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Office Hours: T/Th, 1:00-2:00, 6:00-6:45

HIST 1306: United States History after 1877

CRN 21304 • Spring 2014 • T/Th 11:30-12:45 PM • Room A-625 • 3 Credits

Course Overview, Goals and Themes

As per the UHD catalog, this course “traces the development and growth of the United States from the end of Reconstruction through industrialization, overseas expansion, global wars, the Great Depression and the post-World War II era.”

In this course, you will: cultivate a historical awareness of how the culture and institutions of the United States have changed between 1877 and the present; consider how Americans during this period have understood and managed their individual and collective identities; explore how Americans have viewed their relationship to and participation in the wider world; identify major discoveries, inventions, and scientific achievements, along with achievements in art, architecture, literature, and philosophy, and assess their impact on society; and develop an ability to interpret, analyze, and discuss historical evidence.

In addition, my personal goals are: to encourage you to think historically; to give you a framework for the further exploration of your own historical interests, especially in, but not limited to, American history since the late 19th century; and to convince you that the practice of history can be interesting, exciting and worthwhile, even if this is the last formal history course you plan to take.

I have organized the course around three fundamental themes:

1. How have Americans, in particular, sought to organize their society, whether at the national level, in the states, or in local communities? Whether we are discussing a single family or an entire country, an internal sense of order is critical for any organized group. Of course, over time, people seek to change this order; sometimes they are successful, other times less so. Americans’ motivations to both accelerate and resist change are a critical part of this country’s history.
2. In addition to the internal forms of order described above, individuals and groups often try to establish a broader sense of order as a means of understanding the external world. Where do Americans draw the lines between themselves and everyone else in the world? Who counts as “truly American”, and how has that changed over time?
3. Finally, how do Americans record what has happened, in both past time and in their own time, for posterity? How do they (and we) view and understand change? At its most basic level, history is the creation of narratives that seek to explain change over time by calling on various forms of evidence. However, we will see how historians—and others—throughout this time period, and in

the present, have sought to frame particular views of the past and package them for various audiences.

Course Textbooks

Jennifer D. Keene, Saul T. Cornell, and Edward T. O'Donnell, *Visions of America: A History of the United States*, Vol. 2, 2nd Ed., Pearson, 2012.

Michael Schaller et al., *Reading American Horizons*, Vol. 2 (Since 1865), Oxford University Press, 2013.

All of our in-class discussions will use one or more specific documents from *Reading American Horizons* (AKA RAH in the course schedule) as a starting point, so please bring your copy of that text to every class meeting.

Class Structure and Group Discussions

In this course, each 75-minute class session will be split into two lecture periods, each roughly 20-25 minutes long, and a 20-25 minute group discussion or class discussion period in the middle. It is important that you are present for the entire class period, and I will always start my first lecture promptly at 11:30. If it is necessary for you to arrive late, please respect the other students and take a seat quietly at the side of the classroom nearest the door; you will have the opportunity to move when I am finished with my first lecture.

Be aware that the first lecture of each class session is where I connect the day's documents and topics of discussion to the larger narrative of American history, so if you arrive late, you will have to rely on your group for context.

I will also divide the class into groups of five to six students to facilitate discussions on a smaller scale; these groups will usually meet during the middle third of each class period. Sometimes, I will have the groups present their consensus to the rest of the class or turn in a written account of their discussion, so each group will have to select its own presenters/recorders. However, there are no out-of-class group projects, and I may occasionally rotate the members of these groups, so you will not necessarily be stuck with the same group for the entire semester.

Grading Policies and Exams

There are two primary components to your grade in this course. The first includes attendance, group/class participation, and short in-class writing assignments, which together account for thirty percent of your final grade. The second includes two out-of-class midterm exams and an out-of-class final exam, and will comprise the other seventy percent of your final grade.

Attendance: you are allowed up to THREE no-questions-asked absences for the entire semester. Use these if you are sick, if you have unexpected job or child-care responsibilities, or if you have any family emergencies. After those three, I will subtract one rubric point from your attendance

grade for each of the next two absences and two rubric points for each subsequent absence after the first five. Because it is difficult to participate in your group or in the class if you are not present, any student with more than ten absences during the semester will receive **zero** rubric points for this entire category (30% of the course grade). In addition, students who are regularly tardy or who regularly leave early may face attendance penalties at my discretion.

I will not necessarily take attendance during every class session, and some days I will use in-class writing assignments as a means of checking attendance. Thus, it is not necessary to inform me when you will be absent, but be aware that you are taking a chance. If you are absent you will still be responsible for that day's material and readings on the exams, so you may want to check with a friend or group member to see what you missed.

Grading participation is a more subjective process, but I will assume that everyone is participating, at least during the group sessions, and will only mark students down in that area if they are clearly disengaged with the group or class. In-class writing assignments will be graded on a check/no-check system; any engagement with the question posed will receive a check. Points will be given to all group members present, so long as they have signed the sheet.

Exams: the midterm and final exams will consist of several short (300-500 word) essays, which will engage with one or more specific historical documents along with a broad thematic question. You will have two days to complete the out-of-class midterm exams; questions will be made available on Blackboard at 12:45 PM (i.e. the end of class) on the Tuesday before the exams are due. There will be NO CLASS on the subsequent Thursdays to allow you time to work on the midterm exams. For the final exam, questions will be available at 12:45 PM on Thursday, May 1, giving you one week to complete the exam.

For all three exams, you **will** submit your essay responses in a **single** document (I **only** accept files in .pdf, .rtf, .txt, .doc, or .docx formats) via the appropriate assignment on the course's Blackboard site by 11:59 PM on the date of the exam for the midterms (February 13 and March 20), and on May 8 for the final.

Late exams will be penalized two rubric points immediately and one rubric point every twelve hours thereafter. The Blackboard time stamp will be the official arbiter of whether or not a submission is late. Since the exams are to be completed out-of-class, they are open-book and open-note; however, you should not need to consult any additional sources, and doing so will not necessarily help your grade. When writing exams, be aware of my expectations regarding original work and plagiarism (set out in the Honesty Policy below)

Exam essays will be graded on a five-point rubric, with specific criteria to be provided on a per-exam basis. A score of:

- 5...indicates that the essay exceeds the stated criteria, or is particularly exceptional
- 4...indicates that the essay meets the stated criteria, and is what I would expect from a well-prepared UH-D student

- 3...indicates that the essay is acceptable and meets some of the stated criteria, but could improve with effort in one or more areas
- 2...indicates that the essay is incomplete, and/or needs substantial work to be considered acceptable
- 1...indicates that the essay is completely unacceptable, does not follow directions, or fails to answer the question being asked
- 0...indicates that the essay is missing or otherwise inaccessible to me

Final grades will be calculated out of 100 rubric points as follows:

Attendance	10 rubric points
Class and Group Participation, In-class Assignments	20 rubric points
Midterm Exam #1 (due Thursday, February 13, at 11:59 PM)	20 rubric points
Midterm Exam #2 (due Thursday, March 20, at 11:59 PM)	20 rubric points
Final Exam (due May 8 at 11:59 PM)	30 rubric points
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Total	100 rubric points

Rubric Points:	100-85	84-65	64-45	44-25	24-0
Final Grade:	A	B	C	D	F

Honesty Policy Statement

All students are subject to UH-Downtown’s Academic Honesty Policy and to all other university-wide policies and procedures as they are set forth in the UH-Downtown University Catalog and Student Handbook. In particular, I want you to be aware of the potential for plagiarism, which is the attempt to mislead an audience by presenting someone else’s words, concepts or ideas as one’s own without giving the original author proper credit. This can include copying complete sections of other texts into one’s writing without citing a source, but it also includes making a close paraphrase: merely changing a few words does not change the fact that one is presenting someone else’s ideas as one’s own. Because grading is inherently comparative, plagiarism is also unfair to one’s peers and classmates who have put in significant time and effort to write original work.

I design my course, including my midterm and final exams, to make academic dishonesty and plagiarism impractical and unrewarding, if not nearly impossible. However, in this class or any other, there are things you can do to prevent any suspicions of plagiarism: avoid extended quotations from the readings (even with quotation marks) and always cite your sources, even if you are paraphrasing. For exams in this course, when citing the readings books, indicate the page number in parentheses. Exam responses that I determine to have been plagiarized, even if they were merely copied from the readings book, will receive zero rubric points (i.e. less than unacceptable), and I may take further action as laid out the university’s Academic Honesty Code.

Accommodations Statement

The University of Houston-Downtown complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments or auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, UHD strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a documented disability requiring academic adjustments or auxiliary aids, please contact the Office of Disability Services.

Office: One Main St., Suite 409-South, Houston, TX 77002.

Phone: 713-226-5227

Website: www.uhd.edu/disability/

Email: disabilityservices@uhd.edu

Attendance and Administrative Drop Statement

Your failure to attend class or make contact with faculty to adequately explain your absence by the 10th class calendar day of the semester (for this semester, Jan. 29th) will result in your being administratively dropped from this course. Being dropped from this course may affect your enrollment status and/or your financial aid eligibility.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

Week 1, Jan. 14/16: Introduction–The United States in 1877

Read Visions of America (VoA), pp. 423-467; Reading American Horizons (RAH), pp. 172-186

Week 2, Jan. 21/23: The New America–Industry and Labor

Read VoA, pp. 468-497; RAH, pp. 187-195

Week 3, Jan. 28/30: The New America–Cities and Immigration

Read VoA, pp. 500-516; RAH, pp. 196-205

Week 4, Feb. 4/6: The New America–Progressive Reform and Democracy

Read VoA, pp. 517-527, 530-556; RAH, pp. 215-224

Week 5, Feb. 11: The New America–A Worldwide Reach

Read VoA, pp. 560-589; RAH, pp. 206-214

Midterm Exam #1 due at 11:59 PM on Thursday, February 13.

Note: NO CLASS on Thursday, February 13.

Week 6, Feb. 18/20: America and the Great War

Read VoA, pp. 592-619; RAH, pp. 225-233

Week 7, Feb. 25/27: A New Era: The Most Modern Nation in the World

Read VoA, pp. 624-651; RAH, pp. 234-244

Week 8, Mar. 4/6: Economic Collapse and a New Deal for Americans

Read VoA, pp. 654-680, 684-692; RAH, pp. 245-252

--Spring Break--

Week 9, Mar. 18: Arsenal of Democracy: Winning World War II

Read VoA, pp. 693-715; RAH, pp. 253-260

Midterm Exam #2 due at 11:59 PM on Thursday, March 20.

Note: NO CLASS on Thursday, March 20.

Week 10, Mar. 25/27: America at Home and Abroad in the Early Cold War

Read VoA, pp. 718-746, 752-764; RAH, pp. 269-285

Week 11, April 1/3: The Optimism and Anguish of the 1960s

Read VoA, pp. 765-775, 778-807, 810-835; RAH, pp. 290-302

Week 12, April 8/10: Rebellion, Reaction, and Realignment

Read VoA, pp. 836-839, 842-871; RAH, pp. 302-319

Week 13, April 15/17: After the Cold War

Read VoA, pp. 874-883; RAH, pp. 320-327

Week 14, April 22/24: America in the 21st Century

Read VoA, pp. 884-903; RAH, pp. 328-336

Final Exams are due on May 8 at 11:59 PM