

**\*\*NOTE: This is a preliminary syllabus; although the main texts and written requirements will not change, reading assignments may be added or subtracted, and page specifics will only be included in the finalized syllabus. If you have questions regarding the class reading load before the course start, please feel free to email me.\*\***

**Summer 2009: History 51b  
MTR, 1:45-4:15**

**Instructor: Anne Marie Reardon  
Email: annaree@brandeis.edu**

## **History of the United States, 1865 to the Present**

### **OVERVIEW**

How was the United States transformed from a fractured nation at the end of the Civil War to the political and economic global superpower it is today? In this intensive summer course, we will answer that question by tracing the staggering changes in American life from 1865 to the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We will consider the unifying forces of an expanding federal government and increasing consumer capitalism even as we examine the impact of sociopolitical forces that continue to divide American citizens. In the process, we will also evaluate the roles of technology, migration and shifting American ideologies of rights and identities in creating the modern American nation.

This course has three overlapping objectives: to strengthen students' knowledge and understanding of American history; to introduce students to the practice of history; and to engage students' critical thinking and writing skills. To this end, the course will consist of a combination of lectures, discussions and active historical "sleuthing". Course texts will include a variety of primary sources, including letters, speeches, photographs, films and cartoons created in the historical periods discussed. In addition, a course textbook will provide the historical context and chronology necessary to our full understanding of the past.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

- James Henretta, et al. *America: A Concise History*, 3rd Edition, Vol. 2 (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2006) (course textbook)
- Kevin Fernlund, *Documents to Accompany America's History*, 6th Edition, Vol. 2 (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2008)
- Michael M. Topp, ed., *The Sacco and Vanzetti Case: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2005)
- Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (New York: Bantam Dell, 1992)
- Sid Jacobson and Ernie Colón, *The 9/11 Report: A Graphic Adaptation* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2006)
- Assorted online articles & primary sources (on class LATTE website)

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- 1. Response Essays (5% each, 20% total):** Over the length of the course, students must complete 4 brief response essays of 1-2 pages each. Each essay will consider an assigned primary source or set of contrasting sources, and provide a short critical analysis of the source's reliability (e.g., what biases does it contain? is it convincing?) and significance to American history (e.g., what can it tell us about a particular historical period, person or event?). These essays are due on July 9, 14, 20 and 28.

2. **Primary Source Paper (20%):** Each student must choose a primary source or set of sources from one of the American historical periods covered in class, then write a longer 4-6 page critical analysis paper which examines the source's reliability/bias and historical significance. This paper may contain up to five additional secondary sources to provide historical context (NOTE: Wikipedia is neither reliable nor acceptable as a source). Potential locations of primary sources will be noted on the class LATTE site, and we will also visit Brandeis' Special Collections Archive for further source discovery. Students must hand in a one-paragraph proposal of their paper topic (with a source list) for approval on Thursday, July 16. Final primary source papers are due at the start of class on Monday, August 3.
3. **Midterm Exam (15%):** Each student must complete a one-hour, in-class midterm exam, to be taken during the first hour of class on Tuesday, July 21.
4. **Final Exam (25%):** Each student must also complete a two-hour, cumulative final exam, to be taken during the three-hour final exam period on Thursday, August 6 (the full three hours may be used if students so choose). Both this and the midterm will consist of short paragraph IDs (i.e., "Identify and explain the significance of...") and longer thematic essays. Each exam part will contain a number of ID and essay options to choose from.
5. **Regular Attendance and Active Class Participation (20%):** The success of this class depends on the active participation of all students. Thus, along with the completion of all written assignments, students are expected to come to class having completed the readings and prepared to contribute energetically, thoughtfully and respectfully to all class discussions and exercises. Participation evaluation will consider attentiveness, general class preparedness, class contributions and progress.
6. **Extra Credit:** Students may acquire extra credit by completing one of two optional 1-2-page assignments:
  - Write a 1-2 page analysis of a recent news article (of your own choosing) which relates present events to one or more American historical periods discussed in this class (being sure to consider the article's reliability/bias as a source and historical significance/impact), then present your findings briefly to the class.
  - Write a 1-2 page analysis of a film whose topic relates to an American historical period discussed in this class (being sure to consider the film's reliability/bias as a source and historical significance/impact), then present your findings briefly to the class. (Note: a number of appropriate films are listed at the end of this syllabus, or you can submit a film title for my approval.)

#### **GRADING SUMMARY**

Response Essays (4 x 1-2pg): 20%

Primary Source Paper (4-6pg): 20%

Midterm Exam: 15%

Final Exam: 25%

Attendance & Participation: 20%

#### **DOCUMENTED DISABILITY**

**If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately. Any information you share will be kept in confidence. Please keep in mind that reasonable accommodations are not provided retroactively.**

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University's policies on academic integrity (see [www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/rr/html/rr\\_section4.html](http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/rr/html/rr_section4.html)). Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. All written work must be original and created individually for this class. All papers must appropriately cite (using MLA or CMS format) any sources used. Instances of alleged dishonesty will be forwarded to the Summer School Director for adjudication within the Student Judicial System. Potential sanctions include failure in the course, suspension from the University and permanent dismissal.

## THE FINE PRINT

- You must complete *all* assignments to receive a passing grade in this class.
- Papers are due at the beginning of class. Late assignments will be penalized ½ grade per day, unless an extension is granted by me *prior to the original due date* (or you have a documented medical emergency).
- Papers should be double-spaced, with one-inch margins and 12-point font. They must be submitted in paper form, not via fax or email.
- While I am happy to discuss course material via email, I will not discuss grades via email. If you would like to discuss your grade, please make an appointment to meet with me.

## SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

### **M 7/6 Introduction: Why Study History?**

Archive trip (second half)

### **T 7/7 Civil War & Reconstruction**

Readings: Henretta & Fernlund, ch 15 (selections)

### **Th 7/9 The Jim Crow South & the Conquest of the West**

Readings: Henretta & Fernlund, ch 16 & 19 (selections), *Without Sanctuary* website (LATTE)

Response Essay: Washington's "Atlanta Compromise" vs. Du Bois' "Of Booker T. Washington & Others"

### **M 7/13 The Gilded Age & The Great Wave**

Readings: Henretta & Fernlund, ch 17 & 18 (selections)

Film: Excerpt from *The Golden Door* (in class)

### **T 7/14 Urbanization & the Progressive Era**

Readings: Henretta, ch 18, 19 & 20 (selections); Riis website (LATTE selections)

Response Essay: Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*

### **Th 7/16 \*PAPER PROPOSAL DUE\* American Imperialism & World War I**

Readings: Henretta & Fernlund, ch 21 & 22 (selections)

### **M 7/20 The Roaring 20s: Radicals and the Rise of Consumerism**

Readings: Henretta, ch 22 & 23 (selections); Topp (selections)

Response Essay: Topp, *The Sacco & Vanzetti Case*

**T 7/21 \*MIDTERM EXAM\* The Great Depression & the New Deal**

Readings: Henretta & Fernlund, ch 24 & 25 (selections)

**Th 7/23 World War II: Fighting for Freedom at Home & Abroad**

Readings: Henretta & Fernlund, ch 26 (selections)

Film: *Japanese Relocation* (US Govt Propaganda film short) (in class)

**M 7/27 Kitchen Debates: Cold War, Suburbia & the Problem That Has No Name**

Readings: Henretta & Fernlund, ch 27 & 28 (selections); Betty Friedan, “The Problem That Has No Name” (LATTE)

Film: *The House in the Middle* (US Govt Propaganda film short) (in class)

**T 7/28 The Rights Revolution(s)**

Readings: Henretta, ch 27, 28 & 29 (selections); Cesar Chavez, “Letter from Delano” (LATTE); Moody (selections)

Response Essay: Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*

**Th 7/30 Counterculture, Conflict, and the New Conservatism**

Readings: Henretta & Fernlund, ch 29 & 30 (selections)

**M 8/3 \*PAPER DUE\* The Reagan Revolution & the End of the Cold War**

Readings: Henretta & Fernlund, ch 30 & 31 (selections)

**T 8/4 Going Global: Reimagining America for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Readings: Jacobson & Colón (all); Thomas L. Friedman, “Prologue: The Super-Story” (LATTE); Barack Obama, “A World that Stands as One” Speech in Berlin, July 2008 (Youtube/LATTE)

**Th 8/6 \*FINAL EXAM\* 9am-12pm\***

**EXTRA CREDIT FILM OPTIONS (others acceptable with prior approval):**

*Modern Times* (1936) (Great Depression, modernity, communism)

*The Grapes of Wrath* (1940) (Great Depression)

*The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946) (GIs in post WWII)

*Inherit the Wind* (1960) (Scopes trial/parallel of McCarthyism)

*A Raisin in the Sun* (1961) (Racism & redlining in the 1950s)

*Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying & Love the Bomb* (1964) (Cold War)

*To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962) (Racism in the Jim Crow South)

*The Green Berets* (1968) (Vietnam)

*The Deer Hunter* (1978) (Vietnam)

*Platoon* (1986) (Vietnam, based on 1970s writings of director)

*All the President's Men* (1976) (Watergate)

*And the Band Played On* (1993) (AIDS in the Reagan era, based on 1987 book)