



**Survey of United States History Since 1865**  
**Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**HIST 1233**  
**Summer 2026**

**Contact Information**

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**Course Description**

This is a special introductory survey of United States history from Reconstruction to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in which the students will make connections between Modern American History and the United States' relationship to the peoples and state(s) of Germany. The class is meant to give the students a basic knowledge and framework of American History, illustrating how the Constitution and America's changing role in the world led to its superpower status and overall prosperity. It focuses on the political, legal, and economic issues that contributed to competing concepts of American identity and offers explanations for how and why the state developed in the manner it did. Major themes include changes in society, the development of American prominence on the world political and economic stages, and the crises that shaped the state and its people. Furthermore, it challenges some of the preconceived and learned notions about American History and the American people that are often presented as "truths" in public schools, popular (and flawed) books, and in the media. These challenges are meant to stimulate deeper thought, challenging views and interpretations that are often uncritically presented in high school classrooms and popular media. There is NO room for personal and intellectual growth unless your opinions and values are challenged. The lectures and readings are meant to develop your critical thinking skills in relation to historical themes and particular events. A primary element of the course is the growth of critical thinking among students, concerning the examination of historical themes and paradigms (examples, patterns, models, and standards).

What makes this course unique is that we are going to be exploring American history in Berlin, Germany, and the students will be connecting what they've learned in the textbook (and online videos, links will be posted on the D2L shell for this course) to their experiences in Germany. You will be expected to have read the textbook for the course in the weeks before we travel to Berlin. You will write very short summaries for your readings, which will help you understand the international relationships between the United States and Germany. In country you will be expected to make constant connections to the German history presented in classes and in your experiences in various field trips with the readings you've done in your textbook. Your final project, due three weeks after you return to the United States, will be a paper in which you

explore a topic that relates to both America and Germany. We will determine the paper topic together in the days before we travel, or in the first week of the program in Berlin.

Furthermore, I have a number of lectures available online that you **must** view for the course. They are labelled by lecture topic, but are necessary for the course since in-class lectures and discussion focus on European History as it relates to American History. Again, you must watch each of them to successfully complete this course.

### **Student Engagement in the Material**

Students will be held personally responsible for their own education. I am a harsh taskmaster and do not accept excuses that tend to be pervasive in today's society. You are adults, and with age comes responsibility for your own actions or lack thereof. Active student participation in learning (which includes careful reading of ALL assignments, the completion of ALL assignments in a timely manner) and adequate preparation is essential to meeting the learning outcomes of the course. A grade of A is a designation for superior work, and B for good work. If your work ethic, written work, and other efforts are merely satisfactory, you will EARN a C. The bare minimum earns a D.

### **Textbook**

We will be using a single textbook selected as a corrective to the current state of college textbooks. It does not have modules or that many visuals. However, it has an easy to read, cohesive narrative of American History, presenting it in a more balanced way than most others I've used in the past. McClay offers what he thinks is most important aspects of American history to the reader. The book is affordable at the university bookstore, but I encourage you to get the electronic copy so you have it on an electronic device immediately after ordering. I will not accept "the book didn't come in" or similar excuses.

**Text: Wilfred McClay, *Land of Hope*, 2019, ISBN: 9781594039379**

Online Readings: As assigned

Readings MUST BE DONE by the first week of the Berlin program.

### **Academic Integrity, 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's own). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

**Notice:** Understand the following – it applies to all assignments, including drafts of papers. If you in any instance "cut and paste" from any internet source without citing that source (plagiarism) or use unapproved internet sources, you will **fail the assignment** in question. Depending on the severity of the offense, the professor reserves the right to employ any and all university sanctioned disciplinary actions, of which I will pursue prosecution to its fullest extent. I will drop you from the course and report the incident to Student Affairs and any other office as

per university policy. This also applies to any work done **with ANY AI tools, including those like Grammarly or other editing tools.** I run your assignments through **AI and plagiarism detectors,** so **DO NOT use AI in your assignments or you will fail the assignment.**

### **Grading**

In the past, I've used a number of different assignments to evaluate student learning and retention. This summer you will be evaluated on a final research project, short written assignments, including summaries, and on class participation.

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Percentage of grade</b>
Final Research project	40%
Participation and short written assignments (summaries)	60%

<b>Final Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	90% plus
B	80 – 89.9%
C	70 – 79.9%
D	60 – 69.9%
F	Less than 60%

At the beginning of the course, I will provide a list of terms for the semester to help the students better understand American History. These terms are essential in understanding United States History in the modern period. If I were you, from the first day of the course, I would begin finding the who, what, where, when, how, and why of the terms, keeping them in your notebook. In this manner, you will come to know the basics of American history and build your knowledge base. This will be helpful as well if you choose to watch the lectures on D2L.

The final paper may be a new exercise to some in the class. It is meant to be a focused research paper on some aspect of US/German relations. The topic should fall into the timeframe of the class (1865-present) and we will discuss a proper topic in the weeks before we travel. It should be about 1000 words in length and should draw on about 10 resources and cannot include your textbooks for this course. It should be well-written, edited, and argue a thesis.

Early work is encouraged. It will be due, without exception, three weeks after our return date.  
No late work will be accepted.

### **Extra Credit**

I do NOT offer extra credit for any reason. Don't ask.

### **Make Up Work/Tests**

I will only allow make up work if there is a legitimate excuse. I have the sole discretion in determining whether or not an absence is excused. Other reasons must be documented in some acceptable form or fashion (proof).

### **Desire-to-Learn (D2L)**

MSU Texas uses this platform for online instruction. Each student is expected to be familiar with it as it provides a primary source of communication between student and professor. Check D2L regularly for announcements, course material, and recorded lectures on specific topics. You can log into D2L through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program in the Distance Learning Office at MSU.

### **Online Computer Requirements**

It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer for this course. *Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.* Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline! Your future boss will tell you the same thing when he is dismissing you.

**E-mail:** Note that e-mail correspondence is the most effective and convenient way in which to communicate with me. The professor/student relationship is professional by nature and, accordingly, your e-mail correspondence should be constructed professionally.

**Withdrawals (Course Drop):** The professor is NOT responsible for student withdrawals. The student is responsible for meeting all academic deadlines including withdrawal deadlines.

**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 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 Student Disability Office.

**Grade Appeal Process:** Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University Undergraduate Catalog.

Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor. The videos for viewing are listed in the contents section on D2L by day.

### **Course Schedule**

As this is a study abroad course, our schedule will be determined in Berlin itself. I will have a tentative schedule once our field trips have been booked. Remember, you must view the lectures online as well as attend the lectures in person in Germany. I expect you to have read the book and started your short summaries of each chapter assigned by the time we arrive or in the first couple of days in Berlin. You are responsible for reading and doing a 100-word summary on each of the following chapters in the McClay book (except for the Introduction and Epilogue):

Introduction and Epilogue

Chapter 11

Chapter 12

Chapter 13

Chapter 14

Chapter 15

Chapter 16

Chapter 17

Chapter 18

Chapter 19

Chapter 20

Chapter 21

Chapter 22