

HIST 152: US History Since 1877

Spring 2026

Online Asynchronous

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This course covers the social, economic, and political developments within the United States as well as its diplomatic history in the period of its emergence as a leading world power. This course begins by emphasizing racial issues after Reconstruction, the new industrialism, the last frontier, and agrarian and labor discontent. Attention is focused next upon overseas expansion and Progressive Era reform such as women's suffrage. Later topics include the approach to and participation in World War I, the problems of prosperity during the "normalcy" of the 1920's, the depression and the New Deal, the role of the United States in World War II, the Cold War at home and abroad, postwar liberalism, the Vietnam war, the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, the conservative ascendancy of the 1970s and 1980s, and a view of America in the 1990s.

Required Texts:

The American Yawp: A Massively Collaborative Open U.S. History Textbook, Volume II: After 1877, edited by Joseph L. Locke and Ben Wright. Stanford University Press, 2019.
Available at <http://www.americanyawp.com/>. (Available Online)

The American Yawp Reader: Documentary Companion to the American Yawp, Volume II: After 1877, edited by Joseph L. Locke and Ben Wright. Stanford University Press, 2019.
Available at <https://www.americanyawp.com/reader.html>. (Available Online)

Additional required readings available on Brightspace, marked with a (B).

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, you will have:

- 1) Gained a base-level understanding about United States history since 1877, specifically major themes and developments, and demonstrated this knowledge through discussions, quizzes, and essays.
- 2) Identified key concepts, people, and events in modern American history through weekly quizzes.
- 3) Examined significant political, social, economic, cultural, and technological trends in American history through discussion forums and quizzes.
- 4) Used primary source evidence to analyze fundamental problems in American history in individual writing.
- 5) Applied the material learned in this course to contemporary discourse on politics, race, gender, religion, technology, and life through class discussions and writings.

Course Requirements and Grading:

- I) **Discussion Posts (60 points, 20 points each):** On Brightspace, there are discussion questions available that correspond with a module of course material. For each module of the course, you will write one response to one discussion question on Brightspace, and comment on at least two other responses or comments from other students. Your response should be 300 to 500 words long and reference primary sources for that week. Comments need to be two or three complete and thoughtful sentences that add to the discussion. In other words, you will write one discussion post and leave two comments for each module, which means in total you will write three discussion posts and leave six comments for the entire course. If you write multiple discussion posts for a module, only the first discussion post will be graded. Your discussion post and comments are due on the last Sunday of the module.

These are informal writing assignments. The purpose of these essays is not to improve your writing skills but to stimulate thinking about issues, questions, and problems raised by your study of American history to 1877. Your responses will be assessed on things like the process, clarity, insight, and quality of thought, as well as references to course readings. Please be respectful in your posts and comments.

- II) **Six Quizzes (60 points total, 10 pts. each):** These are a combination of multiple choice and short answer quizzes based on the weekly readings. The purpose of these quizzes is to ensure that you have a basic understanding of the events covered in class. There are six weekly quizzes, due on Sunday of that week at midnight.

- III) Three Essays (120 total, 60 points each):** Instead of exams, you will write three essays throughout the semester for each unit of the course. The questions for each essay will be posted on Brightspace at the start of each unit. You will answer one of the three given questions as completely and thoughtfully as you can, drawing on your readings and our class discussions. Take a position, back up your statements using three to five primary sources, and clearly state what you want to say in minimum 900 to maximum 1,250 words (about 3 to 4 pages). Your essays must be formatted with 12pt. Font, Times New Roman, and Double Spacing. Only use the sources assigned in class, with in-text parenthetical citations, and no works cited page.

Assignments Points and Percentage Breakdown:

Assignment	Points	Percentage
Discussion Posts	~20 points each 60 points	~6.7% each 20% total
Weekly Quizzes	10 points each 60 points total	2% each 20 % total
Essays	30 points each 180 total	20% each 60% total
Total	300 points	100%

Grading Scale:

In this class grades reflect the sum of your achievement throughout the semester. You will accumulate points as described in the assignments portion above, with each assignment graded according to a rubric. At the end of the semester, final grades will be calculated by adding the total points earned and translating those numbers (out of 300) into the following letters (there will be no partial points or rounding).

- A+: 291 - 300
- A: 279 - 290
- A-: 270 - 278
- B+: 264 - 269
- B: 249 - 263
- B-: 240 - 248
- C+: 234 - 239
- C: 219 - 233
- C-: 210 - 218
- D+: 204 - 209
- D: 189 - 103
- D-: 180 - 188
- F: 179 or below

Please note that FERPA (the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) prohibits me from discussing students' grades via email. However, I can talk about grades via scheduled Zoom meetings or through Brightspace. You are welcome to reach me for non-grade related inquiries at my email, jsoucek@purdue.edu. Please remember to write using proper email etiquette.

COURSE POLICIES

Missed or Late Work:

Late assignments will be deducted a letter for each week that passes from the original due date. If you have extenuating circumstances that warrant an extension for an assignment, please let me know in advance and before the assignment is due.

Incompletes:

A grade of incomplete (I) will be given only in unusual circumstances. To receive an "I" grade, a written request must be submitted prior to December 1, and approved by the instructor. The request must describe the circumstances, along with a proposed timeline for completing the course work. Submitting a request does not ensure that an incomplete grade will be granted. If granted, you will be required to fill out and sign an "Incomplete Contract" form that will be turned in with the course grades. Any requests made after the course is completed will not be considered for an incomplete grade.

Use of AI:

Basic Policy: AI is going to become an ever-more important productivity tool over the next decade. However, it is critical that we learn together how to use AI content generators mindfully, responsibly, and ethically. That includes thinking about the context in which we are using AI -- and in an academic setting, that involves the often-frustrating struggle to learn new material and skills, for a grade. Although there are responsible, ethical ways to use AI within academia, we need to be clear: using an AI content generator such as ChatGPT or any other such generator to complete assignments (either entirely or with modification) and representing that material as your own work is both plagiarism and a violation of academic integrity, and is wildly unfair to your fellow students. AI should be used to enhance and supplement academic work, not to replace it.

AI content generators can definitely help students in an academic setting learn to write better or to figure out difficult readings. Before you dive in, though, be aware of the limits of conversational, generative AI tools such as ChatGPT. The current AI models will confidently and very persuasively reassert factual errors. You will be responsible for any errors, biases, or omissions. Be sure to fact check everything, particularly the citations. AI will provide material that sounds authoritative and academic. In most cases, that material will not provide the level of detail that you can achieve by thoroughly mining your assigned reading. Although it may sound great, never be satisfied with AI output.

Be aware that AI use may stifle your own independent thinking and creativity. AI can definitely help students see possibilities that they missed, but it can also narrow insights or ideas to a smaller responsive range or blind you to other possibilities. Remember, in a History course, you are not looking for THE right answer; you are developing YOUR answer and there can be a wide range of appropriate answers.

If stuck, you may use AI to draft an outline to clarify your thoughts. However, here you **must** keep track of your prompts and the AI responses, as you will need to turn in a copy of your interactions with AI together with your assignment, AND cite AI usage where appropriate. You are free to use spell check, grammar check, and synonym identification tools (e.g., Grammarly, and MS Word).

You may not use entire sentences or paragraphs suggested by an AI content generator without providing quotation marks and a citation, just as you would for any other source. If you use AI to write a starting sentence or paragraph, you must substantively rewrite it (not just change around wording, eliminate words, or use synonyms) or go back and write your own introduction after you have completed the paper. If you wind up using any of the starting sentence or paragraph, it must be quoted and cited.

You may not have an AI content generator write the whole or substantive part of any draft (either rough or final) of an assignment for you. You may not rely on generative AI to do your thinking for you. Like Wikipedia, AI is a tool that you can use to help jump-start or fine tune your work – but you should do the hard work yourself.

By submitting assignments in this class, you affirm that they are your own work and you attribute the use of any tools and sources, including any and all AI content generators. I don't think that any of you would deliberately plagiarize, but I am also aware that 1) This tech is new and people aren't sure about usage or appropriate boundaries, 2) People are busy with multiple expectations for their time, and 3) People have various levels of academic knowledge and practice. Just remember that other people face the same challenges you do! I want to make sure that the expectations are clear so that we can spend the semester learning things together—and not worrying about the origins of your work.

For all assignments, I use the Turnitin Originality checker software available on Brightspace. If your essay is flagged for potential use of AI, I will read your essay and then ask to meet with you to discuss your writing process.

CLASS SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO MINOR CHANGES)

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This schedule is subject to change with advance notice from the instructor.

Week	Topic	Readings	Assignments
Module One: Who Built America? 1877 - 1914			
Week 1	The Gilded Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Gilded Age ○ The Labor Movement ○ Populism ○ The New South and Jim Crow • Secondary Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AY, Chapter 16 ○ AY, Chapter 18 • Primary Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ William Graham Sumner on Social Darwinism (ca.1880s) ○ Henry George, <i>Progress and Poverty</i>, Selections (1879) ○ The “Omaha Platform” of the People’s Party (1892) ○ Jacob Riis, <i>How the Other Half Lives</i> (1890) ○ Ida B. Wells-Barnett, “Lynch Law in America” (1900) ○ Booker T. Washington & W.E.B. DuBois on Black Progress (1895, 1903) 	
Week 2 (March 15 – March 21): Spring Break			

Week 3	The Progressive Era	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Imperialism ○ The Progressive Era • Secondary Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AY, Chapter 19 ○ AY, Chapter 20 • Primary Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Albert Beveridge, “March of the Flag” Speech (1898) (B) ○ Jane Addams, “The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements” (1892) ○ Eugene Debs, “How I Became a Socialist” (April, 1902) ○ Woodrow Wilson on the New Freedom (1912) ○ Theodore Roosevelt on “The New Nationalism” (1910) 	Quiz 1 First Discussion Post Due on Sunday, March 29
Module 2: Boom and Bust: America from 1914 - 1945			
Week 4	World War I and Its Aftermath	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ World War I ○ The Jazz Age • Secondary Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AY, Chapter 21 ○ AY, Chapter 22 • Primary Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Woodrow Wilson Requests War (April 2, 1917) ○ Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points (1918) ○ Emma Goldman on Patriotism (July 9, 1917) ○ Eugene Debs, 	Quiz 2 First Essay Due on Sunday, April 5

		<p>Statement to the Court (1918) (B)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ W.E.B DuBois, “Returning Soldiers” (May, 1919) ○ Hiram Evans on the “The Klan’s Fight for Americanism” (1926) ○ Ellen Welles Page, “A Flapper’s Appeal to Parents” (1922) ○ Alain Locke on the “New Negro” (1925) 	
Week 5	The Great Depression and World War II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The New Deal ○ World War II • Secondary Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AY, Chapter 23 ○ AY, Chapter 24 ○ Video: The Fallen of World War II (B) ○ Video: American Concentration Camps (B) • Primary Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Franklin D. Roosevelt, First Inaugural Address (1933) (B) ○ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Fireside Chat 1: On the Banking Crisis (March 12, 1933) (B) ○ Huey P. Long, “Every Man a King” and “Share our Wealth” (1934) ○ Woody Guthrie Songs (B) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This Land is Your Land 	<p>Quiz 3</p> <p>Second Discussion Post Due on Sunday, April 12</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pastures of Plenty ▪ I Ain't Got No Home in This World Anymore ▪ Union Maid ▪ Tear the Fascist Down ○ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Declaration of War (December 8, 1941) ○ The Atlantic Charter (1941) ○ Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga on Japanese Internment (1942/1994) 	
Module 3: The End of the American Century: America since 1945			
Week 6	The Cold War and the 1950s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Early Cold War ○ The Affluent Society • Secondary Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AY, Chapter 25 ○ AY, Chapter 26 ○ Video: What is McCarthyism? And How Did It Happen? • Primary Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Truman Doctrine (1947) ○ NSC-68 (1950) ○ Joseph McCarthy on Communism (1950) ○ Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka (1954) ○ The Southern Manifesto (1956) (B) ○ Richard Nixon on the American Standard of Living (1959) 	Quiz 4 Second Essay Due on Sunday, April 19

Week 7	The 1960s and 1970s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The 1960s ○ The Vietnam War ○ Nixon and Carter • Secondary Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AY, Chapter 27 ○ AY, Chapter 28 ○ Video: CNN, The Sixties, Episode 6, 1968 • Primary Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Barry Goldwater, Republican Nomination Acceptance Speech (1964) ○ Lyndon Johnson, Howard University Commencement Address (1965) ○ Fannie Lou Hamer: Testimony at the Democratic National Convention (1964) ○ National Organization for Women, "Statement of Purpose" (1966) ○ The Port Huron Statement (1962) ○ Native Americans Occupy Alcatraz (1969) ○ Jimmy Carter, "Crisis of Confidence" (1979) 	Quiz 5
Week 8	The Triumph of the Right – The 1980s and 1990s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Reagan Revolution ○ The End of History? • Secondary Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AY, Chapter 29 • Primary Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Three Speeches from Ronald Reagan (B) ○ Pat Buchanan on the Culture War (1992) ○ Phyllis Schlafly on 	Quiz 6 Third Discussion Post Due on Sunday, May 3

		Women's Responsibility for Sexual Harassment (1981) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jesse Jackson on the Rainbow Coalition (1984) 	
Finals Week	Final Essay Due: Wednesday, May 6		

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Email Etiquette:

Outside of class or office hours, communicate with your professor by email. State the reason for your email in the subject line (ex: "question about essay"). Include a full salutation (ex: "Dear Dr. Soucek") and closing with your full name (ex: "Sincerely, Eleanor Roosevelt"). Use full sentences, correct grammar, and punctuation. I will usually respond to your emails within 24 hours, with the exception of weekends.

Academic Dishonesty:

Plagiarism refers to the reproduction of another's words or ideas without proper attribution. University Regulations contains further information on dishonesty. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses, and will be treated as such in this class. **You are expected to produce your own work and to accurately cite all necessary materials.** Cheating, plagiarism, and other dishonest practices (including the use of Chat GPT and other AI generators) will be punished as harshly as Purdue University policies allow. Any instances of academic dishonesty will likely result in a grade of F for the course and notification of the Dean of Students Office. Please make sure that you are familiar with Purdue's academic integrity policies: <http://www.purdue.edu/odos/aboutodos/academicintegrity.php>

Please note that using AI to write your essays is academic dishonesty and carries the same penalties as other forms of plagiarism. If any portion of your essay was generated using AI, you are in violation of the academic integrity expectations of this course and the university. Your case will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities for further review of your status at this University.

Nondiscrimination Statement:

Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and

nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. See Purdue's full [Nondiscrimination Policy Statement](#)

Students with Disabilities:

Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at: drc@purdue.edu or by phone: 765-494-1247.

Emergency Preparation:

In the event of a major campus emergency, the above requirements, deadlines and grading policies are subject to changes that may be required by a revised semester calendar. Any such changes in this course will be posted on Brightspace once the course resumes or can be obtained by contacting the professor via email.

Mental Health Statement:

- **If you find yourself beginning to feel some stress, anxiety and/or feeling slightly overwhelmed, try [WellTrack](#).** Sign in and find information and tools at your fingertips, available to you at any time.
- **If you need support and information about options and resources,** please see the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) for drop-in hours (M-F, 8 am- 5 pm).
- **If you're struggling and need mental health services:** Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of mental health support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) at 765-494-6995 during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or by going to the CAPS office of the second floor of the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours.

Grief Absence Policy:

Purdue University recognizes that a time of bereavement is very difficult for a student. The University therefore provides the following rights to students facing the loss of a family member through the Grief Absence Policy for Students (GAPS). Students will be excused from classes for funeral leave and given the opportunity to complete missed assignments or assessments in the event of the death of a member of the student's family.

Violent Behavior Policy:

Purdue University is committed to providing a safe and secure campus environment. Purdue strives to create an educational environment for students and work environment for employees that promote educational and career goals. Violent behavior impedes such goals. Therefore, violent behavior is prohibited in or on any university facility or while participating in any university activity.

Course Evaluation:

During the last two weeks of the course, you will be provided with an opportunity to evaluate this course and your instructor. Purdue uses an online course evaluation system. You will receive

an official email from evaluation administrators with a link to the online evaluation site. You will have up to two weeks to complete this evaluation. Your participation is an integral part of this course, and your feedback is vital to improving education at Purdue University. I strongly urge you to participate in the evaluation system.

Disclaimer:

This syllabus may be subject to change as dictated by class needs and at the instructor's discretion. All changes will be communicated via Brightspace announcements.