

History 17.2

History of the United States from 1877 to the Present

Spring Semester, 2017 TTh - 12 AM - 1:30 PM Santa Rosa Junior College Room: Emeritus 1596	Instructor: Mike Burton Email: mburton@santarosa.edu Office: Emeritus 1546 Office Hours: Mondays 12:00-1:00 PM & Thursdays 1:30-2:30 PM
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Course Overview:

This class is a general survey of the history of the United States from the end of the Civil War to the presidency of Barack Obama. This 140 years span covers only about half the amount of history as the 17.1 class, but consider that we're going to start talking about a nation overwhelmed with the difficulties of securing the freedom of millions of black former slaves, and we'll end with the first African American president. In the 1870s, the United States was a war-torn, backwater nation that most of the civilized world expected to inevitably collapse, yet by the 2000s it stood as the planet's that could be considered a global superpower. Many historians have argued this only could have happened due to a set of very unique conditions between the 1870s and 1970s. We'll look at those conditions and contemplate how the United States fairs now that those conditions have changed.

We'll be looking at a time that saw humanity go from the telegraph to a cell phone in every pocket with access to the sum of all human knowledge. We'll go from a time when Americans were just considering the idea of time zones so they could schedule steam locomotive routes, to the ability to get to work by commuter jet. And in warfare, we'll begin with the single-shot rifle, get to the atomic bomb around midterms, and end with remote drones capable of killing a single person from the other side of the planet. It's safe to say the last 140 years has seen more change on the planet Earth than the entire previous millennium. But how has American society dealt with these changes? With so many new ideas flowing through the human zeitgeist, we'll cover an era in which several leaders around the world promised their people an achievable utopia if they were willing to get their hands bloody. You might be surprised with ways in which Americans influenced Adolf Hitler, and in turn, how the Nazi movement in Germany permanently changed race relations in the United States.

This class will contemplate the lives of Americans throughout all of these changes, with a particular focus on the lives of traditionally marginalized people who consistently reminded the United States of the ideals of liberty it professed to be founded on. Most of those struggles are by no means over, but knowing the history of those struggles prepare us for understanding the vehicles of change within our current culture. Some of these topics are still raw, maybe even uncomfortable for us to look at, so remember that we do not study history to judge the people of

the past or to assign blame. We study history to place those people and their decisions into context, to try to see the world as they saw it, to see how those decisions play out in the real world, and to learn how our current society was made, so that we can endeavour to make this society a better one.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- 1) The memorization of exact dates does not concern me as much as chronology does, meaning you will be expected to know the order of major events *and* explain how one event led to the next.
- 2) Describe and analyze the various historical interpretations of the seminal moments in American history from 1877 to the present.
- 3) Explain how the issues of race, class, ethnicity, and gender influenced the development of American society, economic institutions, and the American political system.
- 4) Evaluate the causes and effects of historical events of both the United States and abroad.
- 5) Evaluate the status of various peoples within American society and offer an informed critique of how social, political, and economic factors contributed to their status.
- 6) Explain how decisions made to address immediate issues in domestic and global affairs had long lasting effects on American society.
- 7) Analyze and distinguish between primary and secondary sources as historical evidence.

Required Text:

Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty!: An American History, Volume 2* (Brief 3rd Edition).

ISBN# 9780393935530.

At the SRJC bookstore a used copy is \$54, but on Amazon it usually goes for less than \$20 (the reason I picked an older edition). Other editions should be fine, but it must be Volume 2.

Grading:

Quizzes - 150 points (25%)

Book Report - 150 points (25%)

Midterm Test - 150 points (25%)

Final Test - 150 points (25%)

Total Possible = 600 points

Tests:

The midterm and the final will consist of three sections each: a multiple-choice scantron section, short answers in blue book section, and a take-home essay. Each section will be worth 50 points.

Quizzes:

There will be 4 quizzes throughout the semester, worth 50 points each. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped at the end of the semester. *No make-up quizzes.* If you miss a quiz, that 0 will be the one that is dropped.

Book Reports:

Aside from keeping up with the assigned textbook reading, you will pick one of the books listed below, read it and write a paper (1200-1500 words [about five to six pages]) that gives the author's main historical argument, uses evidence from the book to support that argument, and your review of how effectively you believe the author made his or her argument. *This will not be a summary of the book.* In class we will discuss the details of this assignment, how to write an academic paper, and how to properly cite sources.

James Green- *Death in the Haymarket*

Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston- *Farewell to Manzanar*

Donna Jean Murch- *Living in the City*

Jade Wong Snow- *Fifth Chinese Daughter*

Tom Wolfe- *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*

Late Paper Policy:

Whether your reasons for needing to turn in a late paper are good or bad, legit or fictional, you can turn in any paper one class meeting after its due date and receive 10% off your grade for that assignment (the equivalent of one letter grade).

Teaching Methodology:

Most classes will be designed around my lectures, but your questions and comments are key to this process. Being able to comfortably talk about a subject is one of the best ways to learn the material, so rather than me talking at you for an hour and a half, I prefer discussions where everybody has a voice. We will occasionally do in-class group work meant to foster discussion.

Classroom Comportment:

- 1) We are all adults in this classroom and you will be expected to act like adults. Treat your classmates, myself, and yourself with respect.
- 2) If you disrupt the class, such as *having conversations separate from the class structure*, you will be asked to leave (and the rest of the class might have a very easy quiz after you leave). You chose to enroll in this class and are not required to be here.
- 3) Falling asleep in class is disruptive, as causes the students around to lose their attention and giggle, and I have to stop the lecture to wake you up and ask you to leave.
- 4) No cellphones in class, for any reason. Turn them off before class.
- 5) Laptops are allowed, but *only for taking notes*. Facebook, games, personal email, etc., are strictly forbidden and if caught abusing this trust, then everybody's laptop privileges will be revoked.
- 6) I don't have a rule for repeated tardiness, please don't give me cause to make one.
- 7) Keep in mind, your teachers do form opinions of you and those opinions matter when we're grading.
- 8) I am a very reasonable person and exceptions to the rules can be made if you talk to me. Any exceptions must be able to extend to the whole class.

- 9) If you are struggling with the class, don't wait until the day an assignment is due or afterward to say something. Sometimes there might be something, like an essay question that makes sense to me, but has the whole class confused, and I won't know it unless somebody says something to me.
- 10) Remember, I want you to succeed in this class. I want every one of you to earn a well-deserved A.

Attendance:

These are district policies-

- 1) If your absences exceed more than 10% of the the total class time, I reserve the right to drop you from the course. There is no distinction between excused and unexpected absences, but if you're worried you might miss enough classes that you could be dropped, talk to me or email to let me know you still wish to continue the class.
- 2) If you miss the first two classes without contacting me, you will be dropped.
- 3) If you cease coming to class and fail to drop with Admissions & Records, I might not notice until it's too late to drop you and you can receive an F in the class.

Do Your Own Work Policy:

Any cheating during tests or quizzes, or plagiarism in written papers, will automatically result in a zero grade for that assignment and the Dean's Office will be notified. It might seem easy to cut and paste passages off the internet, but it is even easier for a teacher to type suspicious passages into Google and instantly find the true authors. To build historical arguments you will be using evidence from primary or secondary sources and we will discuss how to properly quote and cite those sources.

Course Timeline & Readings:

Week 1 (Jan 17 & 19) - Introduction & Reconstruction
Reading: Chapter 15, "What is Freedom?"

Week 2 (Jan 24 & 26) - Expanding & Securing the Frontier
Reading: Chapter 15, "What is Freedom?"
Chapter 16, America's Gilded Age

Week 3 (Jan 31 & Feb 2) - Gilded Age & Working for a Wage
Reading: Chapter 16, America's Gilded Age

Week 4 (Feb 7 & 9) - Immigration & Intimidation
Reading: Chapter 17, Freedom's Boundaries

Week 5 (Feb 14 & 16) - Overseas Imperialism & Domestic Populism
Reading: Chapter 17, Freedom's Boundaries

Week 6 (Feb 21 & 23) - A Man, A Plan, A Canal, Panama

Reading: Chapter 18, The Progressive Era

Week 7 (Feb 28 & Mar 2) - The Good, The Bad, and The Progressive Politics

Reading: Chapter 18, The Progressive Era

Week 8 (Mar 7 & 9) - Women's Rights & World War One

Reading: Chapter 19, Safe for Democracy

Week 9 (Mar 14 & 16) - Booms & Busts

Reading: Chapter 20, From Business Culture to Great Depression

Midterm Test with essay due.

Book Report Selection due.

SPRING BREAK

Week 10 (Mar 28 & 30) - New Deals & Great Migrations

Reading: Chapter 21, The New Deal

Week 11 (Apr 4 & 6) - World War Two & Race Revisioned

Reading: Chapter 22, Fighting for the Four Freedoms

Week 12 (Apr 11 & 13) - Red Scare & Cold War

Reading: Chapter 23, The United States and the Cold War

Week 13 (Apr 18 & 20) - Suburbs Sprawl & Civil Rights

Reading: Chapter 24, An Affluent Society

Book Report Thesis Statement due.

Week 14 (Apr 25 & 27) - Real Rebellions & Would-Be Revolutions

Reading: Chapter 25, The Sixties

Week 15 (May 2 & 4) - The Birth of the Red & Blue States

Reading: Chapter 26, The Triumph of Conservatism

Book Reports Due

Week 16 (May 9 & 11) - From Communism to Terrorism

Reading: Chapter 27, Globalization and its Discontents

Chapter 28, September 11 and the Next American Century

Week 17 (May 16 & 18) - Wrap Up & Review

Reading: Chapter 28, September 11 and the Next American Century

Week 18 - Finals, with essay due.

