

AMERICAN HISTORY - SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

History is a long, ongoing and extremely rich conversation between human communities, particularly in a country as diverse as the United States. In this course we will explore American history from the Civil War (1861-65) to the present. Students will be introduced to the significant events, individuals, developments, and processes that have created what has come to be one of the most powerful countries in the world. Connecting several key-themes of American history, the course will teach students how to analyze and interpret facts and evidence to achieve a well-rounded understanding of the major developments in U.S. modern history. The course will be organized around the following themes : national identity; migration and settlement; politics and power; production, trade, and technology; globalization; and culture. The course will provide students with a set of skills necessary to the study of history : analyzing primary and secondary sources, developing critical arguments, making comparisons, and contextualizing events and their continuity and change over time.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Presenting information in lectures, the course makes use of textbooks, images and online sources. Students are expected to take notes during lectures, carry out assigned readings and written exercises, as well as involve actively in classroom discussions and exercises.

LEARNING GOALS

Students completing this course will be able to:

1. Understand key-timelines used in American History, their major notions and terminologies
2. Recognize and identify particular periods, individuals and events.
3. Analyze and discuss facts and evidence using key-terms and notions covered in class.
4. Engage in a critical discussion of events and periods considered either singly or in compare-and-contrast relations.
5. Work collaboratively with peers to produce short textual/oral reflections on American history

COURSE HOURS

The course has 20 class sessions in total. Each class session is 120 minutes in length. The course meets from Monday to Friday. The course has a total of 40 class hours.

REQUIRED TEXT (AVAILABLE AS PDF AT THE SCHOOL'S OFFICE)

D. Shi and G. Brown Tindall, *America: A Narrative History*, Volume 2, 10th Edition, 2016

Language: English

ISBN-13: 978-0393265958

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Class assignments, exercises, and oral participation.
- One Midterm exam (definitions and short-answer questions covering basic information in the lectures and readings).
- 2-page-long Reading Response Card for a text studied in class.
- 2-page-long Archival Study Card during History Lab introducing to primary source examination.
- A 15 minute-long oral presentation explaining date, theme, individual, or material source in American History chosen in agreement with the Professor, with a PowerPoint containing images and quotes. It may be an extended version of your Reading Response and Archival Study Cards.

GRADING POLICY

The grades you earn in this course will depend on your performance. The following grading guidelines will be used :

A/A- Excellent; performance demonstrates rigorous intellectual engagement, great care and extra effort, clear planning, extensive development and excellent written and oral expression. Work also shows great creativity and originality.

B+/B Very Good; performance reflects mature thought, care and effort. You have gone beyond basic minimum requirements and taken the time to think your subjects through and

produce thoughtful, polished work, written and oral.

B-/C+ Good. You have performed and submitted work and assignments that are complete, well-organized and show strong potential;

C/C- Satisfactory. You correctly completed the course's basic minimum requirements;

D+/D Unsatisfactory. Work and assignment are submitted incomplete;

F Poor. Little or no evidence of effort to complete assignments or to improve.

If you would like to dispute any grade in this course, you must do so within one week of receiving the grade (this includes exams).

ASSESSMENT

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| 1. Oral Participation and Class Exercises | 20% |
| 2. Midterm Exam | 20% |
| 3. Reading Response Card | 20% |
| 4. Archival Study Card | 20% |
| 5. Oral Presentation | 20% |

Cell phones, pagers, game devices, etc. must be switched off (not set to vibrate) when you are in class. Computer use should be limited to note-taking.

Class Schedule And Assignments

7/8 Introduction – History: Hoes Does it Work ?

- Lecture on Definitions and Methodologies : Primary and Secondary Sources; Historical Arguments and Comparisons; Contextualization / Causation; Continuity / Change
- Read J. Jusserand/American Historical Association, 'The Historian's Work'
- Task : Group work on specific historical individuals / events and how they challenged / awed / moved you and why.

7/9 From Pre-Columbian America to the Modern United States

- Lecture on the Early Settlers, the War of Independence, the Founding Fathers
- Read Shi, Tindall, Vol. 1, Chapter 7
- Tasks : Group work and study questions on the U.S. Political System and Ideology

7/10 The Civil War and Its Aftermath (1861-1877)

- Lecture on the Civil War and Reconstruction
- Read Shi, Tindall, Chapters 15 and 16
- Tasks : Group work and study questions on the Jim Crow Laws

7/11 The Gilded Age and Westward Expansion (1865-1900)

- Lecture on Early Capitalism and Immigration
- Read Shi, Tindall, Chapters 18 and 19
- Tasks : Group work and study questions on the Rubber Barons

7/12 History Lab #1 : A. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*

- Task : Individual and Group Work on Primary Sources : Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* ; Writing of a 2-page Archival Study Card

7/15 The Birth of the Middle Class (1920-1929)

- Lecture on Life in the Modern City, Technology, and Marketing
- Read Shi, Tindall, Chapters 23 and 24
- Tasks : Group work and study questions on Urbanization and the Capitalist System

7/16 Boom and Bust (1929-1939)

- Lecture on the Great Depression and the New Deal

- Read Shi, Tindall, Chapter 25

→ Tasks : Group Work and study questions on Boom and Bust Theory and F.D. Roosevelt's Social Policies

7/17 World War II (1933-1945)

- Lecture on the Two Fronts, the War Effort at Home and its Consequences

- Read Shi, Tindall, Chapter 26

→ Tasks : Group work and study questions on D-Day and the War in the Pacific

7/18 Leader of the Free World (1945-1959)

- Lecture on the American Way of Life and the Cold War

- Read Shi, Tindall, Chapters 27 and 28

→ Task : Group work on study questions on N.A.T.O. and on Cultural Conservatism

7/19 History Lab #2 : World War I and Peace Culture

→ Task : Individual and Group Work on Primary Sources : President Wilson's Fourteen Points ; Writing of a 2-page Archival Study Card

7/22 Midterm Exam

→ Tasks : Definitions and short-answer questions covering basic information in the lectures and readings (2-hour long)

7/23 Countercultures of the 1960s and 1970s

- Lecture on Changing Lifestyles, the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement, the Watergate Scandal

- Read Shi, Tindall, Chapters 29 and 30

→ Tasks : Correction of Midterm; Group work and study questions on Pop Culture and the Civil

Rights Movement

→ Oral Presentation Outline Due (1 page : title, summary, primary and secondary sources)

7/24 ‘America Is Back’: Reaganomics and the Culture Wars (1977-1992)

- Lecture on Neoliberalism in Economy, End of the Cold War, and Cultural Conservatism
- Read Shi, Tindall, Chapter 31

→ Tasks : Group Work and study questions on Economic Deregulation and on the Nuclear Umbrella Initiative

7/25 From Hollywood to YouTube : American History Through Popular Culture

- Lecture on Mass Culture and the Entertainment Industry
- Read Shi, Tindall, Chapter 30

→ Screening (excerpts) : A. Iñárritu, *The Revenant* (2015) : Indian-American Heritage and Environmentalism on Screen

7/26 History Lab #3 : Martin Luther King and the Road to Racial Equality

→ Task : Individual and Group Work on Primary Sources : Martin Luther King’s ‘I Have A Dream’ Speech ; Writing of a 2-page Archival Study Card

7/29 Global America Rebooted I : From the ‘End of History’ and the ‘New World Order’ to the ‘War on Terror’ (1993-2007)

- Lecture on the GAFAM e-Revolution; the 2001, Sept. 11th Terrorist Attacks and their Aftermath in Politics and Diplomacy
- Read Shi, Tindall, Chapter 32

→ Tasks : Group Work and study questions on Gulf Wars and on GAFAM

7/30 Global America Rebooted II : A Time of Many Crisis (2007-the present)

- Lecture on Identity Politics, the 2008 Financial Crisis, the Ecological Crisis, the Diplomatic Crisis (Obama's Pacific Pivot, Trump's Exit from Multilateralism)

- Read Shi, Tindall, Chapter 32

→ Tasks : Group Work and study questions on African-American Identities and on Divided American Society Under Trump

7/31 Oral Presentations, Part I

→ Task : 15 minute-long oral presentation explaining date, theme, individual, or material source in American History chosen in agreement with the Professor, with a PowerPoint containing images and quotes. May be an extended version of your Reading Response and Archival Study Cards.

8/1 Oral Presentations, Part II

→ Task : 15 minute-long oral presentation explaining date, theme, individual, or material source in American History chosen in agreement with the Professor, with a PowerPoint containing images and quotes. May be an extended version of your Reading Response and Archival Study Cards.

8/2 History Lab #4 : Personal Computers, the Internet, Smartphones, and the Cognitive Revolution

→ Task : Individual and Group Work on Primary Sources : Marketing Material from the IT Industry ; Writing of a 2-page Archival Study Card

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