



Survey of United States History Since 1865
Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities and Social Sciences
HIST 1233 Section 280
Spring 2020

Contact Information

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Course Description

This is an introductory survey of United States history from Reconstruction to the end of the 20th century. 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. This course 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 school courses, popular (and flawed) books, and in the media. These challenges are meant to stimulate lively and rational debate, in which students with various opinions can exchange points of view respectfully without childish shunning or ad hominem attacks. There is NO room for personal and intellectual growth unless your opinions and values are challenged. The discussions, lectures, and readings are meant to develop 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).

Student Participation

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, classroom engagement (attentive note taking and participation in discussions), the maintenance of a weekly study schedule, the completion of ALL assignments in a timely manner, adequate preparation for exams, and, when necessary, individual post-exam consultation with the instructor, is essential to meeting the learning outcomes of the course. However, if you turn in all assignments, pass your exams, and participate in discussions, you are not guaranteed a "good grade". A is a designation for superior

work, and B for good work. If your enthusiasm, work ethic, written work, and test taking 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 offered fairly cheaply at the university bookstore.

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

Online Readings: As assigned

Readings for the week MUST BE DONE by the beginning of the first class for that week.

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 to whom credit is given). 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. 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 or all university sanctioned disciplinary actions, of which I will pursue prosecution to its furthest extent.

Grading

In the past, I've used a number of different assignments to evaluate student learning and retention. However, this semester I am employing assignments and evaluation as my mentors evaluated me as an undergraduate, which held me accountable for my own performance.

Assignments	Percentage of grade
Exams (3) 20% each	60%
Analytical book review	20%
Active participation and attendance (includes pop-quizzes and in-class assignments)	20%

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

There will be three essay/short answer exams taken in class. At the beginning of the course, I will provide a list of terms for the semester to help the students study for these exams, giving them what (in my opinion) is most important for well-educated students to understand United States History in the modern period. If I were you, at the beginning of the course, I would begin finding the who, what, where, when, how, and why answers to the terms I present to you, keeping them in a separate notebook. In this manner, you will come to know the basics of each lecture/discussion, so you can better perform in class, and build your knowledge base for exams, discussions, and pop quizzes.

The book review may be a new exercise to some in the class. This is **NOT** a book report. Reviews are critiques of books in which the reviewer briefly describes the main thesis and the points the author uses to prove the argument. Once this is done, the reviewer critiques the book (is the argument believable, well researched, persuasive, well written). Does the author fulfill his or her stated or implied purpose? Is the argument subtle or ham-fisted? I will provide a “how to” sheet with a barebones description of how to do a short academic review. I suggest you use review essays from an academic journal (such as the *American Historical Review*) to get a feel for what they are meant to do. Now you might be asking yourself, “why do I have to do this? I don’t intend to be a professional historian [or] I won’t ever take another course in this department.” Every academic field requires such critical exercises; furthermore you may take a position after college in which the boss wants you to critique something in writing. This review will give you practice doing a formal critique. We will spend class time talking about and practicing analytical writing and the book review itself.

The book you select to review **CANNOT** be a novel or any other work of fiction. It must be an academic book or a substantial memoir with historical significance. It must be approved by the instructor **NO LATER THAN THURSDAY, February 6 AT 4PM**. For every day you are late in requesting book approval, the final grade for the review will be lowered by 5%. I suggest you choose and read the book carefully in the first half of the semester to avoid the end of term flood of assignments. Early work is encouraged. It will be due, without exception, on March 7 no later than noon. No late work will be accepted. Same goes for the exams.

Active participation means not only attending the course, but contributing to discussion, asking questions, and being engaged. Just showing up IS NOT ADEQUATE. If you can't commit, there's no reason to take the course.

Extra Credit

I do NOT offer extra credit.

Make Up Work/Tests

I will only allow make up work if there is a legitimate excuse for missing a scheduled exam. I have the sole discretion in determining whether or not an absence is excused. University functions approved by the administration counts. Other reasons must be documented in some acceptable form or fashion (proof) must be presented.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

I may use MSU's D2L program to post documents or give assignments. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication between student and professor. In the first week, I will post the syllabus and the terms for the course. 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.

Online Computer Requirements

It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. *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!

Instructor Class Policies

Conduct: All students are expected to act as responsible adults. Any disruptions or distractions will be dealt with in an appropriate manner. Below you will find general guidelines covering certain actions and/or behaviors that are to be avoided. As a general rule any behavior that disrupts the administration of this class will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment conducive to learning. In order to assure that all students have the opportunity to gain from the time spent in class, students are prohibited from engaging in any form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result, minimally, in a request that the offending student leave the classroom. Furthermore, the professor reserves the right to deduct points from the student's semester total or remove the student from the course. **Arriving late is considered a distraction.** If arriving more than three (3) minutes late – DO NOT enter the classroom.

Electronic Devices, Texting, and Phones: The use of tape recorders, iPods, mp3s, or any other recording device in class is **prohibited**. It is imperative that you turn off phones, all other communication devices, and electronic equipment before entering the classroom. The use of a telephone or texting device for any reason is prohibited. *On the first offense the student will*

be penalized 20 points on her or his participation score for the week. The second offense will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom. The professor reserves the right to expel and administratively withdraw a student from the class upon the third offense.

Laptops, Tablets, & etc.: You must obtain permission from the professor to use laptops, tablets, and phones (or any other device capable of accessing the internet) in the classroom. Recent scholarship suggests that laptops and tablets are **major distractions** to fellow students and in general do not enhance learning and/or the classroom experience. Furthermore, there will be no surfing, texting, emailing, etc. in the classroom, unless I specifically ask the students to do so.

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

Attendance and your grade: This course is structured so that it is to the student's advantage to attend class regularly. From past experience, students who choose not to attend on a regular basis are not successful. I allow three, and only three unexcused absences. After that, each unexcused absence will result in a penalty to your participation grade. If you have a total of 9 unexcused absences, you will not be able to pass the course.

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.

Course Schedule

Week 1—Introduction to the Course, Policies, and the War Between the States

Reading: McClay, Introduction and Epilogue

Jan. 21—Introduction and the War

Week 2—The Ordeal of Reconstruction and Congressional Power

Reading: McClay, Chapter 11

Jan. 28—Punishing the South, Johnson vs. Congress

Week 3—Post-Reconstruction America

Reading: McClay, Chapter 12

Feb. 4—The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments

Week 4—Building an American Empire

Reading: McClay, Chapter 13

Feb. 11—The Spanish-American War and Foreign Policy, 1865-1914

Week 5—The Progressive Era (?)

Reading: McClay, Chapter 14

Feb. 18—**EXAM 1** and Problems with Progressivism and the Growth of the Government

Week 6—Progressivism's Champion, Woodrow Wilson, and the Great War

Reading: McClay, Chapter 15

Feb. 25—Technocratic Rule and Elitism in American Government; the Great War

Week 7—Fighting the Great War, the American Experience

Reading: James W. Rainey, "Ambivalent Warfare: The Tactical Doctrine of the AEF in World War I," *Parameters: U.S. Army War College* 13 (3) (1983): 34–46 [google search]; and Stephen J. Lofgren, "Unready for War: The Army and World War I," *Army History* (22) (1992): 11-19 [JSTOR]. [No D2L]

Mar. 3—Fighting World War I: American Difference on the Western Front

Week 8—The Roaring 1920s

Reading: McClay, Chapter 16

Mar. 10—Urban Hedonism: Flappers, Jazz, Changing Culture; Teetotalers, Do-Gooders, and Organized Crime: Prohibition and Al Capone

Week 9—FDR and the New Deal

Reading: McClay, Chapter 17

Mar. 24—Progressive Reaction to the Great Depression; New or "Raw" Deal?

Week 10—The Greatest Generation's Greatest Challenge: World War II

Reading: McClay, Chapter 18

Mar. 31—The Second World War and America's Experience

Week 11—Fighting the Second World War, American Military in Europe and the Pacific

Reading: Military history of the United States during World War II (wikipedia page on World War) [special attention will be paid the problems of using Wikipedia in academic context]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_history_of_the_United_States_during_World_War_II

Apr. 7— **EXAM 2** and America in the Second World War

Week 12—The Cold War

Reading: McClay, Chapter 19

Apr. 14—The Korean War and Vietnam

Week 13—The 1960s and the Baby Boomers

Reading: McClay, Chapter 20

Apr. 21—Counterculture, Reaction to Middle America, and Rock and Roll

BOOK REVIEW DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS (NO EXCEPTIONS)

Week 14—Nixon to Reagan: Stagflation to Prosperity

Reading: McClay, Chapter 21

Apr. 28—The Reagan Revolution: Partial Repudiation of Progressivism and the Fall of the USSR

Week 15—Recent America: Polarizing American Society

Reading: McClay, Chapter 22

May 5—Criticizing the Bushes, Clinton, Obama, and Trump

Final Exam during Finals' Week