

HIST 15200 – United States History Since 1877

Spring 2026

CRN: 15924

Instructional Modality: In-person, Lecture

Class Meetings: MWF, 1:30–2:20 PM

Location: Wilmeth Active Learning Center (WALC) 1055

Credits: 3.0

Instructor Information

Instructor	Contact	Office & Hours
Dr. Renée Gaarder	rgaarder@purdue.edu 765-494-8341	University Hall (UNIV), 3rd Floor Tuesdays 1:00–2:00 PM or by appointment

Course Description

This course examines the **growth and transformation of the United States from 1877 to the present**, exploring major **political, economic, social, and cultural developments**. We will analyze topics including:

- Industrialization and labor conflicts
- Agrarian challenges and reform movements
- The Great Depression and New Deal
- World Wars I and II
- The Cold War era
- Shifts in civil rights, culture, and politics in the late 20th and early 21st centuries

Students will engage history through **lectures, textbook and primary sources, film, photography, music, and discussion**.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of U.S. history since 1877 through written assessment.
 2. Identify key themes and connections across time.
 3. Apply historical methods such as primary source analysis, cultural critique, and visual analysis.
 4. Develop writing and critical thinking skills through evaluating competing interpretations and crafting historical arguments.
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Required Materials

Textbook

- *The American Yawp: A Massively Collaborative Open U.S. History Textbook*, Stanford University Press Edition, Volume II.
(Free online; link will be provided in Brightspace.)

Additional Materials

All supplementary readings, primary sources, media, and assignments will be posted on **Brightspace**.

Course Schedule Overview

Below is an accessible, week-by-week schedule.

All assignments are due **by 11:59 PM** on the date listed.

Week 1 (Jan 12–16): Course Introduction / First Contact to 1877

Reading: Black Codes of Mississippi; Fourteenth Amendment; Fifteenth Amendment (Brightspace)

Assignments: None listed

Week 2 (Jan 19–23): America's Gilded Age (1870–1890)

Note: No class on Monday 1/19 (MLK Holiday)

Reading:

- *The American Yawp* Ch. 16–17
- PSR: Carnegie, *Gospel of Wealth* (1889); Omaha Platform (1892); Turner, *Frontier Thesis* (1893); Jackson, *Century of Dishonor* (1881)

Week 3 (Jan 26–30): Freedom's Boundaries at Home and Abroad (1890–1900)

Reading:

- YAWP Ch. 18
- PSR: Henry Grady, *New South*; Ida B. Wells, *Lynch Law in America*; Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*

Week 4 (Feb 2–6): Progressive Era (1900–1916)

Reading: YAWP Ch. 19–20

PSR: Kipling, *White Man's Burden*; Twain, *War Prayer*; Debs, *How I Became a Socialist*; Blackwell, *Women's Suffrage*

Assignment: PSA 1 due 2/6

Week 5 (Feb 9–13): WWI and Its Aftermath (1916–1920)

Reading: YAWP Ch. 21

PSR: Wilson War Message; DuBois, *Returning Soldiers*; Van Wert, *Flu Pandemic* (1918)

Assignment: Quiz 1 due 2/13

Week 6 (Feb 16–20): Boom to Bust (1920–1932)

Reading: YAWP Ch. 22

PSR: Harding, *Return to Normalcy*; Page, *Flapper's Appeal*; Locke, *The New Negro*

Exam: Exam 1 in class on 2/20

Week 7 (Feb 23–27): The New Deal (1932–1940)

Reading: YAWP Ch. 23

PSR: FDR Second Inaugural; Hunter, *On Relief*; McCall, *Moving People*

Week 8 (Mar 2–6): World War II (1941–1945)

Reading: YAWP Ch. 24

PSR: Atlantic Charter; Executive Order 9066; Truman on Hiroshima

Week 9 (Mar 9–13): The Cold War (1945–1953)

Reading: YAWP Ch. 25

PSR: Truman Doctrine; McCarthy Speech; Hellman Testimony

Assignment: PSA 2 due 3/13

Week 10 (Mar 16–20): Spring Break

No class

Week 11 (Mar 23–27): An Affluent Society (1953–1960)

Reading: YAWP Ch. 26

PSR: Brown v. Board; Nixon on Standards of Living; JFK on Church and State; Rosa Parks narrative

Assignment: Quiz 2 due 3/27

Week 12 (Mar 30–Apr 3): The 1960s (1960–1968)

Reading: YAWP Ch. 27

PSR: Johnson Voting Rights; NOW Statement; Port Huron Statement

Exam: Exam 2 on 4/3

Week 13 (Apr 6–10): The Conservative Turn (1969–1988)

Reading: YAWP Ch. 28

PSR: China Visit Announcement; Carter, *Crisis of Confidence*; Steinem, *Equal Rights*; Native Americans at Alcatraz

Week 14 (Apr 13–17): Culture Wars (1989–2004)

Reading: YAWP Ch. 29

PSR: Reagan Inaugural; AIDS Patient Statement; Parents Music Resource Center; Schlafly, *Women's Responsibility*

Assignment: PSA 3 due 4/17

Week 15 (Apr 20–24): The Recent Past

Reading: YAWP Ch. 30

PSR: Clinton on Free Trade; Bush on Post-9/11; *Obergefell v. Hodges*

Assignment: Quiz 3 due 4/24

Week 16 (Apr 27–May 1): Review and Exam 3

Exam: Exam 3 in class on 5/1

Final Exam: None

Major Assignments and Grading

Quizzes (3 × 25 points = 75 points)

- Open-book, 20 minutes, 5 questions
 - Based on assigned chapters and lectures
 - Taken independently through Brightspace
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Primary Source Analyses (3 × 50 points = 150 points)

Each PSA must be:

- 12-pt Times New Roman (or similar)
- Double-spaced
- 1.5+ pages
- Submitted to Brightspace by 11:59 PM on due date

PSA 1 → choose a source from YAWP Chapters 16–21

PSA 2 → choose a source from YAWP Chapters 22–26

PSA 3 → choose a source from **Purdue Archives** (requires MLA citations)

No AI tools permitted in any part of the writing process.

Exams (3 × 100 points = 300 points)

- In-class
- Combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay
- Study guide provided 1 week prior
- No cumulative final exam

Total Possible Points: 525

Grading Scale

A+: 97–100%
A: 93–96%
A-: 90–92%
B+: 87–89%
B: 83–86%
B-: 80–82%
C+: 77–79%
C: 73–76%
C-: 70–72%
D+: 67–69%
D: 63–66%
D-: 60–62%
F: Below 60%

Course Policies

Email Policy

- Available 9:00 AM–5:00 PM, Monday–Friday
 - Responses within 24 hours
 - Follow professional etiquette (greeting, clear question, full name)
 - Check syllabus and Brightspace before emailing questions
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Missing Assignments

- Due dates are firm; late work receives a failing grade
 - Exceptions considered **case-by-case**
 - Must contact instructor within 1 week of missed work
 - Communication early = more flexibility
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Office Hours

- Tuesdays, 1:00–2:00 PM
 - In person at University Hall, 3rd floor
 - Check in with receptionist
 - Virtual or appointment-based meetings available
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Attendance

Attendance is essential.

- Recorded via **iClicker**: <<https://join.iclicker.com/HIFL>>
- **Three (3) unexcused absences allowed**
- Each additional unexcused absence lowers final grade by one letter step
- Excused absences include:
 - Documented illness
 - Bereavement
 - Jury duty
 - Military training

Arriving **15+ minutes late** counts as absence.

University Policies and Student Resources

University Attendance Policy

Students should notify instructors promptly in event of emergencies.

Bereavement or illness requiring quarantine should be reported to the **Office of the Dean of Students** (765-494-1747).

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and cheating result in:

- Automatic **F** in the course
- Referral to the Dean of Students

Review Purdue's policy (linked in Brightspace).

Accessibility and Accommodation

If you anticipate barriers or need accommodations:

- Email the instructor
 - Contact the **Disability Resource Center (DRC)**
drc@purdue.edu | 765-494-1247
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Inclusion Statement

All students deserve respect, dignity, and a safe learning environment. Discrimination will not be tolerated.

Mental Health Resources

If you feel overwhelmed or distressed:

- **CAPS:** 765-494-6995 (24/7 availability)
 - **Dean of Students:** drop-in 8 AM–5 PM
 - **WellTrack:** Online self-help tools
 - **Wellness Coaching** (free via BoilerConnect)
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Basic Needs Support

If you face food or housing insecurity, contact:

- **Dean of Students Office**
- Support available M–F, 8:00 AM–5:00 PM

Emergency Preparedness

Review details at Purdue's Emergency Preparedness website.
Alerts sent via Purdue ALERT system.

Disclaimer

Course requirements, policies, and deadlines may change in the event of a major campus emergency. Updates will appear on Brightspace and via email.

Rubric: Primary Source Analysis

(Formatted for screen reader clarity)

Paragraph 1: Synopsis (10 points)

- **A:** Thorough description including author and main points
- **B:** Most major points included
- **C:** cursory summary, limited engagement
- **D:** Very general summary
- **F:** Missing

Paragraph 2: Context (10 points)

- **A:** Strong historical context tied directly to document
- **B:** Some context, partially connected
- **C:** Broad context not tied directly
- **D:** Outside sources or AI used
- **F:** Missing or opinion-based

Paragraph 3: Analysis (10 points)

- **A:** Thoughtful commentary and insight
- **B:** Good commentary with some depth

- **C:** Basic commentary
- **D:** Shallow or vague
- **F:** Missing

Spelling & Grammar (10 points)

0–1 errors = A

2–3 = B/C

4 = D

More than 4 = F

Citations (10 points)

- Proper MLA citations required
- Missing or incorrect citations reduce score