

History 102: American History, Civil War Era to the Present

MW, 4-5:15PM
2650 Mosse

The Stories We Tell Ourselves

History is about stories. We make sense of history through the framework of stories. What stories we choose to tell about ourselves, our families, our communities, our country, and ultimately the world matter. They matter because what we believe about the past and its stories guide us as we make choices now and in the future. Without understanding history, and especially the stories we tell ourselves from it, we cannot understand ourselves or others.

In this class we will explore the richness and messiness of American (and world) history since the Civil War. We will look closely at the stories people have told themselves, and the consequences of those narratives. Understanding those narratives, and how they differ over time and from different perspectives, will help us as we try and make sense of the world we have inherited and our place in it. Together we will see how stories about the past (and our past) matter, and hopefully gain an appreciation for history and our fundamental role in understanding and interpreting it.

Course Objectives

1. Learn how to identify personal, group, and national narratives and how they shape our understanding of history.
2. Learn how to identify and formulate historical questions.
3. Learn how to recognize, evaluate and think critically about historical arguments.
4. Learn how to evaluate sources and evidence.
5. Learn how to make historical, evidenced based arguments.
6. Have fun and maybe even your mind blown.

Course Mechanics

This class meets for two, 75-minute lecture periods and one 50 minute discussion period each week over the Spring semester. To meet the requirement of a 4-credit course it is expected that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, studying, etc) for about 3 hours for every class period.

My Office Hours are Mondays 2-3PM in Mosse 5265 or by appointment. (Zoom Office Hours are available upon request)

The Teaching Assistants for this course, their sections, and Office Hours are:

Emily Lobenstein: Office hours by appointment in Mosse 4269 or over Zoom

Section 301 Thursday 8:50-9:40 AM, Mosse 2631
Section 302 Thursday 9:55-10:45 AM, Mosse 2125
Section 303 Thursday 11:00-11:50 AM, Mosse 2125
Section 304 Thursday 12:05-12:55 PM Mosse 2121

Adrián Bermúdez Pérez: Office Hours Mondays 12-2PM in Mosse 4269 or over Zoom.

Section 305 Thursday 1:20-2:10 PM, Mosse 2231
Section 306 Thursday 2:25-3:15 PM, Mosse 2101
Section 307 Thursday 3:30-4:20 PM, Mosse 2111
Section 308 Thursday 4:35-5:25 PM, Mosse 2125

Readings

[American Yawp Online Textbook](#)

[Voices & Visions](#) Document Reader

Chapters and Articles (posted digitally to Canvas)

Primary Documents (posted digitally to Canvas)

Gaddis, John Lewis. *Surprise, Security, and the American Experience*. Harvard University Press, 2005.

(The only book you have to purchase for this course, or check out from the library or otherwise get a copy of, is the John Lewis Gaddis book. You can find it online for as cheap as five dollars)

Assignments

Top Hat/Lecture Participation (10%)
Weekly Reflection (15%)
Discussion Participation (15%)
Family History Story (5%)
Group Assignments (15%)
Reading Quizzes (weekly, drop the lowest two grades) (15%)
Document Analysis (10%)
Final (15%)

Top Hat/Lecture Participation (10%)

I will be using Top Hat during our Lecture periods. If you don't already have a Top Hat account, please follow this [knowledge base article](#) to sign up for one (it is free as long as you sign up with

your wisc.edu email). Once you have a Top Hat account, please log into the Canvas course and click on the Top Hat link in the course to register for my Top Hat course. Clicking on a link in Canvas is the only way to permanently enroll in the correct Top Hat course.

Your total grade for this category will include Top Hat question response and lecture attendance (Top Hat will be used to also take attendance). You are allowed 2 unexcused absences for the semester. Please contact me if you need to be absent from lecture for any reason.

Weekly Reflection/Discussion Assignment (15%)

This Discussion assignment should include three basic paragraphs. Each week pick one reading for the week to write about. The first paragraph should summarize the reading and its key arguments, the second paragraph should be about how it connects with a previous reading (this can be argument, theme, topic etc.) and the final paragraph should offer your critical assessment of the reading: What was most persuasive? What was least persuasive? Which are the issues and questions that need more attention and explanation? These must be posted to your discussion sections board **at least 24 hours before your discussion section**. The first reflection is due the first full week of classes (The week of January 30th). After that every other week you will get together with your Discussion Group and submit a group entry rather than an individual entry. You will alternate between individual and group submissions for the rest of the semester.

Discussion Participation (15%)

In addition to the weekly reflections, you are required to attend and participate in your discussion section. Your TA will lay out the expectations for your discussion sections. Your participation in discussion sections will account for 15% of your final grade.

Family History Story (5%)

What is the story of your family? We all have a story about ourselves and our family that helps us place ourselves and orient ourselves in the world. For example, one potential story is of religious immigrants who came to the US and who have achieved the American dream. Is the story of your family in America one centered on a specific ancestor? Is it one of successful immigration? Temporary immigration? Marginalized progress? Oppression and opportunity? Declining opportunity? What is the story(ies) you and your family tell about yourselves. Write out the story of yourself and your family, make it explicit. This should be at least one page, single spaced due the week before Spring Break (**Due by Friday, March 10th**)

Group Assignments (15%)

Group Op-Ed Assignment

1. Each student in the group needs to find one current op-ed piece (written in the last year in a major American news outlet). As a group, read and discuss each op-ed piece and vote on which one most convincingly uses historical evidence to help its argument. Submit a brief explanation, no more than one page, why your group considers it a strong candidate in comparison to all those submitted. (**Due Friday, March 10th**). Please also turn in a link or copy to each of the op-ed pieces considered.
2. Using the op-ed piece you have selected as a group analyze it using the lectures and readings from the course. Answer the following types of questions: Does the author give

an accurate historical representation of the issue? Or does he/she ignore the historical issues altogether? Does the author ignore issues of economics, gender, race or religion that are pertinent to the topic? Describe what kinds of changes you would make to the op-ed piece if you were writing it based on your historical study, and why you would make those changes. For this assignment, you are basically using the knowledge you have gained from the course to examine an author's viewpoint on an issue. Your group's analysis should be 2-3 pages in length. Please submit the original op-ed with your analysis. **(Due Friday, March 31st)**

Weekly Reflection Assignment:

This is the same as for the individual reflection assignment, except every other week you will write it as a group and submit it.

Discussion group assignments:

You may have various group activities and assignments based in your Discussion section.

Group Contribution Evaluation

Each person will fill out a peer assessment of each member of the group and grade them on their contribution to the group. We will, as a class, collaboratively build the form and template for assessing your peers. The evaluation will take place the final full week of classes.

Weekly Reading Quiz (15%)

You must take a reading quiz every week based on that week's readings. The quizzes will be available on Canvas and must be completed by the Wednesday Lecture of that week. For example, **your first reading quiz must be completed by Wednesday, February 1st at 4PM.** Your lowest two quiz scores will be dropped from your final grade.

Document Analysis (10%)

write a 3-page analysis of a document from the primary materials included with each lecture. (See the Canvas course site for each lecture.) Students will write an analytical essay that follows this format: Page 1: Describe the argument of the document and the purpose of its writer(s). Quote the most compelling phrases in the document, and explain their importance. Page 2: Contextualize the document. Explain what the document tells us about the time during which it was written. What do we learn about American society, politics, and culture from the chosen document? What do we learn about the hopes, fears, visions, and frustrations of the era during which the document appeared? Page 3: Critique the document. Describe inaccuracies, prejudices, exaggerations, and misleading statements in the document. Analyze how the document could have offered a more compelling account of the historical period. How could it tell us more about society, politics, and culture in the United States at that time? This assignment may be submitted at any time over the course of the semester but must be turned in **no later than Monday, April 24th.**

Final (15%)

For the final you can either continue your Family History Story and turn it into an essay or write a standard History Research Paper

Option 1: Family History Story

For the Family History Story Final place your story/your family's story in the broader context of US history. Does your family fit into a narrative about a specific wave of immigrants? Does your family have an agricultural history? Interrogate your family story using what you have learned about US history from this class. What connections do you see that you may not have seen before? Are there some hard truths unacknowledged in your family history? Work with your TA to find sources, articles, books etc. to help you contextualize your family story.

You can also narrow it down to a specific event or occurrence in your family history. For example, my grandfathers were both farmers during the implementation of the New Deal. One of them became a lifelong Democrat as a result, the other a lifelong Republican. Understanding the influence of FDR and the New Deal on my grandfathers is an important part of my Family Story. Pick one such moment, event, or occurrence and write a 5-7 page double spaced paper on it. You must use at least 3 academic sources not assigned in class. Paper must follow MLA Format for citations and contain footnotes.

Option 2: Traditional Research Paper

Pick an historical event, person, period, movement, etc. and write a research paper on it. Your paper must be 5-7 double spaced pages long, use 3 academic sources not assigned in class, use footnotes, and follow standard MLA format. Work with your TA to identify your topic and for help finding appropriate sources for your paper.

Whether you pick option 1 or option 2, you must go to your TAs office hours, have a conversation with them and **get your topic approved for your final paper by Monday, April 10th COB**. Your Final paper is due **Monday, May 8th by 11:59PM**.

Grading Scale

A (92.50+); AB (87.50-92.49); B (82.50-87.49); BC (77.50-82.49); C (69.50-77.49); D (60-69.49); F (Below 60)

Illness Policy

If you get sick you will have the opportunity to make up missed classes through alternative assignments created in consultation with the professor and TAs. No medical documentation of the illness will be required. Please take care of yourselves.

Privacy of Student Information, Digital Tools, and Learning Analytics

The privacy and security of faculty, staff and students' personal information is a top priority for UWMadison. The university carefully reviews and vets all campus-supported digital tools used to support teaching and learning, to help support success through [learning analytics](#), and to enable proctoring capabilities. UW-Madison takes necessary steps to ensure that the providers

of such tools prioritize proper handling of sensitive data in alignment with FERPA, industry standards and best practices.

Diversity & Inclusion Statement

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

This class, by nature of its content, will naturally lead to discussions about sensitive topics such as gender, race, sexuality, religion, violence, and political persuasions. We will learn how to share opinions and offer arguments that not everyone will, or should, agree with. No matter what is expressed, we will all be respectful, open, and welcoming to all viewpoints and experiences. There will be no tolerance for bullying, pejoratives, verbal or physical abuse, or intimidation of any kind. If there is any behavior you find threatening or intimidating, please come talk to me so we can make the course more welcoming and inclusive.

Academic Integrity Statement

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform instructors [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Instructors [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#))

Additional Resources

THE HISTORY LAB: A resource center where experts (Ph.D. students) will assist you specifically with your history related courses and papers. No matter your stage in the writing process — choosing a topic, conducting research, composing a thesis, outlining your argument, revising your drafts — the History Lab staff can help you sharpen your skills and become a more successful writer. Schedule a one-on-one consultation at <http://go.wisc.edu/hlab>.

THE WRITING CENTER: Another writing resource on campus that provides one-on-one consultations with students to assist them with writing assignments. The writing center is open to all courses (not only history related ones). You can find more information about hours & how to schedule an appointment on their website: <http://www.writing.wisc.edu/index.html>.

SOFTWARE TRAINING FOR STUDENTS: A great resource for learning how to use pretty much any software or technology available to students from Canvas, to Zoom, to Excel, to R, to the Adobe Suite. You sign up for workshops or for 1-on-1 help depending on your needs. And it is all free for students. Find more info, sign up for a consultation or a workshop on their website: <https://sts.doit.wisc.edu/>

Course Schedule

(Note: This is a living syllabus and is meant to be a mostly finished draft of what we are reading and doing when. With that said, I reserve the right to change assigned readings and other materials when and if I find new materials that better fit the objectives of the course, or if during our course sessions we collectively decide we need to learn more about a particular subject, topic, event etc. I promise to not make any unreasonable changes and to make all changes in consultation with the TAs and you the students)

Week One

Readings: Syllabus

January 25th *Introduction*, *Syllabus Review*, *Course Expectations etc.*

Week Two

Readings, “Reconstruction” *American Yawp* (AY); “How the Germans Became White Southerners”; Eric Foner *Reconstruction*, pgs. 281-316.

Assignments: Weekly Reflection (Due Wednesday, Feb 1st); Reading Quiz (Due Wednesday, Feb 1st by 4PM)

Jan 30th *America Through The Civil War*

February 1st *Reconstruction* (This will be a virtual class and take place on Zoom)

Week Three

Readings: “Capital and Labor” (AY); “The West” (AY), “To Domesticate and Civilize Wild Indians”

Assignments: Weekly Reflection (Due Wednesday, Feb 8th); Reading Quiz (Due Wednesday, Feb 8th by 4PM)

February 6th *Reconstruction and “Redemption” America’s unfinished Revolution*

February 8th *Evolution, Social Darwinism and Modernity: Gender, Culture and Society in late 19th century America*

Week Four

Readings: “Life in Industrial America” (AY); “American Empire” (AY); Michael Kazin, *Populist Persuasion*, “The Righteous Commonwealth of the Late 19th Century,” pgs. 1-7, 27-46.

Assignments: Weekly Reflection (Due Wednesday, Feb 15th); Reading Quiz (Due Wednesday, Feb 15th by 4PM)

February 13th *The United States and the International System*

February 15th *Labor and Capital in a Gilded Age*

Week Five

Readings: “The Progressive Era” (AY), “WW I and its Aftermath” (AY); “The Antiracist Origin of the Quota System”; Searching for [Lutiant](#)

Assignments: Weekly Reflection (Due Wednesday, Feb 22nd); Reading Quiz (Due Wednesday, Feb 22nd by 4PM)

February 20th *WWI and the Progressives at Home and Abroad*

February 22nd *The Aftermath*

Week Six

Readings: “The New Era” (AY); “The Great Depression” (AY): David Kennedy, *The American People in the Great Depression*, pgs. 160-177, 190-202.

Assignments: Weekly Reflection (Due Wednesday, Mar 1st); Reading Quiz (Due Wednesday, Mar 1st by 4PM)

February 27th *The Great Depression*

March 1st *The New Deals*

Week Seven

Readings: “WW II” (AY); *Why the Allies Won*, pgs. 314-327; Gary Gerstle, “Preface” and Chapter 5, “Good War, Race War.”

Assignments: Weekly Reflection (Due Wednesday, Mar 8th); Reading Quiz (Due Wednesday, Mar 8th by 4PM); Family History Story (Due Friday, March 10th); Group Op-Ed Assignment Part One (Due Friday, March 10th)

March 6th *The Origins and Fighting of WWII*

March 8th *WW II and the Postwar World*

Spring Break

Week Eight

Readings: “The Cold War” (AY); “The Affluent Society” (AY); Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight*, Preface, pgs. 1-19, 106-144.

Assignments: Weekly Reflection (Due Wednesday, Mar 22nd); Reading Quiz (Due Wednesday, Mar 22nd by 4PM)

March 20th *The Origins of the Cold War. The “Third World” and Decolonization.*

March 22nd *The Affluent Society and the Rise of the New Right*

Week Nine

Readings: “The 60s” (AY); Phillip Caputo *Rumor of War*, preface and pgs. 307-337.

Assignments: Weekly Reflection (Due Wednesday, Mar 29th); Reading Quiz (Due Wednesday, Mar 29th by 4PM); Group Op-Ed Assignment Part 2 (Due Friday, March 31st)

March 27th *The Second Reconstruction or Reconstruction Continued*

March 29th *Anti-Communism and the Vietnam War*

Week Ten

Readings: “The Unraveling” (AY); “Amalgamation and Hypodescent: The Question of Ethnoracial Mixture in the History of the United States”;

Assignments: Weekly Reflection (Due Wednesday, Apr 7th); Reading Quiz (Due Wednesday, Apr 5th by 4PM)

April 3rd *The Global Disruption of 1968*

April 5th *From Goldwater to the Reagan Revolution*

Week Eleven

Readings: “The Triumph of The Right” (AY); “The Women of SNCC: Struggle, Sexism, and the Emergence of Feminist Consciousness, 1960-66”; “The Relationship Between the “Invisibility” of African American Women in the American Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s and Their Portrayal in Modern Film”

Assignments: Weekly Reflection (Due Wednesday, Apr 14th); Reading Quiz (Due Wednesday, Apr 12th by 4PM)

April 10th *Feminism and Civil Rights the Ongoing Struggle*

April 12th *The End of the Cold War, the End of History*

Week Twelve

Readings: “Sex, Secularism and Religious Influence in US Politics”

Assignments: Weekly Reflection (Due Wednesday, Apr 21st); Reading Quiz (Due Wednesday, Apr 19th by 4PM)

April 17th *Globalization, its Pitfalls and Promises*

April 19th *America in Crisis?: From the Election of 2000 to September 11th*

Week Thirteen

Readings: David Hendrickson, *Union, Nation, or Empire*, pgs. 3-22; John Lewis Gaddis, *Surprise Security and the American Experience*;

Assignments: Weekly Reflection (Due Wednesday, Apr 28th); Reading Quiz (Due Wednesday, Apr 26th by 4PM); Document Analysis (Due no later than Monday, April 24th)

April 24th *The Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and The War on Terror*

April 26th *The Rise of the Tech Gods*

Week Fourteen

Readings: “The Recent Past” (AY); [New Gilded Age](#), [A Second Gilded Age?](#), [Myth of a Second Gilded Age](#)

Assignments: Weekly Reflection (Due Wednesday, May, 3rd); Reading Quiz (Due Wednesday, May 3rd by 4PM); Final (Due Monday, May 10th)

Monday, May 1st *Populism in an Age of Polarization*

Wednesday, May 3rd *The End of Globalization and the International Order: Democracy v. Authoritarianism at Home and Abroad*