This course explores the history of the United States from the end of the Civil War in 1865 through the present. It is not a typical survey, in that it does not rely on a textbook or move rapidly from historical event to historical event in an effort to maintain “coverage.” Instead, we will approach the class from a thematic, story-oriented perspective to uncover lesser-known moments in U.S. History. Major themes of the course include race, the evolution of capitalism, the American “empire,” war, and environmental perspectives on history.

**COURSE GOALS**

- Educate students in the basic outline of U.S. history since 1865
- Debate and analyze the role of the U.S. in global history, and the impacts other nations’ histories have on the U.S.
- Contextualize current headlines using historical knowledge
- Introduce students to the methodology of the historian—what sources to use, how to approach primary documents, and ways to give voice to the past
- Synthesize information and communicate that information effectively in both written and oral forms

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

We will be reading large sections of the following texts, which are available for purchase in the bookstore and, of course, online. E-books are acceptable. Our other readings will be posted on Moodle.

Eric Foner, *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction*
Glenda Gilmore, ed., *Who Were the Progressives?* (Historians at Work)
Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration*
Ted Steinberg, *Down to Earth: Nature’s Role in American History*
ASSIGNMENTS
FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE THE ATTACHED EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Reading Quizzes (10%)  Current Events Essay (20%)
Panel Presentation (10%)  Primary Sources Essay (20%)
Final Exam (25%)
Midterm (15%)

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES
All submissions are due at the beginning of the class period on the day specified on the syllabus. Late writing assignments will be docked one letter grade per day late. Late speeches are not accepted unless permission has been granted by instructor prior to due date. Students will not be given extra credit assignments or allowed to make up work that they have missed due to absence other than that incurred for University business.

❖ All essays and responses must be typed.
❖ Submissions must be double-spaced, with 1 inch margins and Times New Roman 12-point font. Failure to follow these very simple instructions will result in a loss of points.
❖ Please include your name on all submissions. No name, no grade.

GRADING SCALE

A = 93-100  B- = 80-82  D+ = 67-69
A- = 90-92  C+ = 77-79  D = 63-66
B+ = 87-89  C = 73-76  D- = 60-62
B = 83-86  C- = 70-72  F = below 60

PLAGIARISM
All submissions must be original with sources clearly and correctly documented. Work previously submitted for other courses is not accepted. Any student who represents the work of another as his or her own is guilty of plagiarism and will be subject to the penalties outlined in The Student Handbook, including failure in the course and suspension from the University.

Think for yourself, do your own work, and cite your sources.
ATTENDANCE POLICY

This class is a seminar, and its success depends upon your presence and full participation. Students who miss more than two weeks of class (6 absences) will receive an FA (failure due to absences) for the course. Students who must be absent due to University business should notify the teacher early in the course. Arriving late or leaving early from a class is disruptive; three tardies/early exits will be considered the equivalent of an absence. Students who come to class unprepared may be dismissed by the professor and such dismissal will be counted as an absence.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you are registered with Disability Resources and have your accommodation letter, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations that may be necessary. If you have a disability but have not contacted Disability Resources, please call 726-2980/4078 or visit DR located within Career Development, Room 205 of the University Center.

Students who may need course accommodations are welcome to make an appointment to see me during office hours. Students with disabilities must be registered with Disability Resources, 726-2980/4078, and I must have received an accommodation letter before you begin receiving academic adjustments.

DISCLAIMER

The professor reserves the right to modify the content of the syllabus at any time during the semester. Students will be given plenty of notification if and when this occurs. Moodle is only used in this course to supply students with readings and notifications of due dates—the gradebook feature will not be used.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Week 1: Introduction
Reading: Forever Free, Chapter 2

August 25: Introduction to the course

August 27: What is History?

August 29: Causes and Consequences of the Civil War

Week 2: The Second American Revolution
Reading: Forever Free, Chapters 3, 4, 6
September 1: NO CLASS, LABOR DAY

September 3: The Facts of Reconstruction

September 5: A Failed Revolution?

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Week 3: Empire in the Era of Jim Crow  
Readings: *Forever Free*, Chapter 7; Bender, “Empire Among Empires” (Moodle)

September 8: Ideological Underpinnings of Empire

September 10: Our Imperial Moment

September 12: Racism meets Imperialism

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Week 4: Industrialization  
Readings: *Down to Earth*, Chapters 7 and 8

September 15: Big Business

September 17: Railroaded: Redefining Space and Time

September 19: Tenement Life

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Week 5: The Great Divide  
Reading: *Who Were the Progressives?* (entire)

September 22: The Urban Problem

September 24: The Progressives’ Solution (and its Dark Side)

September 26: In-class meetings for Panel Presentations

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Week 6: Leaving and Arriving  
Reading: *The Warmth of Other Suns*, pp. 3-46

September 29: Immigration into the U.S.
October 1: Emigration out of the South

October 3: **Panel Presentations on Who Were the Progressives?**

**Week 7: WWI and All That Jazz**

October 6: WWI and America’s Solidification of Global Standing

October 8: Race and the Great War (guest speaker, Dr. Mitcham)

October 10: **Midterm Exam**

**Week 8: Economic Problem No. 1**

Readings: *The Warmth of Other Suns*, pp. 89-106, 238-246, 260-275, 285-292; Excerpts from *Down and Out* (Moodle)

October 13: FALL BREAK, NO CLASS

October 15: A New World Order: Competing Visions for the Future

Current events day

October 17: The Great Depression

Primary source day

**Week 9: The Good War**

Readings: Excerpts from *War Without Mercy* and *The Good War* (Moodle)

October 20: Oil and the Origins of World War II

**Paper One Due**

October 22: The “Good War”?

October 24: The Bomb and the Beginning of a New Kind of War

**Week 10: A Throwaway Society**

Reading: *Down to Earth*, Chapters 11-14

October 27: The Good Life? The U.S. Military-Industrial Complex
October 29: Fast Food Nation: 1950s Consumerism

October 31: Shrink-wrapping America: Ecological Implications of Consumerism

Week 11: The Urban Crisis

November 3: The Long Civil Rights Movement

November 5: The Urban Crisis and the Great Society

November 7: Ghetto to Grave

Week 12: Mid-Century Movements
Readings: Down to Earth, Chapter 15

November 10: Demanding Economic and Gender Rights

November 12: Saving the Planet

November 14: FILM
Paper Two Due

Week 13: The Global Cold War
Readings: Excerpts from The Untold History of the United States (Moodle)

November 17: Coups in the Third World (guest speaker, Dr. Aleman)
   Film Response due

November 19: The Vietnam War

November 21: Global Backlash and the Origins of Current Crises

Week 14: The American Century

November 24: The Evolution of 20th Century Capitalism
November 26-28: THANKSGIVING BREAK, NO CLASS

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Week 15: Recent Conflicts and Potential Consequences
Readings: Excerpts from *The Future War* (Moodle)

December 1: Meddling in the Middle East

December 3: The Melting Pot

December 5: Climate Change and the Ozone Layer

**Final Exam Monday, December 8 at 10:30**
Bring essay portion of exam to test, IDs and Short Answer will be administered on the day of the exam
HISTORY 218
EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

DUE DATES FOR ESSAYS: OCTOBER 20 AND NOVEMBER 14
You may write and turn in the following essays in any order you wish, but you cannot repeat an assignment and you MUST turn in a paper on each due date. Refer to the submission guidelines on the syllabus for instructions regarding font, margins, etc.

CURRENT EVENTS ESSAY

In this 5-6 page essay, you will choose an article or articles from a newspaper or news website published within the last two years and relate the current event discussed or analyzed with the historical processes we are learning about from texts and lectures. Your essay should summarize the current event or issue covered in the news source(s), relate it to an historical event or process, and then discuss the historical event using examples from lectures, your assigned readings, or a textbook placed on reserve in the library.

Here’s an example: An article published in Newsweek recently outlined the current child migrant crisis in the U.S. as tens of thousands of unaccompanied minors have traveled up through Central America and Mexico to reach the U.S.-Mexico border. The rhetoric used by anti-immigration politicians in the current crisis echoes that of nineteenth-century Americans who opposed the vast numbers of immigrants flowing into the U.S. from the coast of California (Asians) and Ellis Island (southern Europeans and Irish). I think it would be interesting to compare and contrast the assumptions Americans make about the immigrants, or perhaps compare and contrast the reasons the immigrants are coming in the first place, or even compare and contrast Ellis Island to Arizona detention centers. Essentially, I’m asking you to contextualize a current event with your knowledge of the past.

Acceptable news sources include the major newspapers such as The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, the Chicago Tribune, The L.A. Times as well as TIME magazine, Newsweek, The Atlantic, Bloomberg News, Mother Jones, and anything from the BBC, NPR, or Al-Jazeera. All sources must be cited within the paper and you need a Works Cited page attached to the end of the paper.

PRIMARY SOURCES ESSAY

In this 5-6 page essay, you will choose a primary source from the list posted on Moodle, analyze it, and discuss its historical context. Primary sources form the base that supports historians’ reconstructions of the past. To use primary sources with confidence, historians need to be alert to potential causes of bias, distortion, and inaccuracy in the sources. This assignment will give you practice in ways to identify such causes.

Your essay should answer the following questions: Who wrote the document, and for whom was it written? Does the author have an argument? Is so, what is it? How might the
intended audience shape the perspective of this source? Under what specific historical circumstances was this source created? What larger historical events, processes, or structures might have influence this text? Is this source consistent with what you know about the historical record from that time? What biases or other cultural factors might have shaped the message of this source? What historical perspectives are left out of this source? What other kinds of documents would you want to examine to corroborate its claims?

All of these questions are interrelated; your paper should not be a simply a list of answers to individual questions, but a coherent essay with an introduction and conclusion. It might help to think of the paper as an introduction to the document in a collection of sources. To answer some of these questions, you will have to include information from outside sources. All outside sources must be cited in the paper and you will need a Works Cited page at the end of the paper.

**Panel Presentation, Due October 3**

During Week 5 of the semester, you will be asked to read the entire book, *Who Were the Progressives?* This book covers four controversies of the Progressive movement and includes historians’ contradictory perspectives on these debates. Once we’ve read and discussed the book, you’ll be divided into groups and assigned a specific section so that you can make an oral presentation comparing, contrasting, and evaluating the differing views of historians on your group’s assigned controversy. The purpose of this assignment is to further your understanding of how historians have shaped the basic textbook narrative of history, and to illuminate the long, messy process of coming up with “facts.”

The content of the presentation must summarize the excerpts in your group’s section of the book, explain how the two historians differ, relate their work back to the theme of the section, and make some conclusions as to how these excerpts either do or do not further our understanding of the makeup and contributions of the Progressives.

The presentation must be at least 10 minutes long, and your group is required to make a PowerPoint to accompany your presentation. Dress is what I call “class casual,” meaning jeans and t-shirts are fine, but no sweats or exercise clothes.

**Reading Quizzes, Due Weekly**

Reading quizzes will be given every Friday that we have class. This means that while I’d like you to have all of your reading for the week done on Monday, it is not DUE until Friday. Each quiz will consist of no more than two content-related questions. This means I will ask you questions related to the ideas or conclusions of the text, rather than minute details. Here’s an example: A content-related question for a reading on the rapid industrialization of the 1870s might be, “What does the author say about the relationship between industrialization and the decline in Native American populations?” A detail-related question would be, “Who invented the steamboat?” Each quiz will take approximately 20-25 minutes to complete.
**Film Responses, Due November 17 and December 1**

We will watch at least two films over the course of the semester. At the beginning of the next class, a **three-page response** to the film is due. The purpose of a response is to help you engage the film as a visual source. It should *not* be a place for you to simply summarize what you saw. This is a place for you to identify and probe points in a film, sometimes by inserting your *own* ideas into the film’s conversation.

Ideas for responses:

- **Evaluate:** Make a judgment about the worth of an idea or argument, examining strengths and weaknesses
- **Connect:** Show how the film relates to other material discussed in class, seen in the media, learned in another class
- **Identify:** Pick one assertion, argument, or moment from the film and explain its significance to a larger topic or the theme of the class
- **Argue:** Take a position for or against the film and give reasons to support it
- **Explore:** What did the film make you think of? What parts sparked your interest or curiosity?
- **Reflect:** What personal memories or experiences does this film trigger? What personal values or beliefs does this film reinforce or challenge? What dilemmas or problems does this film raise?