Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the history of the United States in the late-19th, 20th, and early-21st centuries. During these years, the United States matured from a provincial and fractious nation into a modern and still-fractious superpower. We will examine the major political, social, and economic developments of this period and consider their impact on how Americans viewed themselves, their institutions, and the world around them. The course also introduces students to the analysis of primary-source historical texts. Finally, the course invites students to consider the “big questions” of historical inquiry, such as how to link the individual personalities and events of the past with the broader movements and forces at play in politics, society and economy.

Course Goals

At the end of this course you will be able to:

• Identify the major patterns of economic development, social change, and political reform in the United States, from the late 19th century through the early 21st century.
• Explain how mass industrialization reshaped American demography, geography, social conflicts, government institutions, and foreign relations.
• Describe the emergence in the United States of a powerful national state over the course of the 20th century, including arguments made on its behalf and objections raised against it. Explain how the growth of big government was shaped by and itself shaped world affairs.
• Recognize and assess how recent American history since the 1990s expands upon and diverges from broader patterns of American economic and political history, going back to the 1870s.
• Analyze primary-source texts to complicate and ask new questions about broad historical narratives.

Required Readings

The main text for this course is Elizabeth Cobbs-Hoffman, Edward J. Blum, Jon Gjerde, eds., *Major Problems in American History*, Volume II: Since 1865, 3rd ed. (Wadsworth, 2011). New and used copies are available for purchase—often at considerable discount—at Amazon, AbeBooks, Alibris, and other booksellers. Note that used books often take a long time to be delivered. Regardless of how you acquire the book, you will need it for the first module.
All additional readings and multimedia materials will posted online within the relevant modules.

A traditional textbook is not required in this course. Nevertheless, if you wish to consult a textbook, the following is recommended: Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty!: An American History*, Vol. 2, Seagull 3rd ed. (Norton, 2010). Amazon.

**Grades**

Your final course grade will be made up of the following components:

- **Participation**: 35%. Your participation grade encompasses several distinct components, which are outlined in a grading rubric that is available on the course website. It includes the quality of your group-discussion posts, civility and responsiveness to other students’ comments in group discussion, and timely responses to email from the instructor.

  Your participation grade will be assigned at the end of the course and covers the sum total of your participation throughout the term. Nevertheless, in order to give you a sense of how your participation is being assessed, you also will be given 2 non-binding participation assessments over the duration of the course: one on July 26 (covering the first 5 modules) and another on August 8 (covering the subsequent 4 modules). These assessments are intended to identify your progress but will not be used directly in calculating the final participation grade.

- **Essays**: 25%. This component is calculated by averaging the 5 individual essay grades you receive. A detailed grading rubric for essays is available on the course website.

- **ID Quizzes**: 10%. Each of the 5 ID quizzes will receive 0-2 points. The sum total of all 5 quizzes makes up the quiz component of the final grade. The grading rubric for ID quizzes consists of the following:

  2: Student has fair to excellent understanding of the term to be identified, including the term’s definition or meaning, relevant dates and context, its historical significance, and an instance from course materials in which the term appears. (This corresponds to conventional grades ranging from A to B.)

  1: Student has a very limited understanding of the term to be identified, and is able only to describe properly one or two of the above elements. (This corresponds to conventional grades ranging from B- to C-.)

  0: Student did not complete the quiz, submitted a blank quiz, or is completely mistaken about the identity of the term in question. (This corresponds to conventional grades ranging from D to F.)

- **Final Exam**: 30%. The grading rubric for the final exam utilizes the essay and ID rubrics.

**Module Assignments**

For each module, students will complete 4 distinct assignments:
1. **Lecture**: Watch a brief lecture (or read its transcript). The lecture (and transcript) for each module will be available online on the first day of that module.

2. **Readings, Multimedia Materials, and Handouts**: Complete assigned readings, examine any assigned multimedia materials (e.g., films or film clips, artwork, songs), and review any handouts accompanying the lecture. The assigned readings and multimedia materials for all modules will be available to you at the beginning of the course so consider reading ahead in order to facilitate your participation in group discussion.

3. **Group Discussion**: Participate in group discussion by posting at least 2 comments (ranging from a few sentences to 2-3 paragraphs) to a group discussion board. At the beginning of each module, the instructor will provide at least 2 threads (each comprising a question or comment) to help launch the conversation. You are required to post at least 1 original, substantive comment to the thread of your choice and to post 1 response to comments posted by any another classmate. This is the minimum requirement and it is perfectly acceptable. Of course, a lively, shared conversation is the single most critical component of a successful course, so you encouraged to go beyond the minimum: to read and ponder all of your classmates’ postings and to submit as many postings and responses as you wish to share. At times, the instructor may intervene in a discussion already underway. Be sure to read carefully read the instructor’s additional post(s). You are encouraged but not required to respond, as this falls beyond the minimum requirement.

One further note: some modules will feature separate threads in which the instructor asks students respond in some manner (e.g., to introduce themselves to fellow classmates during the first module). You are expected to participate but your response will not affect your grade (unless of course you are uncivil).

4. **Essay or ID Quiz** (except Module 1, where there is neither an essay or ID quiz)

   **Essay.** In each of 5 modules (see course schedule below), you will write a brief essay. An essay question or prompt will be provided at the beginning of the module. In response, you will submit online a 2-4 page essay by midnight of the final day of the assigned module. The essays will cover the lecture and reading/multimedia assignments; no additional reading is expected. Aside from your first essay, in which you will receive more extensive feedback, you will often receive only a rubric assessment and a grade for these essays. If you wish further clarification, feel free to contact the instructor.

   **ID Quiz.** In each of 5 modules (see course schedule below), you will complete an ID quiz. The quiz must be completed online at any time on the last day of the assigned module. Once you begin the quiz, you will have 15 minutes to complete it. The quiz consists of a single term (or individual, event, title, or phrase), for which you will write a paragraph (4-6 sentences) that addresses the basic questions of who, what, when, where, and why. In particular, your paragraph should identify the term (or individual, event, title or phrase); provide an approximate date and context for the term; explain the term’s significance within American history and the course’s main themes; and give a specific example from lecture or the reading that supports your explanation. In most cases, you will receive a rubric assessment and a grade but no individual feedback on your ID quizzes. If you wish further clarification, feel free to contact the instructor.

   **Exemplary Work.** Soon after the conclusion of each module, the instructor will post to the course website an exemplary essay or ID from that past module to serve as a standard
by which students can assess their own work and progress. In some cases the instructor will comment on the strength or weakness of the exemplary works but the authors’ identities will be concealed to preserve privacy.

**Final Exam**

The final exam will take place on **August 17** on the Storrs campus. Alternatively, you can take the exam on the same date at a regional UConn campus with an approved proctor or at a certified proctoring center with instructor approval. Information on making such alternative arrangements will be available online. To ensure that your final-exam arrangements are properly settled, you are required to report the following:

- **By July 16**, you must inform the instructor where you expect to take the final exam.
- If you are not taking the exam on the Storrs campus, you must secure all arrangements and **by July 23**. After final approval is granted, your arrangements for the final exam cannot be modified.

The exam will consist of 4 IDs (worth a total of 50%) and 1 essay question (worth 50%).

- **IDs.** You will write identification paragraphs on 4 out of the 7 terms listed on the final exam. You will not have any advance notice as to the 7 terms that will appear on the exam but you do get to select the 4 terms on which you will write.

- **Essay.** On August 15, you will be provided with 3 possible essay questions that could appear on the final exam. Only at the exam itself will you discover which of the 3 essay questions has been selected. In other words, you will not have a choice of essay questions at the final exam so you will have to study for all 3 essay questions.

The final exam is closed-book and closed-notes, which means you cannot consult any books or notes during the exam itself. Any preparation you do in advance (e.g., for the essay questions) will have to be memorized.

**Additional Policies**

**Academic Integrity:** You cannot communicate with other students or receive any outside assistance in writing your essays, taking the quizzes, or preparing for the final exam. Both the quizzes and the final exam are closed-book and closed-notes, which means you cannot consult any books or notes while taking them. Everyone is expected to follow this code of conduct. Cheating and plagiarism will be punished to the fullest extent possible. See the [UConn Student Code](#) for more on cheating and plagiarism.

**Late Policy:** Late contributions to the group discussion will have a significant impact on participation grades. Barring extraordinary circumstances and advanced notice, no extensions will be granted for missed ID quizzes. Essays will be penalized by a third of a grade (e.g., a B+ would drop to a B) for each partial or full day they are late; moreover, after the deadline has passed, the online submission system will not accept essays so they must be emailed directly to the instructor. Missing the final exam without prior approval from the instructor may result in failure in the course.
Accessibility: To request accommodations for a disability, contact the Center for Students with Disabilities at 860-486-2020, csd@uconn.edu, or http://www.csd.uconn.edu. Contact CSD as soon as possible to secure the necessary paperwork that will ensure that accommodations are implemented in a smooth and timely fashion.

Course Schedule

Module 1: Introduction: America at the Crossroads (July 9-10)

The Age of Mass Industrialization (1870s-1920s), Modules 2-5

Module 2: Industrialization and Immigration (July 11-13)
  ID Quiz (July 13)

Module 3: Revolt and Reform (July 14-17)
  Report where you will take the final exam (July 16)
  Essay due (July 17)

Module 4: Imperialism and Democracy (July 18-20)
  ID Quiz (July 20)

Module 5: Nostalgia and Normalcy (July 21-24)
  Approval deadline for alternative final-exam arrangements (July 23)
  Essay (July 24)

The New Deal Order (1930s-1980s), Modules 6-9

Module 6: New Deal State (July 25-July 27)
  ID Quiz (July 27)

Module 7: National Security State (July 28-July 31)
  Essay (July 31)

Module 8: Expansion of American Liberalism (August 1-August 3)
  ID Quiz (August 3)

Module 9: Conservative Resurgence (August 4-7)
  Essay (August 7)

The Era of Reinvention (1990s-Present), Modules 10-11

Module 10: The New World Order (August 8-10)
  ID Quiz (August 10)

Module 11: The New Economy (August 11-14)
  Essay (August 15)

Final Exam (August 17)