

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Title: America since 1865

Number: HIS 12

Credits/Hours: 3 credits/3 hours

INTRODUCTION

History 12 begins with the era of Reconstruction and ends at the present day. The course attempts to cover aspects of the development of the United States from a variety of perspectives. It tries to go beyond dates and facts and to consider why the United States developed as it did.

To what extent has modern America been shaped by the seminal events of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries? How has America been defined by the continuing evolution of its government, its land, and its people? How has the United States faced the challenges of domestic and global change in terms of politics, economics, technology, and culture? To address these and other historical questions, the class integrates elements of history, political science, economics, art and literature to present a multifaceted history of America and its history.

OBJECTIVES

A primary objective of the course is for the student to achieve a deeper insight into the American experience, past, present, and future. Through intensive study of the events and individuals that comprise the history of the United States of America, undergraduates will develop a sense of perspective and a broader frame of reference for their own individual and collective histories. The knowledge students acquire in our learning environment will provide them with the necessary intellectual and cultural background to define for themselves what it means and has meant to be American.

Additionally, as a central offering in the Liberal Arts, the course acquaints students with many of the core concepts, theories, and methodologies essential to academic and cultural literacy. Through emphasis on reading and interpreting texts, comparative conceptual analysis, the explication of graphic charts and illustrations, and communicating clearly and effectively through writing, the course develops and enhances student skills in the areas of critical thinking, reading comprehension, and both oral and written communication.

ASSESSMENT

History 12 employs a variety of pedagogical techniques including lecture, discussion, and computer-based (online and web-enhanced) instructional technologies. Oral presentations, low-stakes writing assignments, and small discussion groups are also encouraged.

Assessment of student learning will be based on class assignments, which include readings from primary and secondary texts, group discussions in class and/or online, class presentations, and written work, which may take the form of essays, journals, reports, research papers, or other assigned writing. The specific forms and combinations of assignments are left to the discretion of individual instructors.

In addition to informal or low-stakes assignments, student achievement of basic skills and knowledge will be measured through examinations and term papers. Examinations require essay writing, and will test reading comprehension and fluency as well as mastery of critical thinking skills. Specific weighting of various assignments and requirements is determined by individual instructors. However, students in all sections are expected to master a common body of information as measured by their responses to selected questions.

COURSE OUTLINE

The following topics will be covered by the course. Given the breadth and fluidity of this subject, it is expected that instructors may vary the content, organization, and overall approach of their sections.

I. Reconstruction and the Gilded Age

Introduction to the era following the Civil War; political, economic, cultural and social aspects of the period from 1865 to 1914, including Reconstruction, industrialization, Gilded Age politics and Progressivism, the rise of immigration, American Imperialism, and the period before WWI.

II. World War I and the Jazz Age

World War I; postwar society and modernism; the Roaring Twenties.

III. The Great Depression and World War II

The New Deal and governmental activism; the effects of the Depression on the American people and culture; WWII background, leaders, and events in the military arena and home front.

IV. The Cold War

Postwar America's rise to prominence and political supremacy; America's response to Communism on a global and domestic level.

V. Post-WWII America

Post-WWII prosperity, development and suburbanization; Civil Rights; domestic policies through the era of the Great Society programs.

VI. Vietnam Era

The history and background of the war in Vietnam, and concurrent domestic developments; protest movements; Watergate; energy crisis.

VII. The Modern Era

American society, culture, and politics from the late twentieth century to the present day.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning Goals:

The purpose of this course is:

1. To introduce students to the basic concepts, questions, and problems addressed by American historians of this period;
2. To trace specific historical developments in American domestic and foreign affairs during this period, including Reconstruction, World Wars I and II, the Great Depression, and the Cold War, among others;
3. To foster skills needed to read, interpret, and analyze primary sources such as documents and other texts;
4. To foster skills needed in historical methodology;
5. To foster skills needed to write a historical essay;
6. To enable students to apply their learned knowledge to their understanding of ongoing current events in American society and culture.

Learning Outcomes:

As a result of taking this course, students will learn or be able to:

1. Read and comprehend primary source texts;
2. Identify and understand key vocabulary terms used within the discipline;
3. Identify and analyze historical problems from a variety of viewpoints;
4. Explain and defend historical arguments;
5. Write clearly, critically, and effectively;
6. Develop and use research skills;
7. Use a variety of learning strategies including traditional lectures, oral presentation, collaborative learning, and/or computer-assisted learning (in certain hybrid-online sections).

Measurement:

Strategies to be used in demonstrating that students' learning has been achieved will include:

1. Quizzes
2. Classroom discussion
3. In-class ("low-stakes") writing assignments
4. Group discussions and/or presentations
5. Take-home writing assignments
6. Examinations (essay and objective/factual)
7. Essay papers (short and/or term papers)
8. On-line and web-enhanced exercises and assignments

Evaluation:

Based on the above measurements, the following quantitative and qualitative evidence will provide evidence that students have achieved their learning outcomes:

1. 75% passing grades on quizzes
2. Discussions and writing assignments reflect students' understanding of texts and class material, as well as their facility in explaining and defending their position
3. Writing assignments reflect students' ability to think and write clearly, effectively, and critically
4. Examination results demonstrate knowledge of basic concepts and ability to analyze historical problems.