



Course Syllabus: Survey of U.S. History since 1865

College of Liberal Arts
HIST 1233 Section 205
Spring Semester 2026

Contact Information

Instructor: Brandon Blakeslee

Office: OD 217

Office hours: Mon, Wed 11:00am-12:00pm; Tues, Thursday 12:00pm-1:30pm

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Instructor Response Policy

Email is the best way to reach me outside of office hours and I will try to respond within 24 hours of your email. However, I do not check my email as regularly on Saturday.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Joseph Locke and Ben Wright, et al. *American Yawp*: *The American Yawp* offers a free and online, collaboratively built, open Access the book by going to the website: <http://www.americanyawp.com/index.html> and then following the instructions to download or access the text.

A one-subject lined notebook

Course Description

General survey of American History from 1865 to the present. Required of all baccalaureate students.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes/Course Competencies

During this course, students will learn how to:

1. identify key events, peoples, individuals, terms, periods, and chronology of the history of the United States; distinguish between historical fact and historical interpretation; and connect historical events in chronological chain(s) of cause and effect
 - a. You will learn what happened and how different historians interpret those events.
2. develop critical thinking skills by discussing the living nature of history, using historical evidence to critique competing interpretations of the same historical events, explaining the nature of historical controversies

- a. We will go into detail about why historic controversies exist and how to evaluate their merits against each other
- 3. synthesize diverse historical information and evidence related to broad themes of U.S. history and present this information in coherent, well-articulated, and well-substantiated analytical discussions and other written assignments
 - a. I will ask you to think critically about people, events, and ideas both in class as well as through assignments
- 4. develop the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision making by examining the motivations and actions of key figures in U.S. history
 - a. By the end of the class you should be able to start doing history yourself
- 5. learn how to sift through a large amount of information and categorize in order to determine its importance and aid in its retention
 - a. You will learn a way to take notes.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work, not the individual to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

Generative AI-Usage

This class involves students developing their research and writing skills. Students should develop those skills themselves rather than offload that responsibility onto generative AI. As such, an excessive use of AI in research or the writing of papers counts as a form of plagiarism as far as this class is concerned. Papers flagged for excessive AI will be given a zero and the students will have one opportunity to rewrite the paper for a better grade.

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grading/Assessment

Assessment: Your final grade is out of 1000 potential points that can be earned from three potential sources

- Notebook Checks (150 points)
 - Will be graded based on notebook checks which will happen four times a semester with each check being worth 50 points
- The Assignment (550 points)
 - You know what is overrated... (100 points)
 - Wikipedia like Article (100 points)
 - Critique of Historic Figure or Defense of Historic Figure (200 points)
- A Midterm Exam (100 points)
- A Final Exam (100 points)

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Points
Participation	200
You know what's overrated...	100
Historic figure Selection	50
Annotated Bibliography	50
Wikipedia like article	100
Opening Arguments	150
Critique or Defense of a Historic Figure	200
Total Points	1000

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

Grade	Points
A	900
B	800 to 899
C	700 to 799
D	600 to 699
F	Less than 600

Readings

This class features weekly readings from *American Yawp*. While students are welcome to read at their own pace, they are expected to finish assigned chapters in-between notebook check dates.

Writing Projects

Students will be asked to do research on a historic figure who pertains to U.S. history between 1865-2006. Students will first choose the figure, compile a list of sources to help them understand the figure, write an overview of the figure, before being asked to critique or defend the figure.

Exams

Exams will have two components: An identification section where you are asked to identify key terms discussed in class and an essay section where you write about the broader theme of the class. Each exam should not take more than fifty minutes to complete and is worth 100 points or 10 percent of your grade.

Extra Credit

I do not grant individual extra credit, but may offer extra credit for attending a guest lecture or something of that nature (but do not have anything planned at this time)

Late Work

Late work will not be accepted unless student arranges an extension before the due date, or extenuating circumstances keep the student from asking for an extension.

Important Dates

Last day for term schedule changes: January 23.

Deadline to file for graduation: February 16

Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" April 29 at 4pm.

Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Final Exam: Wednesday, May 13, 3:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m. in PY103

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled. That being said, I understand that things happen and you may not be able to attend class and so I do not take attendance. However, you are still responsible for information that was discussed in class and I recommend you get notes from your fellow classmates (lecture slides will not be posted online).

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees, and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester.

However, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans, and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make an application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibit the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state, and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License-to-carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by the MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled *“Run. Hide. Fight.”* which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: [“Run. Hide. Fight.”](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule:

Below is the complete course schedule along with readings for each class period and due dates for the assignment. Please note that the schedule may change due to unforeseen circumstances, but I will notify you of the changes and update the dates in the syllabus.

Course Schedule

Week or Module	Reading	Assignment Due
Week 1 (1/20-1/22)	Chapter 15 "Reconstruction"	No assignment due
Week 2 (1/27-1/29)	Chapter 17 "The West"	You know what's highly overrated... Jan 29
Week 3 (2/3-2/5)	Chapter 16 "Capital and Labor"	Historic Figure Selection Feb 5
Week 4 (2/10-2/12)	Chapter 20 "The Progressive Era"	Notebook Check
Week 5 (2/17-2/19)	Chapter 21 "World War I And Its Aftermath"	Annotated Bibliography Feb 19
Week 6 (2/24-2/26)	Chapter 22 "The New Era"	No assignment due
Week 7 (3/3-3/5)	Chapter 23 "The Great Depression"	Notebook Check Wikipedia like Article March 5
Week 8 (3/17-3/19)	Chapter 24 "World War II"	Notebook Check Midterm Exam
Week 9 (3/24-3/26)	Chapter 26 "The Affluent Society"	Opening Arguments March 26
Week 10 (3/31)	Chapter 25 "The Cold War"	Critique of a Historic Figure
Week 11 (4/7-4/9)	Chapter 19 "American Empire" Sections II-IV; Chapter 27 "The Sixties" Sections II, V; Chapter 28 "The Unraveling" Section II	Notebook Check
Week 12 (4/14-4/16)	Chapter 27 "The Sixties" Sections III-IV; VI-VIII	Defense or Critique April 16
Week 13 (4/21-4/23)	Chapter 28 "The Unraveling" Sections III-VIII	No assignment due
Week 14 (4/28-4/30)	Chapter 29 "The Triumph of the Right"	No assignment due
Week 15 (5/5-5/7)	Chapter 30 "The Recent Past"	Notebook Check Final Exam