

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Title: U.S. History in a Global Context: From Reconstruction to the Present

Number: HIS 18

Credits/Hours: 3 credits/3 hours

INTRODUCTION

This course will examine U.S. history from Reconstruction to the present. Unlike the traditional survey course of this period, this course will take a transnational approach and explore how U.S. history fits into the global context. Historians and other scholars have become increasingly aware U.S. history can be better understood by examining how it is enmeshed in events and historical developments outside the nation's borders. As the historian Thomas Bender has written, "National histories are part of global histories." This course will fulfill one of the required courses for students who have chosen to pursue the college's Global and Environmental Studies Option.

How was U.S economic development influenced by global economic trends? In what way was the Civil Rights movement influenced by the process of decolonization in the developing world? How did the creation of the U.S. New Deal welfare state compare to such trends in other industrialized nations? 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 and to understand that U.S. history is connected to events and processes that occur outside the nation's boundaries. 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 18 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 Industrialization

Exploring how Reconstruction led to changes in the international cotton trade and an intensification of European imperialism as Europe struggled to find other sources for this key commodity. It will also look at how industrialization led to a growing concern with foreign markets

II. Empire, Progressivism, and War

This section will explore such issues as the U.S.'s deepening relations with Latin American and Asia, the connections between U.S. progressivism and international intellectual developments and the U.S.'s growing global concerns during WWI

III. The U.S. and the Global Crises of Economic Depression and War

An examination of how the U. S economic crisis was connected to the worldwide global economic crisis, a comparison between the U.S. welfare state and the welfare state of other industrialized nations, and the U.S. role internationally during WWII.

IV. Post-WWII America and the World

An examination of the U.S.'s central role in creating rules governing the international economic system and how the Cold War affected the developed and the developing world

V. The Crises of the 1960s and 1970s

The connections between the U.S. civil rights and student movement and international developments such as decolonization and the international student movement. The complex connections between the end of the long postwar economic boom and global economic developments

VI. U.S. History and Globalization in the 21st Century

The transnational nature of migration, the development of neoliberalism as a global political and economic project, and the impact of 9/11 on the U.S. and world affairs

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Rogers, Daniel T. *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Rosenberg, Emily. *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.
- Ruble, Blair. *Second Metropolis: Pragmatic Pluralism in Gilded Age Chicago, Silver Age Moscow, and Meiji Osaka*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Russo, David J. *American History from a Global Perspective: An Interpretation*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000.
- Smith, Bonnie, ed. *Global Feminisms Since 1945*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Tucker, Richard P. *Insatiable Appetite: The United States and the Ecological Degradation of the Tropical World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Von Eschen, Penny. *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning Goals:

The purpose of this course is:

1. To help students explore how events and developments that occur in the U.S. are connected to events outside the nation's boundaries.
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.