

History 221

American History from 1877—Present

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Office Hours: MWF 12:00-1:00 and by appointment.

We will explore pivotal moments from the end of Reconstruction to more recent developments. This course will seek to explain the context, causes, significance, and trajectory of decisive episodes. The readings, lectures, and class discussions are intended to foster critical thinking rather than merely inform about the past. Successful students will not only gain a greater understanding of our nation's development but hone skills in evaluating evidence, argument, and cogent expression.

Students are expected to have read the assigned reading by the specified date and thus be prepared to discuss the material in class. Special attention should be given to the bias of the author, the evidence s/he uses and its rhetorical support. The instructor's lectures supplement the textual assignments, and integration of all materials is necessary to successfully answer quizzes and exams. The students will not only have to sift facts from the competing narratives, but explain why they find a particular view persuasive.

Required Texts

Paul Johnson. *A History of the American People*.

Howard Zinn. *A People's History of the United States* (Recent editions preferred.)

Primary documents not readily accessible will be made available as required.

Grading

Students will take a Midterm and a Final Exam. In addition to other elements, each exam requires an essay incorporating the texts and lectures and must demonstrate critical reasoning. Skillful use of historical materials must be at the heart of the essay, but still be governed by traditional rules of college writing and employ clarity and thoughtful organization. For the assigned book review, the student in consultation with the instructor, shall select a historical work. After the instructor approves the book, the student will write a 4-5 page review critically evaluating the author's argument and evidence. Quizzes shall also be administered throughout the term, requiring the students to be current with their readings and lectures. As participation contributes to the final grade, students are expected to thoughtfully join in class discussions.

The components are weighted as follows: Quizzes (10%); Participation (10%); Midterm Exam (25%); Book Review (25%); Final Exam (30%).

Our Tentative Schedule

June 22-26

The End of Reconstruction; The Gilded Age.
Zinn, 239-295; Johnson, 498-607.

June 29-July 3

Imperial America and Progressivism
Zinn, 297-376; Johnson, 607-656.
Documents: *Proceedings in the Matter of Reed Smoot*, Joseph F. Smith Testimony;
W.E.B. DuBois, *Souls of Black Folk*; Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House*.

July 6-10

Normalcy, Depression and War
Zinn, 377-425; Johnson, 656-788.

July 13-17

Midterm Exam: July 15
Cold War, Korea, and Civil Rights
Zinn, 426-467; Johnson, 788-869, 891-94.
Documents: NSC 68; McCarran Internal Security Act; Letters from Montgomery.

July 20-24

Vietnam
Zinn, 469-501; Johnson, 869-90
Documents: Pentagon Papers Selections; National Security Archive and Cold War
International History Project on Cuban Missile Crisis; Port Huron Statement.

July 27-31

Movements and Malaise
Zinn, 503-62; Johnson, 894-917.

Aug 3-7

Book Reviews Due: Aug 3
Republican Ascendancy
Zinn, 563-682; Johnson 917-76.
Documents: Project for the New American Century; Moral Majority; Reagan,
"Morning in America."

Aug 10

Quo vademus?

Those requiring additional accommodations due to disability should contact the university's disability office. The instructor retains all rights to any recordings made of the lectures. Any reproductions are permitted solely for the students' use during the term.