

# United States Since 1877

**Spring 2026**

**Instructor:** Professor Devan Lindey

**Email:** dlindey@purdue.edu

**Office Hours:** Via Zoom by appointment

**Syllabus Note:** I reserve the right to adjust this syllabus within a reasonable timeframe and will notify you of any changes.

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## Course Epigraphs

These quotations help frame the class's approach to history:

- *"The past is never dead. It's not even past."* — William Faulkner
  - *"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."* — John Muir
  - *"The great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us...history is literally present in all that we do."* — James Baldwin
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## Course Description

This course introduces major **social, political, economic, and cultural developments** in the United States from **1877 to the present**. We will move chronologically and explore how multiple themes—war, governance, identity, culture, movements, economics—interweave to shape the modern U.S.

We will focus on understanding **how the America we know today came to be**, while developing historical context for contemporary issues.

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## Learning Outcomes

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

1. Identify major events and trends shaping the U.S. from 1877 to today.
  2. Craft historical arguments using appropriate evidence.
  3. Evaluate sources and connect them to course themes.
  4. Strengthen written communication through historical analysis.
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## Course Materials

### Required Texts

- **The American Yawp, Volume II:** free online  
<<https://www.americanyawp.com/>>
- **American Yawp Documentary Reader:** free online  
<<https://www.americanyawp.com/reader.html>>

Additional readings and materials will appear on **Brightspace**.

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## Course Delivery and Methods

This is an **asynchronous online** class. You will engage with course content through:

- Weekly textbook chapters
- Weekly primary source readings
- Recorded lectures

Because the course is **condensed into eight weeks**, staying current is essential.

### Readings

Textbook chapters and primary source readings are listed in the course schedule.

Textbook chapters give broad context; primary sources provide insight into lived experience and support assignments.

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## Email Courtesy

Please include:

- A clear subject line
- Respectful, complete sentences
- Your full name

I'm here to help—clear communication helps us both.

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## AI Policy

**AI tools may not be used for:**

- Writing assignments
- Generating ideas
- Drafting your final project

Permitted: basic spelling/grammar check (e.g., Grammarly).

**Rationale:**

- Writing and research are core historical skills.
- AI often generates inaccurate information.
- AI relies on uncredited labor and can reproduce bias.
- You cheat yourself out of learning by outsourcing your thinking.

As author Ted Chiang notes:

*"Generative A.I. lowers our expectations... reducing the amount of intention in the world."*

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## Assessments Overview

You will complete **quizzes, discussions, evaluations, check-ins, a progress report, an annotated bibliography, a final project (Unessay), and a showcase.**

All due dates are **firm** unless you request an extension before the deadline.

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# Assignments

## Quizzes

Multiple-choice quizzes ensure you stay current and support preparation for the final project.

## Course Evaluations

Two assignments (1–2 pages each):

- What you know about U.S. history before the course
- What you learned by the end

## Discussion Board 1: Introductions

Share who you are, your major, and interests.

## Discussion Board 2: Brainstorming

Explore ideas for your final project and discuss with classmates.

## Other Discussion Boards

Respond to weekly prompts tied to readings and lectures.

Responses must:

- Be more than "I agree"
- Use correct citation (e.g., "... " (U.S. Constitution) )

## Annotated Bibliography (5 sources minimum)

Each entry requires:

- A Chicago-style citation
- A paragraph explaining the source and how it connects to your project

## Check-Ins (2)

Light assignments to help you stay on track.

## Progress Report

An outline or summary of your final project's development.

## Unessay

A creative project in **any medium**, such as:

- Short story
- Podcast
- Poem or collection
- Visual art
- Film
- Recipe with historical analysis
- Game design

The project must engage course themes meaningfully.

## Showcase

Post your Unessay for class discussion near the end of the term.

## Ponder with the Professor

Submit anonymous questions about the course, history, or general curiosity.

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# Grade Breakdown (Total: 230 points)

Assignment	Points
Course Evaluations (2 × 10)	20
Introduction Discussion	10
Brainstorm Discussion	10
Check-Ins (2 × 5)	10
Other Discussions (2 × 10)	20
Annotated Bibliography	20
Progress Report	10
Showcase	10
Quizzes (7 × 10)	70
Unessay	50

Total	230
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## Grading Scale

A+ = 98–100

A = 93–97

A- = 90–92

B+ = 88–89

B = 83–87

B- = 80–82

C+ = 78–79

C = 73–77

C- = 70–72

D+ = 68–69

D = 63–67

D- = 60–62

F = 0–59

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## Late Work Policy

Paper assignments may still be submitted but receive a **10% deduction per day**.

Email me as soon as possible if you need to submit late work.

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## Course Schedule

### **Week 1 (3/9–3/16): Expansion and Society**

**Read:** Chapters 16–18

**Due:** Course Evaluation, Introductions, Quiz 1, Brainstorm

### **Week 2 (3/16–3/21): Spring Break**

No assignments

### **Week 3 (3/22–3/29): Empire, Social Movements & World War**

**Read:** Chapters 19–21

**Due:** Quiz 2, Check-In

### **Week 4 (3/29–4/5): From Boom to Bust**

**Read:** Chapters 22–23

**Due:** Quiz 3, Annotated Bibliography

### **Week 5 (4/5–4/12): From Hot to Cold War**

**Read:** Chapters 24–25

**Due:** Quiz 4, Discussion Board, Check-In

### **Week 6 (4/12–4/19): The Times They Are a-Changin’**

**Read:** Chapters 26–27

**Due:** Quiz 5, Discussion Board

### **Week 7 (4/19–4/26): Things Fall Apart and the Rise of Reagan**

**Read:** Chapters 28–29

**Due:** Quiz 6, Showcase begins, Progress Report

### **Week 8 (4/26–5/3): And Here We Are**

**Read:** Chapter 30

**Due:** Second Course Evaluation, Showcase concludes, Quiz 7

### **Exam Week (5/4–5/9)**

**Unessay Due** — date TBA

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## **Discussion and Response Rubric**

### **Insightfulness (20%)**

- **0%:** No argument or does not answer the question

- **50%:** Oversimplified argument
- **70%:** Interesting but loosely connected
- **90%:** Good argument with minor gaps
- **100%:** Clear, strong, relevant argument

### **Evidence (20%)**

- **0%:** No relevant examples
- **50%:** One example strong, others weak
- **70%:** Some relevant facts
- **90%:** Good examples, limited explanation
- **100%:** Strong, well-explained evidence

### **Writing Style & Word Count (20%)**

- **0%:** Inappropriate or too short
- **50%:** Casual writing; errors
- **70%:** Needs proofreading
- **90%:** Academic quality
- **100%:** Clear, polished, correct length

### **Citation (20%)**

- **0%:** Plagiarism
- **50%:** Incomplete citations
- **70%:** Some missing citations
- **90%:** Minor citation issues
- **100%:** Fully accurate citations

### **Peer Feedback (20%)**

- **0%:** No feedback
- **50%:** Superficial
- **70%:** Only one reply
- **90%:** Relevant but less insightful
- **100%:** Two thoughtful replies

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# **University Policies**

## **Protect Purdue Plan**

Follow campus health guidelines. Noncompliance may result in removal from class or referral to the Dean of Students.

## **Academic Integrity**

Cheating or plagiarism results in:

- Automatic failure of the assignment or course
- Referral to the Dean of Students

## **Nondiscrimination**

Purdue prohibits discrimination on the basis of identity, background, or status.

## **Accessibility**

If you experience barriers:

- Contact me
- Contact the **Disability Resource Center**: [drc@purdue.edu](mailto:drc@purdue.edu) | 765-494-1247

## **Mental Health**

Support includes:

- **CAPS**: 765-494-6995
- **WellTrack**
- **Dean of Students Office**
- **Wellness Coaching**

## **Basic Needs**

If food or housing insecurity affects you, contact the **Dean of Students**.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

Follow Purdue ALERT instructions and university emergency guidance.