

## History 4301E

# The United States in the Twentieth Century

Tuesdays 12:30-2:30 pm, Stevenson Hall 1119

**Professor Rob MacDougall**

Office: Lawson Hall 2228

Office Hours: Mondays 1-2:30 pm, Fridays 1-2:30 pm.

Email: [rmacdou@uwo.ca](mailto:rmacdou@uwo.ca)

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

### Course Description

This course 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 Barack Obama and Sarah Palin. Our topics include political struggles and cultural upheavals, racial segregation and the civil rights movement, the World Wars and the Cold War, 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, in order to understand the real complexities of "the American century." And we will ask how we can use this history in the present, since the story of the United States in the 20<sup>th</sup> century undeniably shapes our lives—here in Canada and around the world.

### Assignments

This is a seminar class, and it depends upon everyone's **active participation** every week, in the form of reading, discussion (in class and online), and engagement with historical sources. We will talk more in class about what active participation means and requires.

You will write one substantial **research paper** in History 4301; it will be between 20-25 pages long, including footnotes (approx. 4500-6000 words). A paper of this length cannot be written overnight, or even in a two-week burst at the end of term. You should expect to work on this paper, a little at a time, all year long. All of the written assignments for the course represent stages of this 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 is **no midterm or final exam**.

## Evaluation

Research Proposal	10%	due November 4
Rough Draft of Research Paper	20%	due February 10
Feedback on Classmate Papers	10%	due March 3
Final Draft of Research Paper	30%	due April 7
Participation (in class & online)	30%	every week

Participation, both in class and online, counts for 30% of your final grade; you may weight this as 20% in class and 10% online or vice-versa (whichever benefits your grade).

## Required Texts

The following books are required reading for this course. They should be available at the campus bookstore, from a variety of book sellers, and on 2-hour reserve at Weldon Library.

- Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).
- Michael Hunt, *The American Ascendancy: How the United States Gained and Wielded Global Dominance* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).
- Louise Knight, *Jane Addams: Spirit in Action* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010).
- George Packer, *The Unwinding: An Inner History of the New America* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2013).
- Eric Rauchway, *The Great Depression and the New Deal: A Very Short Introduction* (London: Oxford, 2008).
- Bruce Schulman, *Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism: A Brief Biography with Documents*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)

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.

## 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 in the week before the film is to be discussed. (Times, dates, and locations will be announced in class and online.) **I do expect you to attend these evening screenings** unless you have an unmovable conflict. If you really cannot attend a screening, you must find some way to view the film on your own time before we discuss it in class. Copies may be available at Weldon, on the internet, or from me.

- *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.

## 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 when necessary, but I do not require this and I do not have strong feelings about which textbook you should use. Eric Foner's ***Give Me Liberty! An American History*** (which you may have used in History 2301) is a good text, available on the reserve shelves at Weldon, but you are free to use any other textbook 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 useful when engaged in a complicated research project. Two books that I recommend are Booth, Colomb and Williams' ***The Craft of Research*** and Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein's ***They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing***. You are not required to buy either, but you may find them useful in your work. Both are available in the library.

## Learning Outcomes

Students in History 4301e will:

- collaborate in a year-long investigation of 20th-century United States history
- locate, interpret, and evaluate primary sources, identifying their meaning and demonstrating awareness of their historical context, significance, audience, and goals
- read selected secondary source works and engage that literature in both class discussion and written work
- research and write essays making sustained historical arguments, supported with evidence from primary and secondary sources, presented in clear and correct prose
- engage with their peers in complex and constructive discussion of both the course content and the process of doing and writing history
- situate contemporary issues in a historical context, identifying and assessing the present-day relevance of the history covered in this course

## Schedule

The exact topics or readings for each week may change. Please check the class website each week for the most up to date information. Most weeks you will read a few **chapters from the required texts** along with a short selection of additional **primary sources**. These will be posted on the course website: <http://www.robmacdougall.org/4301>

### *First Term*

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>September 9</b>	<b>Introduction to the Course</b>
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>September 16</b>	<b>The Case for History</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readings to be assigned; check the course website.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>September 23</b>	<b>The American Century Begins</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunt, <i>The American Ascendancy</i>, Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2.</li> <li>• Additional readings to be assigned.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>September 30</b>	<b>Rich and Poor in the Gilded Age</b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knight, <i>Jane Addams</i>, Preface and Chapters 1, 2, and 3.</li> <li>• Additional readings to be assigned.</li> </ul>

**Week 5      October 7      Race and Ethnicity at the Century's Start**

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

**Week 6      October 14      The Progressives**

- Knight, *Jane Addams*, Chapters 4 and 5.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 7      October 21      The United States and the First World War**

- Gerstle, *American Crucible*, Chapter 3.
- Knight, *Jane Addams*, Chapter 6.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 8      October 28      Life and Culture in the 1920s**

- Knight, *Jane Addams*, Chapter 7.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 9      November 4      NO CLASS**

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE NOVEMBER 4:** I will be out of town this week and our class will not meet. Your research proposal will be due, however.

**Week 10      November 11      Boom and Bust**

- Hunt, *The American Ascendancy*, Chapter 3.
- Rauchway, *The Great Depression*, Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 11      November 18      The Great Depression****FILM SCREENING: THE GRAPES OF WRATH**

Date, time, and location to be announced.

- Gerstle, *American Crucible*, Chapter 4.
- Rauchway, *The Great Depression*, Chapter 3.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 12      November 25      The New Deal**

- Rauchway, *The Great Depression*, Chapters 4 through 7.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

**Week 13      December 2      The United States and the Second World War**

- Gerstle, *American Crucible*, Chapter 5.
- Hunt, *The American Ascendancy*, Chapter 4.
- Rauchway, *The Great Depression*, Conclusion.
- Additional readings to be assigned.

## ***Second Term***

Readings and topics for Second Term will be finalized later in the fall, and I will give you a new version of the syllabus then. In the meantime, here are the due dates you need to know:

**ROUGH DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE FEBRUARY 10**  
**FEEDBACK ON CLASSMATE PAPERS DUE MARCH 3**  
**FINAL DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE APRIL 7**

## **ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS**

### **Prerequisites and Antirequisites:**

Unless you have either the requisites for this course, as described in the Academic Calendar description of the course, or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites. The Academic Calendar description of each course also indicates which classes are considered antirequisites, i.e., to cover such similar material that students are not permitted to receive academic credit for both courses.

### **Academic Offences:**

Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitute a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### **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 Issues:**

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. This site provides links the necessary forms. 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 should be requested. They will subsequently contact the instructors in the relevant courses about the accommodation. Once the instructor has made a decision about whether to grant an accommodation, the student should contact his/her instructors to determine a new due date for tests, assignments, and exams.

#### **SUPPORT SERVICES:**

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western, <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

*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.*

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)