

HISTORY 21H.102 AMERICA SINCE 1865

Spring 2011

Professor Megan Nelson

TuTh 9:30-11:00 a.m.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course surveys the history of modern America, 1865 to the present, through the lens of protest ideologies, strategies, and rhetoric. Through lectures, reading, and discussion, students will become familiar with the major events, issues, struggles, and myths that been at the center of the American protest tradition. We will pay particularly close attention to the racial, class, and gender constructions and conflicts expressed in American written, visual, and material culture and how they have changed over time.

21H.102 carries a CI-H designation; CI-H subjects provide a foundation in general expository writing and speaking. These subjects require at least 20 pages of writing divided among three to five assignments, of which at least one must be revised and resubmitted. CI-H subjects also offer students substantial opportunity for oral expression through presentations, student-led discussion, or class participation.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Primary documents (PDFs located on class website)

Eric Foner, *Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and Its Legacy* (Louisiana State University Press, 1983). ISBN 0-8071-1189-9

Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America* (Hill and Wang, 1982). ISBN 0-8090-0145-4

Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, *Farewell to Manzanar: A True Story of Japanese American Experience During and After the World War II Internment* (Bantam Books, 1983). ISBN: 0-5532-7258-6

Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried* (Mariner Books, 2009). ISBN: 0-6187-0641-0

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation (25%)

While there is a major lecture component to this course, we will discuss the primary texts and secondary sources you have read at different points during each lecture, and more fully during Thursday discussion sections. Therefore, your active and engaged participation in class is a major component of your grade. By "participation," I mean thoughtful contributions to our conversations that engage with the documents, my questions, *and* the questions and comments of your classmates.

We will not use a textbook for this course; therefore, I strongly recommend that you take detailed notes during lecture and discussion.

You may bring laptops to class on Tuesdays for lecture; however, you may not bring laptops to our Thursday discussion sections.

I expect you to bring your texts every day and have them available to consult during class.

Each student will lead class discussion at least once during the semester; your preparation and performance in this task will contribute to your class participation grade.

Papers (75%)

You will write three papers this semester, each one making use of primary documents, lecture, and secondary source material. These papers will not be merely descriptive “book reports” but will require that you craft an original and forceful argument, cite evidence to prove your argument, and write creative analyses of these pieces of historical evidence. Your grade will reflect content and style—what you have to say and how you choose to say it.

Each paper will be written in 12-point font, double-spaced, spell-checked, cited, edited, and stapled.

Short Analytical Papers: Two 5-7-page papers in which you use multiple primary documents from the course list to make an argument about a significant development in modern American history.

Research Paper: 10-12-page research paper that analyzes a single protest action in American history since 1865. You will need to use at least 5 primary documents and 5 published secondary sources not on this syllabus as sources for this paper. You will also write a paper proposal for this project (5%), which will be due well in advance of the final paper, and a rough draft (10%).

Papers are due to me in hard copy the day they are due. **NOTE: Papers will be marked down one full letter grade (10 points) for each day that they are late.**

COURSE EVALUATIONS AND GRADING

There is no midterm or final examination in this class, but you must pass every portion of this class to pass the class as a whole.

Paper Evaluations

I will evaluate your papers according to four elements:

1. *Argument and Use of Evidence*—how creative and original is your argument? Is it, in fact, an argument at all or is it merely a factual point? What kinds of evidence do you use to prove your points and do these examples and documents actually support your argument? Do you analyze these pieces of evidence fully and creatively or merely present them and move on?
2. *Structure and Organization*—how do you put your argument together throughout the paper? Does the structure of the paper follow the argument or is it a mish-mash of points linked loosely together? Do you use effective transition sentences when you move from point to point and craft conclusion sentences that bring the reader back to your major argument?
3. *Grammar/Writing Style*—how well do you articulate your points? Is your paper a muddle of poor word choices and spelling errors, or is it an eloquent and clean piece of intellectual work?
4. *Originality*—is your argument innovative? Do you present and analyze your evidence in surprising and creative ways? Does your paper contribute to our understanding of modern American culture?

Final Grade Percentages

Class Participation	25%
Short Analytical Papers	30% (15% each)
Research Paper Proposal	5%
Final Research Paper Rough Draft	10%
Final Research Paper	30%

COURSE POLICIESPlagiarism and Cheating

Faculty members at MIT strive to foster a spirit of complete honesty and high standards of integrity. Any attempt by students to present as their own work any work that is not their own is regarded by the faculty and administration as a major offense and renders the offenders liable to serious consequences, possibly suspension from the university. “Scholastic dishonesty” includes, but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student.

If you plagiarize a paper, you will earn a zero on the paper, which means that you will fail the class.

Learning or Physical Differences

Any student who, because of a learning or physical difference, may require some special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to request necessary accommodation.

Religious Observances

A student who is absent from classes for the observation of a religious holy day will be allowed to complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. The student must notify the professor of the absence no later than the fifteenth day after the first day of the semester in order to secure an excused absence and make-up privileges.

Classroom Technology

As noted above, students may bring laptops to lectures on Tuesdays; however, you are not allowed to have laptops open during our discussion sections on Thursdays.

This classroom is a cell phone-free environment—turn off your phones at the door.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Papers are to be turned in on the Tuesday session during the week listed

Readings are to be completed for the Thursday discussion section during the week listed

2.1 Introductions

Lecture: Reconstruction and Redemption, 1865-1877

2.3 DiscussionReadings:

Eric Foner, Chapters 2 and 3 (“The Politics of Freedom” and “The Emancipated Worker,” in *Nothing but Freedom* (1990), pp. 39-110.

Mississippi Black Codes (1865)

Howell Cobb to J.D. Hoover, January 4, 1868

Edward Crosby, testimony regarding the KKK, 1872

2.8 Lecture: Conquest and Survival in the West, 1860-1900**2.10 Discussion**Readings:

Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America* (1982), Preface and Chapter 1 (“The Westward Route”)

Rachel Haskell, from “Life in a Mining Camp”

N.A. Jennings, from *A Texas Ranger*

Chief Joseph, “Speech to a White Audience, 1879”

The Dawes Act

Images: John Gast, *American Progress* (1872); landscape paintings of Albert Bierstadt

2.15 Lecture: Industry and Labor, 1865-1900

DUE: SHORT PAPER ONE

2.17 DiscussionReadings:

Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America* (1982), Chapters 2-3 (“Mechanization Takes Command” and “Capital and Labor”)

John D. Rockefeller, Testimony in *Preliminary Report on Trusts and Industrial Combinations*

Preamble to the Constitution of the Knights of Labor

Sadie Frowne, “The Story of a Sweatshop Girl”

Andrew Carnegie, from *Wealth*

[2.22—NO CLASS—MONDAY SCHEDULE]**2.24 Lecture/Discussion: Urban Culture, 1865-1900**Readings:

Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America* (1982), Chapters 4 and 7 (“Mysteries of the Great City” and “The White City”)

Thorstein Veblen, from *The Theory of the Leisure Class*

Adna Ferrin Weber, From *The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century*

Jacob Reiss, “The Reign of Rum”

Jane Addams, “Youth in the City”

Theodore Dreiser, “The Bowery Mission”

Images: The Ash Can School painters

3.1 Lecture: Commonwealth and Empire, 1870-1900**3.13 Discussion**Readings:

Susan A. Brewer, "The 'Divine Mission': War in the Philippines," in *Why America Fights: Patriotism and War Propaganda from the Philippines to Iraq* (2009), pp. 14-45.

Plessy v Ferguson Majority and Dissenting opinions

The Chinese Exclusion Act

Robert G. Ingersoll, from "Should the Chinese Be Excluded?"

William McKinley, "Declaration of War"

William Ransom Roberts, from "Under Fire in Cuba"

"Platform of the American Anti-Imperialist League"

3.8 Lecture: World War I, 1917-1920

DUE: RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSAL

3.10 DiscussionReadings:

Christopher Capozzola, Chapters 1-2 ("The Spirit of Selective Service" and "Between God and Country: Objecting to the Wartime State"), from *Uncle Sam Wants You*, pp. 21-82.

Theodore Roosevelt, "The Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine"

"The Zimmerman Note"

Woodrow Wilson, "Declaration of War against Germany"

Robert C. Hoffman, from *I Remember the Last War*

Images: War Propaganda Posters

3.15 Lecture: The Great Depression and the New Deal, 1929-1940**3.17 Discussion**Readings:

Neil Maher, Introduction, Chapters 1-2 ("Franklin Roosevelt's Progressive Era Influences" and "The Evolution of CCC Conservation"), from *Nature's New Deal*, pp. 3-76.

Studs Terkel, "Two Views of the Great Depression," from *Hard Times*

"Dust and the Nation's 'Bread-Basket'"

Letters to New Dealers

James Agee and Walker Evans, from *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*

Frank Stokes, from "Let the Mexicans Organize"

Images: FSA photographs

[3.22-3.24—NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK]**3.29 Lecture: World War II, 1940-1945**

DUE: SHORT PAPER TWO

3.31 DiscussionReadings

Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, *Farewell to Manzanar*

Franklin D. Roosevelt, "The Four Freedoms"

Franklin D. Roosevelt, "War Message to Congress"

Soldiers' Letters Home

Korematsu v United States opinions

A. Philip Randolph, from "Call to Negro America to March on Washington"

Excerpts from *The Homefront*

“The Changing World for Women”

Images: War Propaganda posters; Norman Rockwell, “The Four Freedoms”

4.5 Lecture: The 1950s

4.7 Discussion

Reading:

Elaine Tyler May, “Cold War—Warm Hearth: Politics and the Family in Postwar America,” in Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, eds., *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980* (1989), pp. 153-181.

“Up from the Potato Fields”

“What T.V. Is Doing to America”

Edith Stern, “Women are Household Slaves”

Willard Waller, “The Coming War on Women” (1945)

Betty Friedan, from *The Feminine Mystique*

4.12 Lecture: The Civil Rights Movement 1945-1968

DUE: ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER (DRAFT)

4.14 Discussion

Readings:

Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *Journal of American History* 91 (March 2005): 1233-1263

Brown v Board of Education of Topeka Unanimous Decision

Herman Talmadge, “Response to the *Brown* Decision”

Rosa Parks, from *Rosa Parks: My Story*

Martin Luther King, Jr., from “Letter from Birmingham Jail”

George C. Wallace, “Speech in Atlanta,” July 1964

Martin Luther King, “I Have a Dream”

[4.19—NO CLASS—PATRIOTS DAY]

4.21 Lecture/Discussion: Wars at Home and Abroad, 1965-1974

Readings:

Tim O’Brien *The Things They Carried*

Bob Dylan, “The Times They Are A-Changing”

Tom Grace, on the Shootings at Kent State

Report, President’s Commission on Campus Unrest

Tom Hayden, from “The Port Huron Statement”

4.26 Lecture: The Politics of Identity and Protest, 1960s-1970s

4.28 Discussion

Readings:

Robert Gioielli, “Getting the Lead Out: Environmental Politics in 1970s St. Louis,” *Journal of Urban History* 36, no. 4 (July 2010): 429-446.

Stokely Carmichael, from *Black Power*

Gloria Steinem, ERA Hearings Statement

Roe v Wade Majority Opinion

Cesar Chavez, from *Cesar Chavez: Autobiography of La Causa*

5.3 Lecture: The Rise of the Right and the Reagan Era, 1974-1988

5.5 Discussion

Readings:

Blake Ellis, "An Alternative Politics: Texas Baptists and the Rise of the Christian Right, 1975-1985,"
Southwestern Historical Quarterly 112, no. 4 (April 2009): 361-386.

Jerry Falwell, from *Listen America*

Ronald Reagan, "The 'Evil Empire'"

"Greed is Good," from *Wall Street*

Jesse Jackson, from "Common Ground and Common Sense"

5.10 Lecture: Modern America, 1988-present

DUE: FINAL RESEARCH PAPER

5.12 Discussion

Readings:

Ussama Makdisi, "Anti-Americanism in the Arab World: An Interpretation of a Brief History,"
Journal of American History 89 (September 2002): 538-557.

"The National Security Strategy of the United States, September 2002"

Fareed Zakaria, "The Arrogant Empire"

Robert D. Putnam, from "Bowling Alone"

Cindy Sheehan, "It's Up to You Now"

Malcolm Gladwell, "Small Change: Why the revolution will not be tweeted" (2010)

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