

## United States History Since 1877

*As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of Democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference is no Democracy.*  
– Abraham Lincoln

This course surveys United States history since Reconstruction. It aims at contributing to your historical literacy about the U.S. by tracing the standard chronology of national and international events that have shaped U.S. society since the end of slavery and the rise of industrial capitalism.

At the center of our semester-long discussion will be Americans' perpetual, legitimate, heartfelt debate over how best to fulfill the promises of American constitutional democracy. By what means, by what methods do we ensure that Americans are – to draw from Abraham Lincoln's words above – neither slaves nor masters? That question takes us into debates over the relationship between democratic government and economic class, racial identity, ethnic background, and gender roles. Whether we are studying presidential elections or family life, we will continually trace the debate over how to balance "individual rights" and "community welfare," "freedom" and "responsibility," "equality" and "opportunity." At all times, our purpose will be to heighten our ability to understand the concerns and interests that have shaped these debates.

While contributing to your historical knowledge, this course also aims to teach you how to "think historically." This means developing in you the habit of placing single events & isolated stories into a larger historical context, seeking explanations for both change and persistence over time, and pondering the source of any historical evidence. To achieve this goal, we will use a textbook to trace broad trends and we will read primary sources and historians' analyses to trace connections and ponder the problem of evidence. Reading, writing, and speaking assignments are all geared toward developing your ability to pick up a new piece of history, examine it, interrogate it, connect it to more familiar pieces of history, and add it to your growing knowledge of how Americans have experienced their history – and how it is that historians document that experience.

*As it has been in American history, so it will be in this class: the broader and more informed the participation of the people, the more successful the endeavor.*

**Victoria Brown's Office:** Mears 303  
(top floor, southeast corner)

## **Victoria Brown's Office Hours — Spring, 2008**

Mondays: 11:00 a.m. to 11:50; 1:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Tuesdays: 4:15 p.m.- 5:30 p.m.

Wednesdays: 11:00 a.m. to 11:50; 1:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.; 4:15-5:30

Thursdays: 4:15-5:30 p.m.

Fridays: 11:00 a.m. to 11:50; 1:15 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

In class: MWF, 10-10:50/History 112; MWF, 3:15-4:05/History 222; T/R 2:15-4:05/History 318.

Note that I live in Iowa City, but will be on campus every day this semester and will be staying over in Grinnell on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday nights. If you need to reach me quickly on Monday evenings or on the weekends, you may phone me in Iowa City. If you wish to reach me quickly on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evenings, call my campus office @ ext. 3087. I check e-mail frequently (but not constantly), so if it isn't an emergency, e-mail is the best way to contact me.

In addition to wanting to spend office time with you, I will also be booking meetings with my History 222 students and my seminar students. As well, my duties as chair of the History Department will require that I steal time away from my students. But I will always find time for you. If you want to be assured of time with me during office hours, I advise making an office-hours appointment beforehand. If none of the posted times work for you, contact me about making an appointment at another time.

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**Among the first day's handouts, you will find a copy of a Class Contract.** If you decide to enroll in this course, you must sign the copy of that contract which will circulate in class next week. (Hold on to your copy for reference). The purpose of this contract is twofold: (1) to make clear the expectations that each individual student must meet for successful completion of this course; (2) to emphasize that learning in a class setting is a community experience which bears community responsibilities.

By enrolling in this course, you are not only making certain promises to yourself and to me about your performance, you are also promising your fellow students that you will contribute to their learning by giving them your time, your thoughts, your questions, your interest, and your attention.

## **Required Texts:**

America's History, (Sixth edition) Vol. 2 by Henretta, Brody, Dumenil  
Going to the Source, (Second edition) Vol. 2 by Shannon and Brown  
Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism by Bruce Schulman  
Restless Giant: U.S. From Watergate to Bush v. Gore by James T. Patterson

“Documents” to be distributed in class

Additional course materials will be available on the History 112 Blackboard

### **Writing Assignments:**

**1. Short writings:** There are a 11 short writing assignments listed on this syllabus. Some are easier than others, but for simplicity's sake, all are worth 10 points. That totals 110 points possible for these writings, but your overall grade for the course will be computed from a base of 90 points possible for these writings. That means you can skip two writings or drop a low score or two.

I do not advise skipping any of the writings before the first exam. Those writings get you rolling and allow us to get acquainted. They alert me if there are problems to be discussed before the exam. Save the “skip or drop” ticket for a later, rainy day.

These writings are intended to prepare you for class discussion. For that reason, and because you have the freedom to drop two, NO extensions are allowed on these short writings. Please do not ask for one.

**2. Exams:** We have three exams in this class, two are take-home essay exams, one is an in-class essay exam. The first take-home is due on Monday, February 18; the in-class exam is on Monday, April 7, and the second take-home is due on the Wednesday of finals week.

For the two take-home exams, you will receive the questions the week before the Monday due date. For the in-class exam, you will receive study questions the week before. For all exams, you will have a choice of essay topics. See Class Contract for extension policy.

***In all the writing you do for this class, you will be evaluated on the clarity of your argument, the logical organization of your points, the precision of your language, the effectiveness and accuracy of your use of evidence, and the “correctness” of your grammar and punctuation.***

### **Evaluation Policy:**

Short writing assignments = 90 points  
Three exams = 300 points (100 points each)  
Participation/contribution = 150 points  
540 points

In my experience, those who earn 90% or more of these points will receive an A or A-; those who earn between 80% and 89% will receive some sort of B grade; and those who earn between 70% and 79% will receive a C grade. I do not mention the grades of D or F here because I do not

expect anyone in this class to get into that situation. If I see you headed there, we will talk about

how you can change direction.

Here's a tip from my experience: students often focus on their points on exams and fail to appreciate the importance of the points they can continually amass with short writings and consistent contributions to class discussion.

If you do the math, you'll realize it's silly to fret over getting an "80" instead of an "85" on an exam and then miss the opportunity to get a "7" or an "8" on a short writing or fail to prepare for your part in a class debate. If your final grade is important to you, then I strongly advise that you do the short writings and be a regular contributor to class discussion and organized debates. Attending to *that* part of the work will both prepare you to do well on exams and will give you a solid base of course points.

**Take note: "class participation" amounts to a little over one quarter of your grade.** That's a hefty chunk of my assessment of your performance. What questions do I ask when I evaluate your participation?

1. Did you adhere to the SIX points on the Class Contract, which you signed?
2. Did your presence in the class, over the course of the semester, improve the quality of our collective experience? Did you, on a weekly basis, answer and/or pose a question, add a bit of information, cite specific passages in our texts to support your comments, make an connection between our material our material you have studied elsewhere, engage with a class member on a point, venture an idea? At the end of the term, can I look back and say, "yes, that student contributed to the value of the class"????

Participation involves questions, answers, theories, speculations, connections to other classes, jokes, expressions of amazement or anger or curiosity or confusion or dismay or delight. It means bringing your reactions to this material to the room and contributing those reactions.

An observation: students are sometimes shy about floating speculative theories in class. They are quiet in class and then float the speculative theory in an essay exam. This is a poor strategy! Class is the place to put forth a new idea and see what we all make of it. Exams are the place to develop those ideas that you feel confident are sustainable with evidence.

"C" in participation = you attended regularly and were reliable about assignments but seldom if ever spoke. In short, you did not *demonstrate* engagement with the day's readings.

"B" = you were regular & reliable about attendance and assignments, and you sometimes contributed in class . . . or you contributed regularly when you were in class, but you were not reliable about attendance and assignments.

"A" = you were regular & reliable writings about attendance and assignments, and you were a regular, reliable participant in discussion. You demonstrated (every week if not every day) an engagement with the readings and a commitment to making the classroom a lively, interesting place to be.

## Schedule of Class Activities and Readings

**Key:**

AH = America's History, the textbook by Henretta, Brody, Dumenil, and Ware

G2S = Going to the Source: the Bedford Reader in American History by Brown and Shannon

Schulman = Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism

Patterson = Restless Giant

STG = Study Guide. Distributed in class on Friday or over e-mail on the weekend.

Documents will be distributed in class.

Additional materials are on the History 112 Blackboard

**Week One**

January 21: Introduction to the course

Reading: P.J. O'Rourke and William Greider, Rolling Stone, 1995; Wineburg, "Teaching the Mind Good Habits," 2001

January 23: Post-Civil War Reconstruction

Reading: AH, Chapter 15

January 25: Political Terrorism/Congressional Hearings

Reading: G2S, From inside front cover thru Chapter 1: "Political Terrorism During Reconstruction;" AH, p. 460, "The Devastated South" and pp. 462-63, "Freedom"

**Writing assignment:** See STG for question to answer regarding use of the evidence in Chapter 1, G2S.

**Week Two**

January 28: The Gilded Age

Reading: AH, Chapters 16-18; Documents: Census figures re: "What Changed in the U.S. Between 1860 & 1920?"

January 30: Competing Ideals in the Gilded Age: a Role-Play Debate

Reading: Documents: Andrew Carnegie, "Gospel of Wealth" thru Edward Bellamy, Looking Backward

**Writing assignment:** In preparation for playing a "role" in the debate, read each document and, for each document, write answers to the questions posed on the STG.

February 1: Urbanization & Industrial Capitalism

Reading: AH, Chapter 19; G2S, Chapter 3, "Reading the 1894 Pullman Strike;" Documents: U.S. Strike Commission testimony

**Writing assignment:** See STG for question about differences between newspapers and testimony as historical evidence.

**Week Three**

February 4: The Progressive Era

Reading: AH, Chapter 20; Documents: Riis through Rauschenbusch

February 6: The Progressive Era

Reading: Documents: McCormick: “Progressivism: A Contemporary Reassessment;”  
Roosevelt and Wilson speeches

**Writing assignment:** One-paragraph statement of McCormick’s “thesis”

February 8: Immigration

Reading: G2S, Chapter 4; Documents: Petit, “A Democracy Not of Nationalism but of  
Internationalism” and Woodrow Wilson, History of the American People and  
Veto of the Literacy Bill

#### **Week Four**

February 11: The Spanish-American War

Reading: AH, Chapter 21; Documents: Timeline thru “The Philippine Problem”

**Writing assignment:** See STG for writing that will prepare you for class debate

February 13: Native Americans and the Dawes Act

Reading: AH, review Chapter 16, read pp. 754-55; G2S, Chapter 2; Documents: The  
Dawes General Allotment (Severalty) Act, 1887; Duncan, “How Allotment  
Impoverishes the Indian,” 1906

***Take-home essay questions will be distributed in class***

February 15: The Race Question

Reading: AH, review pp. 624-626; G2S, Chapter 5; Documents: “Issues of Race and  
Ethnicity” thru “Protect Your Property”

#### **Week Five**

February 18: Lecture: Woodrow Wilson and Woman Suffrage

***Take-home exam due in class.***

February 20: Woodrow Wilson & World War I

Reading: AH, Chapter 22; Documents: World War I Timeline thru “My Father’s War”

*Thursday, February 21, 9:00-10:00 p.m.: “The Great War.” Required viewing. Will be on  
Reserve in Burling Listening Room all week.*

February 22: Soldiers’ Experiences in World War I

Reading: G2S, Chapter 6

#### **Week Six**

February 25: World War I and Free Speech

Reading: AH, pp. 692-694; Documents: Bourne, “The State,” thru *Abrams v. United States*

February 27: Scientific Racism, the Red Scare, and American Business

Reading: AH, pp. 705-727; Documents: “The Study of American Intelligence” thru American Renaissance re: Madison Grant thru “Who Was Shut Out?”

February 29: Economic & Cultural Debate in the 1920's

Reading: AH, pp. 727-33; G2S, Chapter 7; Documents: “Drinking in College” thru McElvaine, “Who Was Roaring in the Twenties?”

**Writing assignment:** One-paragraph thesis statement on McElvaine

## **Week Seven**

*Two one-hour documentaries on the Depression will be on Reserve in A-V during Week Six and over the weekend for your viewing. Required for Monday discussion.*

March 3: The Great Depression

Reading: AH, Chapter 24

Viewing: Documentaries, “A Job at Ford’s” and “Mean Things Happening”

March 5: Historians – and Students – Debate the New Deal

Reading: G2S, Chapter 8; Blackboard: Smiley, Bernstein, Hamby, Leuchtenburg  
*You will be responsible for reading ONE of these articles on Blackboard*

**Writing assignment:** One-paragraph statement of your author’s thesis and one-paragraph statement of position you think your author would take on New Deal arts projects.

March 7: World War II: the Debates over Preparedness and Reaction to Pearl Harbor

Reading: AH, Chap. 25; Documents: FDR, “Four Freedoms” thru wartime ads

## **Week Eight**

*Sunday evening, March 9, 7:30-10:00 p.m. Two documentaries on World War II: “The Homefront”(90minutes); “Of Civil Wrongs & Rights: The Fred Korematsu Story” (60 minutes) Both will be on Reserve in A-V the previous week. Both required for Monday discussion.*

March 10: Japanese Internment and the Homefront in World War II

Reading: G2S, Chap. 9; Documents: JAACL brief

March 12: Debating the Decision to Drop the Atom Bomb

Reading: Documents: Harry S. Truman, “Statement on the Atomic Bomb,” John Hershey, Hiroshima; and “The Burdens of Power” from Discovering the American Past by Wheeler and Becker

March 14: Truman & the Cold War

Reading: AH, pp. 798-818; Documents Timeline, “Long Telegram” thru “Why Is My Son in Korea ?”

**SPRING BREAK, March 15 - March 30.** *Take advantage of the opportunity to read Bruce Schulman, Lyndon B. Johnson (see April 9 & 14) and, perhaps, start James Patterson, Restless Giant (see April 23).*

### **Week Nine**

March 31: Anti-Communism, Government Surveillance, and Civil Liberties

Reading: AH, pp. 813- 828; Documents: “The Truman Administration Deals with the Communist Menace” thru “Johnny’s Fight”

April 2: Gender, the Cold War & American Capitalism

Reading: AH, Chapter 27; Blackboard: Swerdlow, “Ladies’ Day at the Capitol;”  
Documents: Modern Woman: Lost Sex thru “The Dudleys”

**Writing assignment:** One-paragraph statement of Swerdlow’s thesis

April 4: JFK, The New Frontier, and the Cuban Missile Crisis

Reading: AH, pp. 862-870; G2S, Chapter 10; Documents: JFK Inaugural Address thru “Seymour Hersh Digs Up Tales

### **Week Ten**

April 7: ***In-class exam***

April 9: Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism

Reading: AH, pp. 871-877; Schulman, pp. 1-109 and 179-213.

*Thursday evening, April 10, 8:00 - 10:00 p.m.: Two one-hour CBS documentaries from 1962 and 1966 re: “Mississippi and the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment and “Black Power – White Backlash.” Both will be on reserve in Burling Listening Room all week if you cannot attend the class screening.*

April 11: The Civil Rights Movement

Reading: Schulman, pp. 111-132 and 214-235; G2S, Chapter 11

### **Week Eleven**

*Sunday evening, April 13, 8:00 - 10:00 p.m.: “The Fog of War: Eleven Lessons from the Life of Robert S. McNamara.” . McNamara was Secretary of Defense under JFK and Lyndon B. Johnson. This Academy Award-winning documentary offers a compelling foundation for your study of the Vietnam War. Will be on Reserve in Burling Listening Room all week if you cannot attend the class screening.*

April 14: The Vietnam War

Reading: AH, pp. 877-879; Schulman, pp. 133-178 and 236-271; Documents:  
Chronology of Vietnam, 1948-1969 thru LBJ speech, March 31, 1968

April 16: From Civil Rights to Black Power

Reading: AH, pp. 885-888; Documents: MLK, “Nonviolence: Only Road to Freedom” thru “Critical Assessment of Black Power”

**Writing assignment:** Prepare for in-class “role-play” debate by reading documents and preparing answers to questions posed on STG.

*Thursday evening, April 17, 9:00-10:00: “1968: The Year That Shaped a Generation” Required for Wednesday discussion. Will be on Reserve in Burling all week.*

April 18: Coming Apart at Home

Reading: AH, 888-893; G2S, Chapter 13; Documents: “Beyond Vietnam” thru “Seven Days in April”

### **Week Twelve**

April 21: Nixon’s Vietnam War

Reading: AH, pp. 896-902; G2S, Chapter 12; Documents: Vietnam Chronology thru Tobias Wolff, “After the Crusade”

**Writing assignment:** One-page comparison of Rogers, Kerry, and Wolff

*Tuesday evening, April 22: 8:00-10:00 p.m. “Watergate Plus 30” (2 hours). Required for Wednesday discussion. Will be on Reserve in A-V from Friday through Wednesday.*

April 23: Watergate

Reading: Documents: Watergate Chronology thru “Here We Go Again: Deep Throat Revealed?”

April 25: The Seventies

Reading: Patterson, Prologue and Chapters 1-4; Documents: text of Ronald Reagan’s “A Time for Choosing” with web address where you can listen to the speech.

### **Week Thirteen**

*Sunday evening, April 27, 9:00-10:00 p.m.: “Step by Step: Building a Feminist Movement.” Required for Monday discussion. Will be on Reserve in Burling all week.*

April 28: The Women’s Movement, the Energy Crisis & the 1970’s Economy

Reading: Documents: Friedan, “The Problem That Has No Name” thru “Falwell Organizes the Moral Majority”

April 30: The Reagan Revolution

Reading: Patterson, Chapter 5; Documents: Viguerie thru David Stockman, “The Triumph of Politics”

May 2: Reagan Administration and Iran Contra

Reading: Patterson, Chapter 6; Documents: Oliver North testimony thru George Mitchell statement at Iran-Contra hearings

Viewing: Online viewing of Bill Moyers documentary, "The Secret Government: The Constitution in Crisis" (1 hr. 26 mins)

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=3505348655137118430&hl=en>

**Writing assignment:** Response to question on STG re: significance of Iran-Contra

### **Week Fourteen**

May 5: Reagan, Gorbachev, Bush I, and the End of the Cold War

Reading: Patterson, Chapters 6-7; G2S, Chapter 14

May 7: Clinton & the 1990's

Reading, Patterson, Chapters 8-10

May 9: Clinton Impeachment and Bush v. Gore

Reading: Patterson, Chapters 11-12

***FINAL ESSAY QUESTIONS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED  
ON THE LAST DAY OF CLASS***

***DUE ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 14 at Noon***

***(If you have not used your extension, you may request to turn in exam on Friday at noon)***