



HISTORY 2311G

The United States 1865 to the Present

Winter 2023

Tuesdays & Thursdays 11:30am-12:30pm, Social Science Centre 2032
plus 1 tutorial hour per week

Professor Rob MacDougall

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Office Hours: TBA (but you are welcome to email me with questions about the course)

This is a draft syllabus, subject to change. Please see your course OWL site for an up-to-date syllabus once the term begins.

(last updated 2022 06 10)

Course Delivery with Respect to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The intent is for this course to be delivered in-person, but should the COVID-19 landscape shift, the course may be delivered on-line either synchronously (ie., on Zoom at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (eg., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will not change. The course will return to an in-person mode of delivery when the University and local health authorities deem it safe to do so.

Course Description

This course surveys the history of the United States from Reconstruction to the present day. Topics include the political history of the United States; the growth of American capitalism and mass culture; changing meanings of race, gender, and difference; and the United States' place in the world.

Antirequisites: History 2301E, History 2302F/G.

Course Syllabus

This course explores the history of the United States from the end of the Civil War to the present, from the death of Abraham Lincoln to the age of Donald Trump. Our topics include political struggles, cultural upheavals, and sexual revolutions; racial segregation and the civil rights movement; the World Wars and the Cold War; the genius and the costs of American capitalism; the crimes of U.S. imperialism and America's gifts to the world. We'll identify but also interrogate the dominant narrative in U.S. history, in which American history is seen as a tale of progress towards ever greater and greater freedom. 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'll examine a wide variety of primary sources: the documents, images, and artifacts that historians use to reconstruct the past.

Learning Outcomes

Students in History 2311G will learn to:

- identify and explain the importance of key people, events, ideas, and movements in the history of the United States since 1865
- recognize and evaluate competing narratives and interpretations of United States history
- interpret primary historical sources, analyzing their meaning and demonstrating awareness of their historical context and significance
- use both primary and secondary sources to write essays making historical arguments
- engage in constructive discussion of both course content and the process of doing and writing history

Assignments and Expectations

Although this is a lecture-based class, you are expected to be prepared and engaged every week.

Participation means being at all lectures, attending your weekly tutorial, doing each week's assigned readings, and taking part in class discussions. It may also include short writing exercises, quizzes, or group work. All of these things will contribute to your participation grade for the course.

You will need to complete **two written assignments** in this course:

Primary source analysis: You will be given a selection of historical documents and asked to write a short paper of 1000-1500 words (roughly 4-6 double-spaced pages), analyzing one of them.

Historical essay: You will be given a substantial collection of historical documents and asked to write an essay of 1500-2000 words (roughly 6-8 double-spaced pages) using these sources to make and support a historical argument. You will be given a choice of two topics with historical sources provided; you may choose a different topic and find your own sources if you wish.

There will be a **final exam** during the April exam period.

Evaluation

Participation (in lecture & tutorial)	20%	every week
Primary source analysis (1000-1500 words)	20%	due February 14
Historical essay (1500-2000 words)	30%	due March 21
Final exam	30%	during April exam period

You must complete all assignments to pass the course. Failure to complete either written assignment or the exam may result in failing the course, regardless of grades received for other assignments.

Course Materials

The following textbook is recommended for this course. It should be available at the campus bookstore and from a variety of book sellers.

- Michael McGerr et al., *Of the People: A History of the United States, Volume II: Since 1865* (New York: Oxford University Press). The 5th edition (2022) is preferred, but you may use an earlier edition if you have access to one.

If you have access to another good, college-level U.S. history textbook, you may use that instead. (In History 2301, the predecessor to this class, we used the textbook *Give Me Liberty*, by Eric Foner, for several years.) I will talk in the first weeks of class about how to read and use the textbook and what it means to have more than one approved text.

Every week there will also be **primary source readings**, not listed here. These will be posted on our OWL site, and you will be asked to read and discuss them in your tutorial meetings. These additional readings are not optional; in many ways they are the heart of this course.

Course Schedule

This is a draft schedule, likely to change. Once the course begins, our OWL site will have the most up to date information.

Week 1

January 10 Introduction to the Course
January 12 Reconstruction

Readings: *Of the People*, Chapter 15, plus primary sources posted on OWL.

Week 2

January 17 1876: America, Incorporated
January 19 The Gilded Age

Readings: *Of the People*, Chapters 16 and 17, plus primary sources posted on OWL.

Week 3

January 24 1898: American Empire
January 26 Jane Addams and the Progressives

Readings: *Of the People*, Chapters 18 and 19, plus primary sources posted on OWL.

Week 4

January 31 Woodrow Wilson's War
February 2 America First

Readings: *Of the People*, Chapter 20, plus primary sources posted on OWL.

Week 5

February 7 The Jazz Age
February 9 Boom and Bust

Readings: *Of the People*, Chapter 21, plus primary sources posted on OWL.

Week 6

February 14 The Great Depression & the Great Migration
February 16 The New Deal

PRIMARY SOURCE ASSIGNMENT DUE TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Readings: *Of the People*, Chapter 22, plus primary sources posted on OWL.

READING WEEK | February 18-26

Week 7

February 28 The United States and World War II
March 2 1945: Superpower

Readings: *Of the People*, Chapter 23, plus primary sources posted on OWL.

Week 8

March 7 The Cold War
March 9 The Affluent Society

Readings: *Of the People*, Chapters 24 and 25, plus primary sources posted on OWL.

Week 9

March 14 The Freedom Struggle
March 16 New Frontiers

Readings: *Of the People*, Chapter 26, plus primary sources posted on OWL.

Week 10

March 21 1968: Uprisings
March 23 The City in the Seventies

ESSAY ASSIGNMENT DUE TUESDAY, MARCH 21

Readings: *Of the People*, Chapter 27, plus primary sources posted on OWL.

Week 11

March 28 Right Turn
March 30 The Roaring Nineties

Readings: *Of the People*, Chapters 28 and 29, plus primary sources posted on OWL.

Week 12

April 4 2001 and After: Crises
April 6 Obama's America, and Trump's

Readings: *Of the People*, Chapter 30, plus primary sources posted on OWL.

A FINAL EXAM will be scheduled during the Final Exam Period, April 13-30.

Additional Statements

Please review the Department of History Course Must-Knows document:

<https://www.history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/Docs/Department%20of%20History%20Course%20Must-Knows.pdf>

for additional information regarding:

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