

## History 4301E

# The United States in the Twentieth Century

Mondays 1:30-3:30 pm, Stevenson Hall 3101

Professor Rob MacDougall

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-3 pm

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Course Website: <http://www.robmacdougall.org/4301>

### Course Description

This seminar explores the history of the United States from the 1890s to the present, from the America of Jane Addams and Teddy Roosevelt to that of Sarah Palin and Barack Obama. Our topics include political struggles and cultural upheavals, racial segregation and the civil rights movement, suffragists and second wave feminists, the World Wars and the Cold War, jazz and rock and hip hop, the genius and the cost of American capitalism, America's gifts to the world and America's crimes. We'll try to get past simple arguments between the United States' cheerleaders and its critics, seeking to understand the real complexities of "the American century." We'll think, too, about what it means to study the United States as Canadians—we'll consider how and why the United States differs from Canada, but face the ways in which its history is also our own.

This class depends upon active participation every week, in the form of reading, discussion (in class and online), and engagement with historical sources—written documents but also also images, advertisements, oral histories, music, television, and film.

### Assignments

You are expected to be an active and informed participant in every class. Each week I will ask you to post online (or hand in) a very short response to the readings for that week.

**Participation**, both in class and online, accounts for 30% of your final grade; this may be weighted as 20% in class and 10% online or vice-versa (your choice).

You will write one substantial **research paper** in History 4301; all the written assignments for the course represent stages of this year-long project. A short **research proposal** outlining your topic and available sources is due in early November. A **rough draft** of your paper is due in February. In March, you will read and provide **feedback** on some of your classmates' papers; the **final draft** is due in April.

There will be **no midterm or final exam**.

## Evaluation

Research Proposal	10%	due November 7
Rough Draft	20%	due February 13
Feedback on Classmate Papers	10%	due March 5
Final Draft	30%	due April 9
Participation (in class & online)	30%	every week

## Required Texts

The following books are required reading for this course. They will be available at the campus bookstore and on 1-day reserve at Weldon Library.

- Gary Cross, *An All-Consuming Century: Why Commercialism Won in Modern America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).
- Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).
- Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History* (Revised edition) (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).
- Michael Hunt, *The American Ascendancy: How the United States Gained and Wielded Global Dominance* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).
- Rosalind Rosenberg, *Divided Lives: American Women in the Twentieth Century* (Revised edition) (New York: Hill and Wang, 2008).

Each week there will also be **primary source readings**, not listed here. These will be posted on the course website, and you will be asked to comment on them there. These additional readings are not optional; in many ways they are the heart of this course.

## Optional Texts

Some students find it useful to supplement their reading with a textbook. If you feel you need more background information, I encourage you to acquire a standard U.S. history textbook and read along as necessary, but I do not require this and I do not have strong feelings about which textbook you should use. Paul Boyer's *The Enduring Vision* (which you may have used in History 2301) and William Chafe's *The Rise and Fall of the American Century* are both worthwhile, and both are on the reserve shelves at Weldon, but you are free to use any other textbook or edition if you wish.

There are many books that offer advice on doing historical research or academic writing in general. Sometimes the advice will seem basic, but even basic advice can be very useful when engaged in a long and complicated research project. Two books that I like and may refer to during the year are Jim Cullen's *Essaying the Past: How to Read, Write, and Think about History* and Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein's *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*. You are not required to buy or read either, but may find them useful in your work. Both are available through the UWO library.

## Films

We will also watch and discuss three feature films over the course of the semester. There will be an evening screening of each film the week before the film is to be discussed. If you cannot attend this screening, you should find some way to view the film on your own time

before we discuss it in class. Copies may be available at Weldon, your local video store, the internet, or from me. Whenever possible, however, I hope you will attend the class screening—I have always found these films to be most effective and enjoyable when viewed as a group.

- ***The Grapes of Wrath***. Directed by John Ford; screenplay by Nunnally Johnson from the book by John Steinbeck. 1940.
- ***The Manchurian Candidate***. Directed by John Frankenheimer; screenplay by George Axelrod from the book by Richard Condon. 1962.
- ***Do The Right Thing***. Written and directed by Spike Lee. 1989.

## Schedule

(Topics or readings may change slightly. Check the website for the most up to date assignments.)

### First Term

**Week 1      September 12      Introduction to the Course**

**Week 2      September 19      Before the American Century**

- Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, Preface and Chapter 1.
- Hunt, *The American Ascendancy*, Introduction and Chapter 1.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 3      September 26      The Voice of the People**

- Gerstle, *American Crucible*, Introduction.
- Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion*, Introduction and Chapter 2.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 4      October 3      American Crucible: Race and Ethnicity at the Century's Start**

- Gerstle, *American Crucible*, Chapters 1 and 2.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 5      October 10      THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS**

**Week 6      October 17      The Progressives**

- Rosenberg, *Divided Lives*, Preface, and Chapters 1 and 2.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 7      October 24      The United States and the First World War**

- Hunt, *The American Ascendancy*, Chapter 2.
- Gerstle, *American Crucible*, Chapter 3.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 8      October 31      Zion & Babylon: American Culture in the 1920s**

- Rosenberg, *Divided Lives*, Chapter 3.
- Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion*, Chapter 4.
- Additional readings to be assigned in class.

**Week 9      November 7      The Business of America is Business:  
Capitalism and Consumerism in the 1920s****RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE NOVEMBER 7**

- Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, Chapter 2.
- Hunt, *The American Ascendancy*, Chapter 3.
- Additional readings to be assigned in class.

**Week 10      November 14      Hard Times: The Great Depression**

- Gerstle, *American Crucible*, Chapter 4.
- Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion*, Chapter 5.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 11      November 21      The New Deal****FILM: *THE GRAPES OF WRATH***

Wednesday Nov. 16, 7-9:30 pm, Spencer Engineering Building 2202

- Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion*, Chapter 6.
- Rosenberg, *Divided Lives*, Chapter 4.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 12      November 28      The United States and the Second World War**

- Ninkovich, *The Wilsonian Century*, Chapter 4.
- Gerstle, *American Crucible*, Chapter 5.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 13      December 5      The American Century**

- Hunt, *The American Ascendancy*, Chapter 5.
- Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, Chapter 4.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Second Term****Week 14      January 9      The Cold War Begins**

- Gerstle, *American Crucible*, Chapter 6.
- Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion*, Chapter 7.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 15      January 16                      American Life in the 1950s & 60s****FILM: *THE MANCHURIAN CANDIDATE*****Thursday Jan. 12, 7-9pm, Spencer Engineering Building 2202**

- Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, Chapter 3.
- Rosenberg, *Divided Lives*, Chapter 5.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 16      January 23                      The Long Civil Rights Movement**

- Gerstle, *American Crucible*, Chapter 7.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 17      January 30                      Vietnam and Other Crises**

- Hunt, *The American Ascendancy*, Chapter 6.
- Gerstle, *American Crucible*, Chapter 8.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 18      February 6                      New Left and New Right**

- Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion*, Chapters 8 and 9.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 19      February 13                      The South and the South Bronx: Culture in the 1970s****ROUGH DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE FEBRUARY 13**

- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Reading Week (February 20-24)****NO CLASS FEBRUARY 20****Week 19      February 27                      The Personal and the Political**

- Rosenberg, *Divided Lives*, Chapter 5.
- Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, Chapter 5.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 20      March 5                      The Right Turn****FEEDBACK ON CLASSMATE PAPERS DUE MARCH 5**

- Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion*, Chapter 10.
- Rosenberg, *Divided Lives*, Chapter 7.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 21      March 12                      The Cold War Ends**

- Hunt, *American Ascendancy*, Chapter 7.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 22      March 19                      American Crucible Revisited: Race and  
Ethnicity at the Century's End**

**FILM: *DO THE RIGHT THING***

**Tuesday Mar. 13, 7-9pm, Spencer Engineering Building 2202**

- Gerstle, *American Crucible*, Epilogue.
- Rosenberg, *Divided Lives*, Chapter 8.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 23      March 26                      The Roaring Nineties**

- Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, Chapter 6 and Conclusion.
- Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion*, Chapter 11 and Conclusion.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 24      April 2                              The United States and the World since 2001**

- Hunt, *The American Ascendancy*, Chapter 8 and Conclusion.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 25      April 9                              Conclusions**

**FINAL DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE APRIL 9**

*Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.*

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO  
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

PLAGIARISM

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of Publication and page number. Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writer's ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source; these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction, your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases, in their suspension from the University.

### MEDICAL ACCOMMODATION

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Please go to [https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical\\_accommodations\\_link\\_for\\_OOR.pdf](https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical_accommodations_link_for_OOR.pdf) to read about the University's policy on medical accommodation. Please go to <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medicalform.pdf> to download the necessary form. In the event of illness, you should contact Academic Counselling as soon as possible.

The Academic Counsellors will determine, in consultation with the student, whether or not accommodation is warranted. They will subsequently contact the instructors in the relevant courses about the accommodation. Once a decision has been made about accommodation, the student should contact his/her instructors to determine a new due date for term tests, assignments, and exams.

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact, Rebecca Dashford, Undergraduate Program Advisor, Department of History, 519-661-2111 x84962 or [rdashfo@uwo.ca](mailto:rdashfo@uwo.ca)