HISTORY 102:
A History of the United States since 1865

Course Meetings (Lecture):
Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00-12:15
5208 Sewell Social Sciences Building

Instructor:
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Office Hours:
Thursday, 1:00-3:00 PM, or by appointment

Teaching Assistants:
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"American Gothic" by
Grant Wood, 1930

"American Gothic" by
Gordon Parks, 1942

Welcome to History 102!

This is an introductory course focused on the history of the United States since 1865. It likely will not be similar to a history class like the ones you took in high school. (It at least is not similar to the ones I had when I was in high school!) In our time together, we'll be exploring and analyzing the history of this country's past 150+ years, focusing especially on the significant social, political, cultural, and economic shifts that changed it, rechanged it repeatedly, and made it into the one we inhabit now. This history is multidimensional, multiracial, multiethnic, multigender, and since the United States has never existed in a vacuum, and because it has shaped and been shaped by the rest of the world, transnational.

Among the core animating questions we'll be grappling with is this: *What does it mean to be an American*? All of us may come into the semester with different thoughts as to how to answer that question; some of us may come into the semester having not really thought about it at all. This course will, hopefully, cause each of us to consider that question more deeply, particularly since we sit at a moment in history in which answers to that question seem evermore contentious. With that in mind, we will be especially attentive this semester to what it's meant for people of different backgrounds—including immigrants, racial and ethnic minorities, women, queer people, servicemembers, industrial workers and farmers—to grapple with that question.

Course Aims and Description

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- Identify important patterns, processes, events, people, and places in U.S. history since 1865
- Formulate arguments about change over time
- Evaluate arguments about history
- Determine what constitutes reliable and valid evidence
- Interpret, compare, and contrast primary sources
- Think critically about how the narratives about the past are constructed and told

We will also be considering how the history we are studying shapes the world in which we live, and, as stated above, creating space for students from various backgrounds to think more actively about what it means and has meant to be an American.

While we will cover important names, dates, and events, our primary attentions will be paid to *interpreting those pieces of data in the interests of assembling a more complete picture of American history*. In other words, we will be less concerned with memorizing minutiae than with better understanding history and the human experience. You've probably heard the adage about not seeing the forest for the trees. The trees matter. But so does the forest.

The course meets three times weekly. Two of these meetings involve all of us meeting together in the lecture hall for interactive lectures. "Interactive lectures" will look different from one period to the next, but in general, much of the period will involve me presenting you with a story and analysis of a particular period in history while also periodically asking for your thoughts. The third meeting of the week will be a small group discussion section led by one of our class's fantastic Teaching Assistants. Those sessions will be your opportunity to engage your peers in dialogue about the week's readings and how they relate to the lecture material. You will receive a separate syllabus from your TA that lays out the parameters of and their expectations for discussion sections, but please understand that you attending *and being an active participant in* discussion sections is a crucial part of your final grade. <u>Please be aware that part of participating in discussion sections will involve you also engaging in discussion threads on Canvas in advance of class so that your TA can have a</u>

sense of how to guide discussion. Participating in those Canvas conversations will be an important part of your overall discussion grade, but cannot serve as a substitute for regular attendance and participation in classroom discussions themselves.

Course Credit Information

As a four-credit class, we meet as groups both big (lecture) and small (discussion) for roughly four hours per week. The class carries the expectation that you will spend two hours outside of class on course-learning activities (reading, writing, studying, etc) for every hour of classroom time. In other words, you should allot roughly eight hours of work for this course per week *outside of the classroom,* in addition to the time you spend inside the classroom.

Course Evaluation

Students will be graded on attendance and participation in discussion sections, one short paper, an in-class midterm exam, and a final exam. A small percentage of your grade will also be dedicated to lecture attendance.

I do give some extra credit opportunities throughout the semester (mostly to history-related events and lectures that pop up on the campus calendar), but these aren't intended to replace any of your normal work. If you are closely reading this syllabus and would like to receive one point of extra credit at the semester's start, send me a brief email (sebalto@wisc.edu) by 5:00 PM on Tuesday, September 10 recommending one song that you've been enjoying lately. Don't send links or files; just the artist's name and song title.

A note on lecture attendance: This class has no textbook, thus making regular attendance at lecture sessions absolutely imperative for student success. As such, attendance will be taken at all lecture sessions. That said, the world is a complicated place, and we are living at a complicated time. If you become ill with COVID or some other ailment, need to care for someone who is similarly ill, or have other emergencies arise, we will accommodate you and consider these to be *excused* absences. But it's very important in such a circumstance that you communicate with me and your TA as soon as you can and as regularly as you can so that we can collaboratively formulate a plan. Absences that are unaccounted for (as in, you don't let us know the reason for them) or are attributable to things like vacation, needing to do other coursework, and so on are *unexcused*. You may have two unexcused absences from lecture over the course of the semester. Beyond two, your grade will suffer.

Papers: There will be one paper (of roughly four pages, double-spaced) in this class, due in November and dealing with the experiences of people of Japanese descent whom the United States government interned in camps during World War II. This paper will ask you to make use of Satsuki Ina's *The Poet and the Silk Girl* (one of our two required books for the semester), lecture material, and primary sources that we will make available to you. A more specific prompt will be distributed closer to that time. These essays will be evaluated for content, coherence, argument, and style. Make sure you're turning in something that you're proud of. Further details about my expectations for the papers will be included with the prompts.

Late Papers: Papers that are turned in late will be penalized 5% for each day that they are late. That said, stuff happens; if you know you're going to miss the deadline for urgent reasons, it's imperative that you contact myself and your TA as soon as possible so that we can strategize a plan.

Exams: Specifics of the exam formats will be discussed closer to the time of the exams. I'll say this, though: the exams will focus far more on students interpreting and analyzing history (i.e. short essays) than in rote memorization (i.e. multiple choice). Exams are not graded for grammar, style, etc. The final exam is not cumulative, meaning that it will be primarily about things that we have discussed since the midterm, although there will be connections between the semester's two halves that will be obvious to you.

Discussion section: As noted above, your TAs will provide you with a separate syllabus (prepared in consultation with me) explaining their expectations for discussion section. Please note that your attendance in and participation at discussion sections (including regularly doing Canvas work before sections meet) is tied with the final exam for the most significant part of your grade. This is because it's where you have the greatest opportunity to develop your ideas, demonstrate your knowledge and analytic growth and skill, etc. It's crucial.

Grading: There are 500 total possible points in this class.

FINAL EXAM:	125 points
MIDTERM EXAM:	100 points
PAPER:	100 points
DISCUSSION SECTION:	125 points
LECTURE ATTENDANCE:	50 points

Grading Scale (number of points out of 500 for specific end-of-semester letter grade):

A: 462+	AB: 437-461	B: 412-436
BC: 387-435	C: 347-386	D: 300-346
	F: below 300	

Notes on Classroom Etiquette, Technology, etc.

Part of being in a college classroom is getting yourself ready for standards of decorum and conduct that govern most post-collegiate employment settings. You're not in your dorm/apartment/the library once you step foot within the four walls of our classrooms. You're in a place where you are expected to be attentive and to be respectful to everyone around you.

Q: So, what does that mean?

A: For one, it means being responsible with how you use technology. There are reams of data that show that students who take notes by hand retain information better and get better grades than students who take them on their laptop or tablet. (See THIS and THIS and THIS, etc.) This makes sense – the internet is a temptation and attention-suck that humans have seldom before experienced *en masse*. I would like to tell you that you shouldn't use your laptop at all in class, but I'll leave that to your discretion. Regardless, I will say that laptops are allowed in class for note-taking purposes only. Do not do work for your other classes during our class sessions. Stay off TikTok and Instagram. Stay off email. Stay off whatever new social media platforms have emerged in the days since I write this and which I'm far too old to be hip to. In short, use your computers appropriately, or don't use them at all. I reserve the right to transition to a computer-free classroom, if necessity warrants.

Q: Texting during class is cool, right?

A: No. *Cell phones are not allowed at all.* Used properly, laptops have a justifiable use in class. Phones do not. If you're on your phone during class, I'll ask you to leave for the rest of the session and request that you meet with me individually to discuss a plan for how you're going to avoid doing it again. No one wants this, so please make sure we don't have to deal with it.

Q: How should I interact with the people around me?

A: Simple. *Be good to each other*. Central to this course are issues of citizenship, racism, sexism, political radicalism (both "right-wing" and "left-wing"), labor and capital conflict, discrimination, violence, struggle, power, failure, exploitation, and achievement. Indeed, to say it once more, an animating theme of the course is what it has meant at various historical junctures and for various American peoples *to be American*. At least some of it will likely seem controversial in various ways to pretty much all of you. That's a good thing. College is meant to challenge you and the things you think you know and believe. Debate each other during discussion sections. Debate with me in office hours. I want everyone to feel free to express their opinions, so long as those opinions are well-informed and delivered with honest intentions.

That does not come with a free pass, however. We all – me, you, your TAs – are in various stages of figuring our imperfect selves out, and it's important to respect one another. Controversial or contrarian arguments are welcome. Racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, etc, are not. Think about what you're saying and how others might react to it before you say it. This is not about "having to be politically correct" or "woke." It's "being a functional adult in a pluralistic society."

A Note on Voting

As you are likely aware, this semester we are in the thick of a major election season, for local, state, and federal offices. One of the core elements of any discussion of American history is the historical significance and ongoing importance of American democracy, however imperfect the democratic experiment has been. I urge everyone who is eligible to vote to get registered to do so, and make a plan to do so on or before Election Day, which this year is on Tuesday, November 5. For information on how to register, how and where to vote, etc., visit https://vote.wisc.edu. You may also find it useful to visit the Morgridge Center for Public Service's BadgersVote page, which among other things has a list of upcoming events that includes where BadgersVote volunteers will be posted up registering people to vote across campus: https://morgridge.wisc.edu/get-connected-students/badgersvote/

Course Readings

There are two required books for this course. These may be purchased new or used (if available) at the campus bookstore, or wherever else books are sold. UW Libraries also has copies, though in limited quantity. Readings are due on the date that they appear on the syllabus.

1) Clint Smith, *How the Word is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America* (New York: Little, Brown, 2021)
2) Satsuki Ina, *The Poet and the Silk Girl: A Memoir of Love, Imprisonment, and Protest* (Berkeley: Heyday, 2024)

In addition to these books, there will be numerous short additional readings. These will be primary sources (letters, newspaper articles, journals, and so on from the time period in which they were created) and are available free either from *The American Yawp Reader* – an online accompaniment to *The American Yawp* textbook – or some other open source site. All of those readings are linked via hyperlink below.

Two Notes on Email

1) I do my best to respond to emails in a timely fashion, and usually do so. Understand, however, that responses to emails that you send in the evening or over the weekend may not be returned until the next business day. (For example, if you email me on Friday

evening, please don't expect a response until Monday morning. If you'd consider the matter to be an emergency, please type URGENT in the subject line of the email.)

2) You should craft your own emails in a way that models professional courtesy. It's a good practice to be in. These are not text messages, and should include a salutation (i.e. "Dear Professor Balto") and a closing (i.e. "Sincerely, [your name]"). Very soon, you will be using email to communicate with potential employers, colleagues, etc. Start honing the skill now.

Academic Conduct

Students are expected to adhere to the University of Wisconsin's policies concerning academic integrity. Cheating can lead to all manner of unpleasantries, up to and including expulsion from the university. Any student found to be cheating or plagiarizing will be held accountable according to UW's standards. If you have *any question whatsoever* as to something you're doing may constitute plagiarism, *please ask*. I will not hold it against you if you're worried that you might be plagiarizing and want to check before turning something in. Once you turn it in, however, I'm contractually obligated to follow university procedures. Let's opt for safe over sorry.

For more information, the resources at the following page from the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards may be helpful: https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-misconduct/

Use of AI

Artificial Intelligence programs like ChatGPT and the like are an ever-increasing presence in our lives, for both better and for worse. When applied well and in the right circumstances, they can be tremendously useful as learning tools. In other contexts, they can radically hamper our capacities to learn if we use them as a substitute for our own critical thinking and knowledge production. If we, for example, are asked to write an original essay about the causes and consequences of the Civil War, and outsource that to ChatGPT rather than thinking about the question and writing an answer for ourselves, what have we really learned? The answer, beyond how to use ChatGPT, is "basically nothing."

In that spirit, and for purposes of History 102 this semester, I see little to no contexts in which AI can be used by students in a way that's beneficial to the overall learning goals of the course as those goals are laid out earlier in this syllabus. *Using AI programs (including but not limited to ChatGPT) is thus not allowed for assignments that you turn in in this class, because the theoretical benefits of AI run contrary to our goals in this class.* Submitting work that makes use of such programs is thereby considered cheating, runs afoul of the academic standards described in the above section, and will be treated accordingly.

Disability Services

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of disability or ongoing illness, please contact me as soon as possible. UW's McBurney Center office coordinates services for students with disabilities; I will work collaboratively with the Center and students in need of accommodation to provide necessary accommodations. The McBurney Center's website, including their contact information, is here: https://mcburney.wisc.edu/

The History Lab

The History Department at UW offers resources to students through the History Lab that are intended to help you write like a historian. It's staffed by experienced graduate students who can help you form thesis statements and arguments, adopt correct citational practices, and so on. This

would be a very, very good resource to tap into when you're working on your paper later in the term.

Writing Center

You are also encouraged to utilize the services available to you via UW's Writing Center, which offers wonderful resources and coaching for writers, regardless of self-perceived skill level. The Center (housed in Helen C. White, but with online options also available and satellite locations across campus) offers one-on-one consultation to students to help improve their abilities as writers. Consider consulting with them when planning and writing your papers. Services are free, and constitute a truly invaluable resource for everyone on campus. Visit the Center here for more information: https://writing.wisc.edu/

UW-Madison's Institutional Statement on Diversity

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.

Statement on Recording Lectures and other Classroom Content

My lectures for History 102 are protected intellectual property, per the policy of the University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents. What does this mean? For one, it means that you are not authorized to record my lectures or other classroom content, whether by video or audio. The exception is if you are a student with a qualifying disability that requires accommodation as determined by the McBurney Center. It also means that you are not allowed to sell notes that you take in class; those are for your personal use only (or for collaborative study purposes with your peers who are also enrolled in this class). It means that you are not allowed to record classroom lectures or discussions and distribute them, whether by posting them online or selling them to any organization. Failure to comply with these guidelines constitutes copyright infringement and is susceptible to discipline under university policy.

Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change, depending upon our collective needs and the flow of the semester.

(Note: Lecture titles derive from words, phrases, and sentences that people in the moment used in talking about the times in which they were living.)

Week 1: Telling American Histories

Thursday, Sep 5: Course Introduction: Why Study American History?

Reading

Smith, *How the Word is Passed*, pages 3-84 (**NOTE:** you will not be asked to discuss these chapters in week 1's discussion sections, but we recommend reading this far in week 1 so that you are prepared to hit the ground running for discussion in week 2)

Week 2: The Union after the Fall
Tuesday, Sep 10: "What this Cruel War Was Over": Slavery and the American Civil War
Thursday, Sep 12: "Freedom or its Shadow?:" The Promises and Problems of Reconstruction

Reading (to be completed by the time of discussion section this week)
Smith, *How the Word is Passed*, pages 85-206
"Jourdan Anderson Writers His Former Enslaver" (1865)

Week 3: A New Nation?
Tuesday, Sep 17: "Let Us Have Peace": Reconciliation, Redemption, and the Forging of a New (Old) America
Thursday, Sep 19: "Manifest Destiny": Money, Labor, and Land

Reading (to be completed by the time of discussion section this week)
Smith, *How the Word is Passed*, 207-290

Week 4: Clearing "the Frontier," Colonizing the West
Tuesday, Sep 24: "When the Earth Shakes": The Ordeals and Survivals of Native Americans
Thursday, Sep 26: **NO LECTURE.** In lieu of lecture, watch the documentary *Bad River*, which is streaming here: https://play.xumo.com/free-movies/bad-river/XM0HRGCYFSTLRW. (Apologies for the ad breaks, which are repetitive.) **Note: the documentary is required**

Listen (to be completed by the time of discussion section this week)
https://www.thisamericanlife.org/479/little-war-on-the-prairie

Week 5: Life in a Gilded Age
Tuesday, Oct 1: "A Revolution So Complete:" Industrial Capitalism, Immigration, and the Melting Pot
Thursday, Oct 4: "A Nation of Slaves?": Populism, Unionism, and the Meanings of Class

Reading (to be completed by the time of discussion section this week)
Andrew Carnegie's Gospel of Wealth (1889)
The "Omaha Platform" of the People's Party (1892)

Week 6: Expansion and Repression
Tuesday, Oct 8: "The Game of Grab": The Spanish-Filipino-American War, the Expansion of U.S. Global Power, and Reverberations on the Home Front
Thursday, Oct 10: 'Hellhounds' and Jurists: Legalizing and Enforcing White Supremacy

Reading (to be completed by the time of discussion section this week)
Ida B. Wells, "Lynch Law in America" (1900)
Theodore Roosevelt on "The New Nationalism" (1910)

Week 7: Progress?
Tuesday, Oct 15: "Supreme Possibilities": The Ambitions and Accomplishments of Progressivism

Thursday, Oct 17: "Over Here and Over There": World War I, at Home and Abroad

Reading (to be completed by the time of discussion section this week)
Driehaus Museum, "World's Fair Puck"
Ehrhart/Dalrymple, "Columbia's Easter Bonnet" (do image analysis)

Week 8: Human Movements, Human Struggles
Tuesday, Oct 22: "The Warmth of Other Suns": Migration, Immigration, Prohibition, and the Nation on the Eve of Depression
Thursday, Oct 24: **MIDTERM EXAM (IN CLASS)**

Reading
None
***Note: No discussion sections this week**

Week 9: New Problems, New Deals
Tuesday, Oct 29: "A Nameless Dread Hangs Over": The American People and the Great Depression
Thursday, Oct 31: "A Re-Appraisal of Values": The New Deal and American Society

Reading
Satsuki Ina, *The Poet and the Silk Girl* (pages TBD)

Week 10: War and Fallout
Tuesday, Nov 5: "Ours to Fight For": World War II
Thursday, Nov 7: "Toward the American Ideals": Reconversion and the Nation the War Made

Reading (to be completed by the time of discussion section this week)
Charles A. Lindbergh, "America First" (1941)
Satsuki Ina, *The Poet and the Silk Girl* (pages TBD)
Visit (to be done before discussion section this week)
Visit the Wisconsin Veterans Museum (30 W. Mifflin St, where State Street ends at the Capitol Square). You may tour the whole museum if you like (it's free, and important), but definitely spend some time at the exhibit focused on World War II. You will be asked to discuss your impressions of the exhibit in a discussion post. One way to successfully do that is to focus on one or two objects from the WWII section that seem particularly meaningful or interesting to you.

Week 11: New World, New Dilemmas
Tuesday, Nov 12: **NO CLASS**
Thursday, Nov 14: "No Sense of Decency": The Growing Cold War & the Police of the World

Reading
Joseph McCarthy Speech at Wheeling, West Virginia, February 1950
Judith Adkins, "'These People are Frightened to Death': Congressional Investigations and the Lavender Scare" (NOTE: please look through documents embedded in the article, as well as reading the article)

Week 12: Rights and Revolts

Tuesday, Nov 19: "Move on Over or We'll Move on Over You": The Civil Rights Movement in America

Thursday, Nov 21: "We Gotta Get Out of this Place": The Vietnam War at Home and Abroad

Reading

Reading (to be completed by the time of discussion section this week)

Testimonials Surrounding the Bombing of Sterling Hall at UW

Watch (to be completed by the time of discussion section this week)

The War at Home

PAPERS ON JAPANESE INTERNMENT DUE BY 5:00 PM FRIDAY, NOV. 22.

Week 13: New Lefts

Tuesday, Nov 26: "The Times They Are a'Changin'": The New Left in America

Thursday, Nov 28: **NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK**

Reading

The Port Huron Statement (1962)

National Organization for Women, "Statement of Purpose" (1966)

Native Americans Occupy Alcatraz (1969)

***Note: No discussion sections this week**

Week 14: New Eras

Tuesday, Dec 3: "Something's Happening to People Like Me": The World the Sixties Wrought, and the "Malaise" of the 1970s

Thursday, Dec 5: "Morning Again in America": The Reagan Revolution and the Recalibration of American Politics

Reading (to be completed by the time of discussion section this week)

Statement of AIDS Patients (1983)

Pat Buchanan on the Culture War (1992)

Week 15: Into the Present

Tuesday, Dec 10: Meditations

Final Exam: Monday, Dec. 16, 2:45-4:45 PM