Warrior and the Priest*, 1-68.

Monday (Jan. 28) : The Ladies' Empire: Moral Reform, Social Work, and Suffragettes

Cooper, *The Warrior and the Priest*, 69-142.

Text for discussion sessions: Progressive Party Platform (1912)

Unit 2: Wilson's World

Wednesday (Jan. 30): The Professor Prevails: Wilson, Roosevelt, and the Progressive Presidency

Cooper, *The Warrior and the Priest*, 143- 228.

Friday (Feb. 1): Inside the Progressive Mind: Order vs. Chaos at Home and Abroad

Cooper, *The Warrior and the Priest*, 229-287.

Monday (Feb. 4): Neutrality, Preparedness, and the War for Democracy

Cooper, *The Warrior and the Priest*, 288- 323.

Kennedy, *Over Here*, 3-92

Text for discussion sections:

Unit 3: Over There, Over Here: America in WWI

Wednesday (Feb. 6): Admen, Progressives, and Industrialists: Mobilizing for Modern Warfare

Kennedy, *Over Here*, 93-143.

Friday (Feb. 8): Over There: The Doughboys in Europe.

Kennedy, *Over Here*, 144-218.

Monday (Feb. 11): Peace Without Victory or Victory Without Peace: Wilson's Last Stand

Kennedy, *Over Here*, 219-261.

Cooper, *The Warrior and the Priest*, 324-361.

Texts for discussion sections: Wilson's "14 Points" Address, Yerkes Army Mental Tests [excerpts] (1917).

Unit 4: 1919: Social Unrest in War and Peace

Wednesday (Feb. 13) : "Clear and Present Danger:" The Red Scare, Labor Unrest, and Civil Liberties in Wartime.

Kennedy, *Over Here*, 262-279.

Lizabeth Cohen, "Chicago: 1919-1920," in *Making a New Deal*, 11-52.

Friday (Feb. 15) : Making America Safe for Democracy: Racial Violence and The New Negro Movement

Kennedy, *Over Here*, 279-295.

Cameron McWhirter, *Red Summer: The Summer of 1919 and the Awakening of Black America*, 1-24, 114-148. (posted on Learn@UW)

Texts for discussion sections: W.E.B. Du Bois, "Close Ranks," *The Crisis*,

Unit 5: Americanization at Home and Abroad in the 1920s

Monday (Feb. 18) : No Room in the Melting Pot: The Unassimilables and the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act of 1924

Cohen, "Ethnicity in the New America," in *Making a New Deal*, 53-97.

Mai Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, 21-55. (posted on Learn@UW)

Wednesday (Feb. 20) : Weapons of the Strong: Credit, Food, and Mass Culture

Kennedy, *Over Here*, 296-347.

Cohen, "Encountering Mass Culture," in *Making a New Deal*, 99-158.

Friday: (Feb. 22) Ford's World: Industrial Democracy and American Efficiency

Greg Grandin, *Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Jungle City* (New York: Henry Holt, 2009), 1-20.

Cohen, "Contested Loyalty at the Workplace," in *Making a New Deal*, 159-211.

Text for discussion sections:

Unit 6: Religion

Monday (Feb. 25):

Larson, *Summer for the Gods*, 3-86.

Wednesday (Feb. 27) :

Larson, *Summer for the Gods*, 87-196.

Friday (Mar. 1):

Larson, *Summer for the Gods*, 197-266.

Week 7

Monday (Mar. 4): No Class.

Wednesday (Mar. 6) :

Friday (Mar. 8):

Week 8

Monday (Mar. 11) :

Wednesday (Mar. 13) :

Friday (Mar. 15):

Week 9

Monday (Mar. 18:

Wednesday (March 20):

Friday (March 22):

SPRING BREAK March 22-March 31

Reading Assignment: John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*

Week 10

Monday (Apr.1):

Wednesday (Apr. 3):

Friday (Apr. 5):

Week 11

Monday (Apr. 8):

Wednesday (Apr. 10):

Friday (Apr. 12):

Week 12

Monday (Apr. 15):

Wednesday (Apr. 17):

Friday (Apr. 19):

Week 13

Monday (Apr. 22):

Wednesday (Apr. 24):

Friday (Apr. 26)

Week 14

Monday (Apr. 29)

Wednesday (May 1):

Friday (May 3):

Week 15

Monday (May 6)

Wednesday (May 8): Final Exams Distributed in Class.

Friday (May 10): Last Day of Classes.