This course examines, through reading, discussion, and writing, how individual lives and historical forces interacted in the United States since 1865. Understanding historical change requires that we put people in contexts: events like the Civil War or Great Depression; political party realignments like the elections of 1896 or 1936; movements like the Populist farmers’ revolt or the civil rights movement; ideologies like individualism or progressivism or fundamentalism; and social positions defined by race, class, gender, religious or ethnic belonging. This is a fundamental skill of historical thinking: contextualization.

Further, taking historical perspective requires we understand people first as they understood themselves, in light of the norms and knowledge of their day. Only then should we evaluate their ideas and choices in contexts that we can more fully understand than they. You have a good book for context. You have great texts from historical actors, with rich subtexts and vivid language that captures in a variety of contexts.

During and after European conquest of the Western Hemisphere, the United States became the home and the destination of an astounding array of the world’s peoples. If not already here, they arrived on these shores driven by hope, necessity, greed, and in the case of African Americans, enslavement. The country has since been riven with regional, class, ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural divisions. Yet often in the heat of conflict at home and abroad we see extraordinary acts of cooperation and major strides toward inclusion.

The United States was a nation built upon ideals of freedom, equality, openness, and resistance to imperial tyranny. Yet it was also built by millions of unfree, coerced, and exploited laborers of all colors and nationalities. With a dizzying cast of characters, the nation excluded, subordinated, or segregated its people as much as it included and integrated them. Exclusion and inclusion happened at the same time, and were bound up with each other. In other words, some people were welcomed into the circle of “We the People” even as others were pushed out -- only to attempt to fight their way into the circle later.

The course will consider the biggest questions of American history through representative biographies and voices of public figures, famous and not so famous, who engaged in conflict over the meaning of democracy and the justice of the social order. We will follow their lives in context as they grappled with questions such as:

- What were the necessary political and economic conditions to make real the 14th amendment’s promise of equal citizenship for all, after the Civil War ended slavery?
- Under what rules of the economic game could Americans “better their condition,” in Lincoln’s words, especially when “captains of industry” running large corporations employing armies of workers suddenly dominated the American economy?
- How could women achieve equality in the political sphere and the family, at a time when both by tradition and convenience subordinated them to men? How did women who claimed the right to participate in politics regard mass immigration, urbanization, and growing inequality under industrial capitalism?
• Why did Jim Crow segregation in the South become codified into law in the 1890s-1900s, and what strategies in the 1960s and 1970s proved effective in African Americans’ struggle to dismantle an oppressive social system?
• What role did ordinary citizens claim in defining the great issues affecting the U.S. role in the world: war and immigration?
• What impact did radicalism and anti-radical repression have on the nation’s politics?

Student Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
   - Demonstrate comprehension of major characters, events, decisions, ideologies, and trends in U.S. in a way that rises above recitation of facts and dates to the level of interpretation. People identify facts and dates accurately because they matter in explaining patterns of human experience and change.
   - Discuss and debate conflicting positions taken by those who lived history and by historians who write about these actors. This involves critical analysis of primary and secondary sources.
   - Write short essay quizzes and papers that compare, contrast and explain the points of view and actions of historical actors in terms of their contexts of opportunity and constraint.
   - Synthesize your own analyses and conclusions along one axis of interpretation covering the full sweep of American history over more than a century.
   - Analyze past actors’ lives in context so that you can imagine your own life in contexts of shifting opportunities public challenges, and so that you may make informed choices in a democratic society.

Student Learning Activities – A Summary

Participation, Weekly Quizzes, Discussion Reports, Individual Weekly Journal Entries, and a Final Synthetic Essay based on the insights recorded in your Journals. No in-class exams. Details below, but appreciate you need to do 3 basic things:
   - Prepare in response to the focusing questions, and talk in class and groups.
   - Learn enough of the material to do well on quizzes, or make up through alternative on-line exercises.
   - Make weekly observations of your own thoughts and the best quotations from history, in a journal that will provide raw material for writing a final exam that is a coherent synthetic essay on one of the defined topics.

In the CANVAS modules for this course, I will provide focusing questions for each class along with the full assignments that direct you to the textbook and related primary source readings. Classes will have 40-60 minute lectures, general question and answer sessions, and focused group discussions. Lectures supply new material or will develop themes discussed in texts. If our authors missed a main point or did not fully interpret an event, I will do so--you should take notes, because I might ask you how I differed later.

For most classes, groups of 4 will meet in Teams for focused discussions. This requirement makes it imperative that you prepare in advance and that you come to class having done the readings and considered the questions. If you do not, your own and your group’s performance will suffer (though I have several ways to make sure people are not hugely penalized for being in a group with consistent “slackers”).

Requirements:

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. You must email me in advance if you will miss class, or, in case of emergency, within 24 hours after class. I excuse absences only on the grounds of personal or family illness, or serious emergency, or documented need to attend a religious observance. More than two unexcused absences and
your final grade will go down 2 points for every day missed. Three consecutive unexcused absences constitute grounds for asking you to withdraw from the course.

**Participation, 10%.** We will award points based on the quality and relevance, as well as the frequency of your remarks in general class discussion, and in your teams (as observed by us and your team mates). Highest points will be awarded for people who can make concise analytical statements and support or illustrate their ideas with evidence drawn from the voices of historical actors. You will also have opportunities to make observations on Canvas and LaunchPad exercises.

**Weekly Quizzes, 20%.** Weekly on-line quizzes outside of class draw on any assigned material or content presented in mini-lectures. Your best ten will count toward your final grade. If you run into trouble with quizzes, try working through MacMillan’s LaunchPad chapter quizzes first. Canvas quizzes will consist of half thoughtful multiple choice questions, half short essays.

**Group Discussion Reports, 20%, 400 words.** When we break out into focused team discussions, each student will rotate into and out of the role of “scribe” or “recorder-reporter.” Within 36 hours the scribe will summarize and report on the day’s discussion in writing. You may certainly help individuals in your group, but one person will sign off on each report, and all must write a roughly equal number of reports. There will be one grade for the report, but **HALF** of this grade’s percentage (10% of your final grade) will be awarded to the individuals who write the report. The **OTHER HALF** (10% of your final grade) will be recorded as a group grade. A class this size needs a mechanism for students to hold each other accountable in preparing and thinking about the assignments and topics. Individual final grades may therefore be affected +/- 3 points by how well your group functions. But don’t worry, I did this very successfully twice before and developed ways to assess disproportionate efforts within each group, and adjust final grades in cases where individual students don’t pull their weight (this actually hasn’t happened very much at all). Frequency of group discussions and reports will vary depending on assignments and topics and timing of what happens in class. But as we’ll have at least one and sometimes two group discussions per week, you should expect to personally write a report on your group’s discussion every third week or so. At least 15 minutes will be allocated to group discussions. Use email or Google Docs or paper notes to supplement discussions, sharing your quoted material and individual interpretations verbally and in writing. See Canvas for a Rubric. Your main focus will be on interpreting past actors, but you will inevitably have disagreements or different perspectives, and these should be noted in the reports. Not everyone “does history” the same way, and that is of great interest to me!

**Weekly Journal Entries, 20%.** **Pass/Fail “Free Writing” With a Purpose.** Ten of these must receive passing grade to count toward your final grade. This ensures you will make steady progress on a great final exam! Here you will record three things, in loose paragraphs, yet, complete sentences: 1) Record your ideas and reflections about social and political and cultural developments that you have chosen to focus on for your final exam; 2) Refine chunks of supportive evidence in the form of paraphrases and direct quotations from historical actors. Don’t just quote textbooks or scholars or my lectures. Paraphrase them so the ideas become your own. BUT historical actors speak in language that often demands direct quotation, and that is a fine art; 3) Make comparisons to other groups or decisions or events, especially those that have come before in this class, but also including today’s controversies.

**Final Exam, 30%.** Write up a 10-12 page synthetic essay interpreting and comparing several trends, movements, decisions, or people across the arc of the course (the United States, 1865-2000). Draw exclusively from the assigned material for this course (no other internet or other course material will be allowed—this is meant to synthesize what you learn in this class. If you would like recommendations for supplementary reading from historians, ask me). See Rubric in Canvas.

**Grading Scale:** A+: 98-100; A: 93-97; A-: 90-92; B+: 87-89; B: 83-86; B-: 80-82; C+: 77-79; C: 73-76; C-: 70-72; D+: 67-69; D: 63-66; D-: 60-62; F: 59 and lower.
Weekly Journal and Final Exam Focus—Pick One and Run With It!

In the first few weeks PICK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING and focus your journal entries and your final 10-12 pages take home examination on those questions and themes within one of these arenas of ideas and events. As you see, half the course asks you to interpret and individualize your understanding of what really matters in the past. Use concepts in the readings and these descriptive summaries to organize thoughtful and empirically grounded, specific observations. Synthesize and compare selected voices of past actors to give your narrative human depth as well as analytical precision:

Capitalism, Economic Justice, and the State (Political Economists)
The “classical” liberal theory of laissez-faire political economy views government authority as hostile to and inimical to economic freedom, which is commonly theorized to be the basis of political freedom, especially among conservatives. Yet everywhere we look, powerful corporate interests historically turned to government to foster favorable climates for success. How have these corporate actors controlled and limited state authority? How have ordinary people – especially farmers, workers, and consumers – turned to government and used their own power of numbers in order to balance the power game we call “political economy”? How have those with relatively little economic power successfully or unsuccessfully won or lost opportunities or security from the state and powerful corporate interests? Ask me for examples as the class proceeds if you feel like you are missing something.

Inclusion and Exclusion in the Circle of “We The People” (Insurgent Citizens)
Historians and political scientists use the powerful concept of “citizenship” – the place where individual political and economic rights are either accorded or denied to people on the basis of ascribed group membership -- to trace changes over time in the relative power and access that different groups enjoy to the basic institutions that secure membership in the national community and provide for opportunity. Compare how different “out groups” – immigrants, African Americans, other minorities – have been treated by the majority and have challenged and/or overcome those exclusions commonly referred to as “second-class citizenship”? Talk about several groups, as in comparisons of immigrants and African Americans, or comparisons of African Americans and Indians or Latinos or Asian Americans. Ask me for examples as the class proceeds if you feel like you are missing something.

Gender Roles in Society, Politics, and Culture (Gender Benders)
Women to various degrees have accepted or challenged separate and subordinate roles in the private sphere of the family, and the public spheres of politics and economics and culture. How have women challenged traditional womanhood, either as women and mothers with special roles and duties, or as women with equal rights (commonly called feminists)? And how have men changed their own views of masculinity and manhood in relation to women’s challenges or new demands from other men? How have sexual minorities defined themselves and demanded equal freedom and spaces in the culture and polity? Ask me for examples as the class proceeds if you feel like you are missing something.

America’s Global Missions-- Empire of Liberty? (Freedom’s Imperialists)
In pushing the boundaries of the Republic across the North American continent and then into the Caribbean and Pacific, Americans have theorized that they have an exceptional kind of empire, devoted not to power or greed, but to universal law, or free trade, or democracy, or Civilization. Defending freedom was the philosophy or rationale for two world wars, and for projecting global military and economic power that defined the Cold War. How have Americans been at odds over their mission, their interests, and their profits in the world beyond the boundaries of the United States? How has our view of our allies and adversaries changed since the 19 century? How have those who dissented from America’s foreign adventures expressed themselves and how have they been treated, winning or losing influence over America’s actions abroad? (Reference to civil liberties of those dissenting from foreign policies will be appropriate on several major occasions). Ask me for examples as the class proceeds if you feel like you are missing something.
Politics, Parties, Elites, and Populisms of the Left and Right, From the Grange to the Tea Party (“We the ‘Real’ People,” or the Barn Burners)

The two parties have experienced relentless challenges, from within their ranks, from each other, and from outsiders who gravitated to third parties or worked to transform parties from within. Often the challengers identified themselves as “the people,” “the producers,” “real Americans,” “the forgotten man,” or the “silent” disenfranchised majority. Silent no more! They expressed intense dissatisfaction with central authorities and remote centers of power – be they monopolistic corporations or any of the many units of government and corporate media. If there is something called populism that helps us make sense of American politics, who have been its main proponents, how have they defined their enemies and the nature of the distant threat to their way of life? And how has this changed? Ask me for examples as the class proceeds if you feel like you are missing something.

The Politics of Fear: The Uses of Political Scare Tactics and Moral Panics (The Political Vampires)

Senator Arthur Vandenburg famously told President Harry Truman that if he wanted taxpayers to support Congressional action to aid to Greece and Turkey in their fight against Communism in 1947, he was going to have to “scare hell out of the American people.” When have politicians and political activists used scare tactics to move people to support them, and when have they appealed to, in Lincoln’s words, “the better Angels of our nature”? This question is especially relevant to the issue of radicalism and civil liberties, since in wartime citizens have often had their freedoms curtailed because of what they might do. This kind of politics has always been there, but I think it amped up considerably around the strike wave of the 1880s, World War I, the Cold War, and between 1975 and 1985. Ask me for examples as the class proceeds if you feel like you are missing something.

Required Texts for Purchase


Course Reader available only at Copy King, 611 W. Lee St., Greensboro, ph. 333-9900 (CALL THEM FIRST). Hereafter referred to as the “Red Reader.” This is only available at Copy King, and is an excellent low cost alternative to published collections (Hewitt’s and Lawson’s accompanying volume of documents is $27. This will be much less, and carefully curated. I assign several short excerpts – all primary sources -- each week that speak to themes of the course. Purchasing this convenient reader ensures you will always bring pertinent texts to class. All students should bring both their textbook and the Red Reader to every class.

Note: The great virtue of this textbook is how much it incorporates individual stories and primary sources into a narrative that captures all kinds of Americans and supplies concepts that help us understand contexts. Specific documents and images that were created by past actors provide intimate exposure to their expressions and experiences. These are the building blocks that all historians use to reconstruct complete and plausible pictures of the past. But again, to make full sense of these past voices, we need understanding of broader contexts that might not have been fully understood at the time. Key concepts structure our understanding of broad trends and contexts, and they are conveniently listed at the end of each chapter: globalization, progressivism, industrialization, immigration, populism, the “liberal establishment,” imperialism -- all these concepts help explain and structure understanding of events like the Spanish-Cuban-Filipino-American war of 1898-1904. They allow for international comparisons, for example with the British Boer War, and allow for comparisons across time, for example between that conflict and the United States’ later war in Indochina.

Try to do all the reading before the first class in the week, and certainly do the assigned reading that is clearly pertinent to that day’s topic as titled. Check Canvas for more detailed instructions, citations, and questions.
Administrative Matters:

Course policy on sustainability: Campus-wide policies are being adopted that require students, staff and faculty to act in ecologically conscious ways while at UNCG. No grade here, just the grade the biosphere gives us all! Here are a few links to sustainability information at UNCG, including a recycling guide.

http://sustain.uncg.edu/  http://www.uncg.edu/student.groups/ungreen/index.htm
http://www.uncg.edu/rcy/index.htm

Electronic devices in class: Please turn off cell phones and stow them. Please do not text. All laptops must be closed and stowed, unless I allow them during your discussion periods. The class deserves no less than your undivided attention. We will be an almost entirely technology free zone. It is a learning space where a full range of verbal and nonverbal cues come to play; electronic devices can suck people right out of class and create distracting winds in the process. I expect everyone to purchase a paper textbook and paper course reader, and bring them to class. I will use PowerPoint and internet sources but everyone will be equally focused on the issues. No photographing of PowerPoints or recording of lectures and class discussions is permitted.

UNCG’s Academic Integrity Policy http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/
Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy will be handled in accordance with UNCG procedures. An Educational Resolution Program option is available to students with no other Academic Integrity violations. I am more serious about this than almost anything. Cheating cheapens the value of other students’ honestly done work!

Plagiarism Defined. Memorize the library’s definition and then take the research tour!
http://library.uncg.edu/depts/ref/tutorial/integrate/plagdef.asp

Class Schedule
(Check Canvas for Full Daily Assignments and Guiding Questions)

Complete Reading Assignments, daily questions for study and group discussion, discussion report assignments, and individual journal entries are all outlined on Canvas. Minor changes are to be expected, especially when I learn more about student interests, learn Canvas and LaunchPad’s capabilities, and we adapt to snow days.

WEEK ONE: TOSSED INTO THE STREAM OF HISTORY

1/17: Introductions—Explanation of Themes, Assignments, Guidelines for Doing Well
1/19: “I Did Not Know That!” -- Forces and Events that Shaped America in Your Lifetime
Read: Hewitt and Lawson, Exploring American Histories, ch. 29. Yes, we start with the LAST chapter.
Write: Pick one of the trends that has shaped your world, and examine a related defining event since 1991. In the spirit of discovery and critical self-awareness, pick something that you see now as enormously important in shaping our country or your identity or both, but something that you may have only dimly understood at the time (something important that you really haven’t appreciated up until now). How has your understanding of the event, trend, and its broader context been shaped by reading these historians? Write a short essay, no more than one page single space, 400 words, on the Canvas discussion page. Interesting not only to me as I get to know you but also to your classmates, so don’t write anything that you necessarily want to keep private or share only with me.

WEEK TWO: RECONSTRUCTION: A DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION EXECUTED AND REDEEMED

Read: Hewitt and Lawson, Exploring American Histories, ch. 14, including the “document projects” in the textbook and black voices from Reconstruction in the Red Reader. See questions on Canvas.
1/24: Reconstruction: Emancipation and Black Political Empowerment, 1862-1870
1/26: Reconstruction: Governance, Violence, and White Political Betrayal, 1868-1877
WEEK THREE: CONQUERING THE WEST AND “CIVILIZING” THE INDIANS

Read: Hewitt and Lawson, Exploring American Histories, ch. 15, including document projects in the chapter and Red Reader (Sitting Bull; opposing viewpoints on Indian Education from Thomas Morgan and Luther Standing Bear).

1/31: Western Conquest and the Incorporation of Peoples
2/2: Indian “Reform”: Assimilation, Education, and Resistance in the Late 19th Century

WEEK FOUR: REVOLUTIONARY CAPITALISM AND WORKING-CLASS ACTION


2/7: Titans of Industry and the Great Debate over Monopoly, Wealth, and Poverty
2/9: Knights of Labor and Class Conflict

WEEK FIVE: FARM CRISIS, URBAN CRISIS

Read: Hewitt and Lawson, Exploring American Histories, ch. 16, 538-543; ch. 17, 564-577, ch. 18 entire. See also Documents by Jacob Riis, news coverage of Theodore Roosevelt, and a fuller excerpt of Randolph Bourne’s famous essay, “Transnational America” in the Red Reader.

2/14: Populism and the Crisis of the 1890s
2/16: Mass Immigration, Nativist Reaction, and the Struggle for Urban Power

WEEK SIX: PROGRESSIVE MEN AND WOMEN


2/21: Progressive Reform and the Search for Order and Control
2/23: Social Justice Progressivism, “Maternalism,” and Women’s Suffrage

WEEK SEVEN: BESTRIDE THE GLOBE -- FROM CARIBBEAN AND ASIAN EMPIRE TO WORLD WAR

Read: Hewitt and Lawson, Exploring American Histories, ch. 20, ch. 21, 683-688, Read also Mark Twain and Mary Elizabeth Lease on empire, the New Republic Editorial on Wilson, War and the Intellectuals, and Randolph Bourne’s response, “War and the Intellectuals.”

2/28: The Spanish-American-Cuban-Filipino War and the Trans-Oceanic Empire
3/2: World War One and the End of Progressivism: A Trojan Horse for Repression?

WEEK EIGHT: THE TRIBAL TWENTIES AND THE COMING OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION


3/7: Fighting for the Soul of America: Immigration Restriction, the KKK, and Black Nationalism

WEEK NINE: THE NEW DEAL AND POPULAR POLITICS IN THE DEPRESSION
3/21: No Class—Professor Lecturing at Jepson Leadership Forum at the University of Richmond  

3/23: Economic and Environmental Collapse, the Federal Response, and Popular Expectations of Government?

WEEK TEN: WORLD WAR II, JAPANESE INTERNMENT, AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE “NEW DEAL ORDER”


3/30: The Forties, the Social Contract, and Coming of the Permanent War Economy

WEEK ELEVEN: COLD WAR, RED SCARE, AND CULTURAL CONSERVATISM IN THE FIFTIES


4/4: From Cold War to McCarthyism: The Politics of Fear

4/6: Consumerism, Suburbia, and Women’s Roles in the Fifties


Discussion of Freedom Summer based on document project 26.

4/13: The Great Society

WEEK THIRTEEN: CRACKS IN THE LIBERAL “CONSENSUS”


4/18: The Battlefields of Vietnam and America’s Cities

4/20: Women’s Rights and Women’s Liberation?


WEEK FOURTEEN: THE RISE OF THE RIGHT, ANTINUCLEAR POLITICS, AND COLD WAR’S END


4/25: The Rise of the Conservative Coalition and Its Challengers


FINAL TAKE HOME ESSAY EXAM BASED ON YOUR JOURNAL ENTRIES AND ONE OF THE ISSUE AREAS DUE Friday May 5, 2017, at 6:30 PM sharp—On line and in my office 2141 MHRA

Have a great summer!