



History 118-39875
History of the United States
from 1877
Tu-Th, 9:35-11 AM
Room 30-12
Paul Rittman, Instructor
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Course Description:

A survey of the history of the United States from 1877 to the present. The course will focus on economic, political and social history in order to understand the causal factors that created the United States.

Textbook:

Tindall, George Brown, and David E. Shi. *America: A Narrative History*, Vol. 2. Brief ed. 8th ed. Norton, 2009.

Availability:

I will be available to talk to students before and after the class meets. If you have a question that you would like feedback on during the week, feel free to email me at the above email address. **When you email me, please let me know your class number, 118, as well as the class days/times.** This way I can know which file to open up to look up any information you are requesting. If you want your email responded to in a timely fashion, please make sure that you are requesting information that isn't already in the syllabus, and are including the class information. I do maintain a list of student emails. **If you would like to be included whenever I email something to the class, come up to me before/after a class and enter it into the class spreadsheet I maintain.**

Withdrawal Policy:

February 24 is the last day to drop this class without receiving a "W grade. Excessive absences (at any time in the semester) will result in the student being dropped. If you are going to be absent from class *for an extended period of time*, please email me.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of the course the student can:

1. Analyze causal variables that led to the historical development of the United States between 1870 and the early 21st Century.
2. Compare and contrast various eras of US history since 1876 and explain their historical commonalities and differences.

3. Critically analyze how issues of race and gender were affected by both the economic and political development of the United States from 1870 to the present.
4. Explain how global economic cycles have historically affected not only the economy of the United States, but also its political responses.
5. Recognize, identify and discuss the political, economic, social, diplomatic and intellectual development of the United States from 1870 to the present.

Grading:

Final grades will be allotted according to the following percentage scale:

A	90%
B	80%
C	70%
D	60%
F	below 60%

The different types of assignments are given below, with the percentage points assigned to each category. All assignments will be given a grade, and then factored in according to the following ratios, to determine the final semester grade.

Tests	40% (20% each for the midterm and final)
Essays	40% (20% each for the first essay and second essay)
Essay outline	5%
Participation	15%

Tests

The tests will call for short- and long-answer responses. We will have two such tests during the semester. The final will cover only the material since the midterm. These tests are designed to take up an entire 80-minute class period. The tests will cover material primarily from lectures and class handouts. Long-answer responses will be worth 80% of the test grade; short-answer questions will be worth 20% of the test grade.

No electronic media are allowed at all during tests—no cell phones, no mp3 players, no cds or headsets at all. If a student is caught looking at printed materials, or on another student's exam, their test will be given an automatic zero, regardless of whether they choose to continue taking that test or not. When taking any test, you will need to put any papers, books, or other materials inside a closed binder, folder, or backpack. Once I pass out the midterm and final exam, students must remain in the room to take it. If or when they leave (to answer a cell phone, go to the bathroom, or for any other reason) the test is considered finished and must be turned in to the teacher. Students who fall into any of these categories will not be given extra time to complete that particular exam, nor will they be allowed to make up the exam at a later point in time.

The instructor will provide paper to write out the midterm and final exams on. I strongly suggest that students bring **pens to write with**.

If a student responds to more than the required number of test questions, they should cross out the one(s) that they don't want graded; otherwise, which responses get graded for the exam will be determined by me (class instructor).

Essays

There will be two essays assigned during the semester. Both essays need to be 1200 words (roughly four pages) long. This number includes only the text of the essay itself, not the heading or the works cited page. A recommended division of the essay is a half-page introduction, a three-page body, and a half-page conclusion. Essays must be typed in 12-point type and double-spaced; decorative fonts and script fonts are not allowed.

Essays are an excellent way to learn more about a topic that you are personally interested in. Additionally, essay writing develops your critical thinking skills—you learn to discern what points and issues will support your main thesis, as well as (possibly) examine different explanations, and decide which is most valid.

The essays are **research** essays—assignments whereby you research your topic, and combine the information you have gleaned, with your own opinions and conclusions. As such, essays written essentially of your own opinions or beliefs will be severely downgraded. The idea here is to develop research skills, including not only reading, but also the assimilating different bits of information and viewpoints. If you simply write four pages on everything you already know about your topic, you don't develop those skills.

If you choose to write an essay on a topic covered in class, make sure that your essay goes well beyond what was covered in class; essays that simply repeat classroom lectures or readings will be downgraded to the degree that this happens.

As research essays, they need to reference in the text at least 3 books or articles, in MLA format. Place your full citations on their own page, at the end of your essay (in the same document)—do not create a new document for your works cited. **Essays that place the works cited on a separate document will be penalized.** These three sources are not to include class handouts, notes, the textbook, or Wikipedia (or any of its derivative websites).

The essays need to cover a person that lived, or a specific event that occurred, within the content area and time frame of this class: United States from 1877 to the present time. An event is going to have a definite starting and ending point, and would be something like a war or battle, an invention or discovery of something, a demonstration, meeting, or convention, the enacting of a law, to give only a few examples.

The subject of the essay cannot be something vague and drawn out, like the Industrial Revolution, or movements like women's suffrage. Students tend to struggle with vague topics like this. If you would like to pursue such a topic, modify it to be, for example, an inventor in the Industrial Revolution; or a person who was important in a movement, or that person's arguments for their issue. For example, instead of writing on the Industrial Revolution, look at the life and inventions of James Watt or Thomas Edison; instead of writing on the women's suffrage movement, write about the work of Susan B. Anthony, or arguments she made. The reason why I am insisting on a specific event or the life of an individual, is that when students try to tackle broader issues like this, they typically lose focus, throw

in a few sentences on this and that, and I get the impression that not much learning has taken place. This principle also keeps students from roaming into areas that would be better off in a political science class, such as current events and problems. Essays that violate this rule will be returned and not graded; students will be allowed to submit a substitute essay which will incur a late penalty.

If you are in any way unsure as to whether your topic fits these parameters, ask the instructor.

Covering individuals or events that spilled over the boundaries of this class is acceptable, as long as your essay still stays within the time period of our class.

Essays written before this semester started, or submitted to other classes, are not acceptable.

Format

I do require both 4-page essays to be turned in digitally (via my email address on the first page), as an attachment (not in the body of the email itself). One of the reasons for insisting on a digital copy is for catching plagiarism. **I will accept digital copies in one of the following formats: Word (.doc or .docx), Rich Text Format (.rtf), or Word Perfect (.wpd).** Essays not in one of those formats will be returned to the student, to be resubmitted in a proper format, and will be penalized. You will need to email me the essay by midnight of the day it is due. For the purposes of keeping everything organized, I will NOT accept a hard copy of the essay under any circumstances. The day it is emailed to me is the day it is turned in.

Essay Outline

For the essay outline assignment you will turn in **two forms**. One is the outline form itself; the other, a document from the Writing Lab (that they will give you) signifying that you have gone there and consulted with them. Before going to the Lab, complete as much of the outline form as you can (including small paragraphs in the spaces allotted for them). Then, have them look it over and make suggestions. This visit to the Lab has to be with the first (not the second) essay. While you can feel free to use this outline form for your own benefit when you write the second essay, you will not need to turn in an outline form with that second essay, or take that essay to the writing center.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are not permitted, and can result in receiving a 0 on the assignment, without the option to submit the assignment again, and additionally, any allowable penalty as explained in the student handbook or in accordance with VVC policy.

Participation Grade and Reflections

These will consist of some short readings (sometimes primary source), and a one-page response by the students that are done in class. These are rather unstructured, and the idea here is simply to expose you to historical documents and ideas, and get you to think about them. At the end of the semester, I will average the grade for each reflection assignment, and that will constitute the participation portion of the final semester grade. Tardies and absences will be deducted from the participation grade on the following basis: 10 tardies or absences will trigger a 20 point deduction from the reflection average; 15 tardies or absences will trigger a 50 point deduction; 20 tardies or

absences will trigger a 70 point deduction.

Late Work and Makeup Work Policy

A student who misses the midterm can still receive full credit for it, but will have to turn in a six-page essay (1800 words) on one of the long answer questions (any of them) given in the study guide for the midterm. Apart from the page length and the limitation on choice of subject, all other parameters for the four-page essays apply for the midterm makeup. That makeup essay is due no later than midnight of the final exam.] Assignments that can be turned in late are the essay outline, and the two four-page essays. Late work has to be turned in no later than seven days after the original due date and will be given two-thirds credit. This two-thirds credit policy will be implemented regardless of the reason for the assignment being late. The only exceptions to this one-week extension are any assignments that fall due the last week of class—no work can be turned after the final exam itself.

Reflections are based on class lectures and discussions and cannot be made up (or turned in before or after the assignment is done in class).

A word to the wise: this isn't necessarily intentional at all, but I typically return late work very slowly.

All classwork must be turned in to me personally, as opposed to turned in to a switchboard operator or turned in to my mailbox.

Extra Credit or Re-doing Assignments

The only assignments that can be re-done are essays that are returned because of unacceptable subject choice, as mentioned above. Any such essays that are re-submitted will of course be assessed the late penalty of one-third credit.

Classroom Behavior

Being mean or inconsiderate (as defined by instructor) in class will make you liable to any penalty allowable under VVC policy and the Penal Code of the State of California, including but not limited to: academic penalties, imprisonment, fines, citations, and torture (up to but not including violations of the Eighth Amendment) to the fullest extent permitted by law.

Class Schedule

All major assignments are due the Thursday of the given week

Feb 14-16	Introduction to class; Civil War and the issues that caused it
Feb 21-23	Ch. 18 "Reconstruction: North and South"
Feb 28-Mar 1	Ch. 20 "Big Business and Organized Labor"
Mar 6-8	Ch. 19 "The South and the West Transformed"
Mar 13-15	Ch. 24 "The Progressive Era"
Mar 20-22	Chapter 23 "An American Empire" American imperialism at the turn of the century Essay outline form
Mar 27-29	Ch. 25 "America and the Great War" World War I
<u>Apr 3-5</u>	<u>Midterm review; midterm</u>
<u>Apr 10-12</u>	<u>Easter vacation first essay</u>
<u>Apr 17-19</u>	<u>Ch. 27 "Republican Resurgence and Decline"; 1920s</u>
Apr 24-26	Ch. 28 "New Deal America" Isolationism and the New Deal
May 1-3	Ch. 30 "The Second World War"
May 8-10	Ch. 31 "The Fair Deal and Containment," Truman and Eisenhower Administrations; McCarthy era
May 15-17	Ch. 34 "New Frontiers: Politics and Social Change in the 1960s" Johnson's Great Society, the Civil Rights movement, Vietnam War
May 22-24	Ch. 36 "A Conservative Insurgency" Reagan Era
May 29-31	Ch. 37 "Triumph and Tragedy: America at the Turn of the Century" Foreign trade and the War on Terror second essay
Jun 5-7	test prep, final exam