

Course Syllabus  
HIST 1302: United States History since 1865

Instructor: Hunter Hobbs

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Office Hours: after school daily, 3:45-4:15; or by appointment

### **Course Description**

The questions at the heart of any serious study of American history are, in many ways, trans-historical. They were alive to the ancient no less than the modern mind: What is justice? What is the right balance between the interest of the individual and the interest of the political community? How should society prioritize the demand for material necessity with the aspiration to build a City on a Hill—a vision of human purpose that points beyond and above the low and narrow horizon of material necessity. Hanging above all these questions is the question of human nature itself: specifically, whether there *is* such a thing as human nature which can serve as a regulating standard for human conduct; or whether instead, as Protagoras insisted, “man is the measure of all things,” including nature.

The effort here will be to see American history, so far as we can, in the light of these trans-historical questions which are the starting point for rather than the product of historical inquiry. The United States of America, as a product of Enlightenment thought, is also a product of the particular answers that Enlightenment thought provided to these questions. How do those answers look to us now, here at the start of a new millennium? Did America get the balance right?—or did it at least discover a formula by which the right balance could be pursued with stability through the generations?

Of course the greatest injustices—the treatment of Native Americans and Africans—must not only be considered, but emphasized. But the moralism with which we condemn such injustices must always be cautionary rather than accusatory, keeping always in mind that the modern outlook which informs our judgment is not immune from the very same blindness that it so easily detects in other ages. The great injustices of American history must also be placed side by side with the very real achievements of American society: the democratization of land ownership; the establishment of a form of self-government that is constitutional, republican, and lasting; the abolition of slavery; the development of a form of cultural life which is at once particular and universal.

Our study of American history will involve us in the lives of prominent as well as common Americans, presidents and pig farmers, innovators and immigrants, housekeepers and historians, soldiers and slaves. We must understand the big ideas which shaped the momentum of society, as well as the way in which the momentum of society played out in the lives of ordinary people. We must also be alive to those kinds of momentum which swelled up from below to overwhelm old systems and stir new systems into being.

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

Students will be able to . . .

- analyze cause and effect in the history of the United States, from Reconstruction through the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- analyze the relationship between economics, politics, demography, and social structure in American history since 1865.
- synthesize assigned readings and lectures into a coherent, fact-based narrative that demonstrates critical thinking skills.
- analyze historical documents in light of their context and particular point of view.
- evaluate the unspoken premises that are necessarily involved in the creation of any interpretive framework, including our own.

## **Grading Policy**

Calculating 6-Weeks Grades

- For dual credit courses, major grades count for 70% of the total grade in each 6-week grading period; daily grades count for 30% of the total grade.

Major Grades (70%)

- In most cases, there will be an examination during each 3 week grading period. The examination may or may not correlate to the units of study that are listed below. The units of study do not always fit neatly within the grading periods that are mandated.
- There can be no less than two major grades in each 6 weeks grading period. The major grades will usually be examinations, although projects may also be assigned as major grades.

Daily Grades (30%)

- The most challenging of the daily grades will definitely be reading quizzes, which you can expect on a regular basis throughout the semester.
- There will be other daily grades given from time to time, including journal entries, timeline exercises, reading guides, map exercises, etc.

Final Exam

- The Final Exam will be tentatively scheduled for 11-12 May 2022. Grades are due to Angelo State the next Monday.

Other Grading Policies

- There will be no extra credit assignments, although extra effort can always be applied to your reading journal.
- Daily grade assignments that are turned in after an officially assigned due date will be accepted for credit with a minimum 30 point deduction. After 3 school days have passed, the grade will become a zero.

## The Reading List

### Primary Text

Brinkley, Alan. *American History: A Survey*. Edition 10. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1999.

Major Supplementary readings will include selections from . . .

- Bryce, James. from *American Commonwealth*.
- Johnson, Paul. from *A History of the American People*.
- Sinclair, Upton. from *The Jungle*.
- Tarbell, Ida. *The History of the Standard Oil Company*.
- Tocqueville, Alexis de. from *Democracy in America*
- Zinn, Howard. from *A People's History of the United States*.

Primary Sources will include the following items, among others . . .

- Constitution of the United States, 1787
- “The Gospel of Wealth”, Andrew Carnegie, 1889
- *Plessy* majority opinion, Henry Brown, 1896
- *Plessy* dissent, John Marshall Harlan, 189
- Speech on the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Coolidge, Calvin, 1926.
- *Korematsu* majority opinion, Hugo Black, 1944
- *Korematsu* dissent, Frank Murphy, 1944
- Policy Planning Study 23, George Kennan, 1948
- *Duck and Cover*, film, 1952
- Letter from a Birmingham Jail, Martin Luther King Jr., 1963

## Course Sequence

### Unit 7: Big America

- Session 1: The West; Homestead Act; Transcontinental Railroad; Bierstadt
- Session 2: The Railroads; Credit Mobilier; Thomas Durant; Robber Barons & Captains of Industry
- Session 3: Mechanization of Agriculture; Farming the Plains; Deere, McCormick
- Session 4: Native Americans; Plains Indians; the Reservation System
- Session 5: Big America; Immigration; Cities in Transition—Chicago, New York
- Session 6: Carnegie; Skyscrapers
- Session 7: The Age of Rockefeller; Standard Oil; Tarbell's *History*

- Session 8: McCormick revisited; Riots & Strikes; Labor problems of the late 1800s

#### Unit 8: Turn of the Century America

- Session 9: A brief political history of the late 1800s; Laissez Faire; Booms and Busts
- Session 10: The Pendleton Act; the Sherman Anti-Trust Act; the changing orientation of Americans toward government
- Session 11: Historical Theories: Frederick Jackson Turner & William Appleman Williams
- Session 12: Alfred Thayer Mahan, Hawaii, Spanish-American War; Yellow Journalism
- Session 13: Teddy Roosevelt; McKinley Assassination
- Session 14: The Roosevelt Administration

#### Unit 3: The Meaning of Progress

- Session 15: Cultural Developments—Music, Literature, Sports
- Session 16: Forms of Progressivism—Democracy, Efficiency, Social
- Session 17: Woodrow Wilson
- Session 18: The Course of the War; America's Role in the Great War
- Session 19: Fourteen Points
- Session 20: Prohibition and Women's Suffrage

#### Unit 4: Boom, Bust, Tragedy, and Triumph

- Session 21: The Twenties; Return to Normalcy; Harding and Coolidge
- Session 22: Immigration; Nativism; the Auto Industry
- Session 23: Herbert Hoover and the Crash
- Session 23: The Difference Between a Crash and a Depression
- Session 24: New Deal; Dust Bowl; Woody Guthrie
- Session 25: The War at Home; the European War
- Session 26: The Pacific War; Victory and the Onset of the Cold War

#### Unit 5: Cold War America

- Session 27: Duck and Cover; Kennan and Containment
- Session 28: Civil Rights Movement, Part 1
- Session 29: The Affluent Society: American cultural developments of the 1950s
- Session 30: Civil Rights Movement, Part 2
- Session 31: Sputnik; the Space Race; Rock and Roll and Mass Media
- Session 32: Eisenhower and Kennedy Administrations
- Session 33: Vietnam, Part 1

#### Unit 6: Legitimacy in Crisis

- Session 34: Vietnam, Part 2; Anti-Authoritarianism; Watergate
- Session 35: Running on Empty; Ford and Carter Administrations
- Session 36: Do You Believe in Miracles?; Reagan and Bush1; Afghanistan
- Session 37: War on Terror and Beyond
- Session 38: America and the Question of the End of History

### **Academic Honesty**

Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, violations of published professional ethics/standards, and any act or attempted act designed to give unfair academic advantage to oneself or another student. See the Angelo State University Student Handbook, Part II B: Academic Integrity for more information.

### **Student Disability Services**

ASU is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs or activities of the university, or be subjected to discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008 (ADAAA), and subsequent legislation.

The Office of Student Affairs is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability, and it is the student's responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting: Dallas A. Swafford, Director of Student Disability Services (325) 942-2047 ([dallas.swafford@angelo.edu](mailto:dallas.swafford@angelo.edu)).

### **Absence for Religious Holy Day**

A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.