

# HIST 15200 - United States History Since 1877

Spring 2026

CRN: 15924

Instructional Modality: In-person, Lecture

Date/Time: MWF, 1:30-2:20 PM

Location: Wilmeth Active Learning Center 1055

Credits: 3.00



Trail Riders, Thomas Hart Benton  
(1964-1965)

## Instructor information

### Instructor

Dr. Renée Gaarder

### Contact

rgaarder@purdue.edu

765-494-8341 (office)

### Office location & hours

UNIV 3<sup>rd</sup> floor

Tuesdays 1:00-2:00 PM or by appointment

## General information

### Description

This course is a study of the growth of the United States from 1877 to present. Throughout the semester we will explore this growth by analyzing various political, economic, social, and cultural issues. We will look at various challenges and developments during this period including industrialism, agrarian problems, depression, the New Deal, the two world wars, and the Cold War. We will actively explore history through lecture, textbook and primary source readings, film, photography, music, and discussion.

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will:

- Demonstrate knowledge about United States history since 1877, specifically major themes and developments, through written assessment.
- Identify thematic connections across time.
- Model the basic skills of a historian through primary source analysis, cultural critique, and visual analysis.
- Develop writing and critical thinking skills through encountering competing and conflicting historical interpretation, analyzing these interpretations, and then writing about it.

## Course materials

### Required text

[The American Yawp: A Massively Collaborative Open U.S. History Textbook](#), Stanford University Press Edition, Volume II

All other course materials will be available via the class Brightspace page.

## Course schedule

Week	Date	Unit	Weekly Reading	Assignments (due by 11:59 PM on the date specified)
1	1/12-16	Course Introduction/First Contact to 1877	<u>Brightspace: Black Codes of Mississippi, Fourteenth Amendment, Fifteenth Amendment</u>	
2	1/19-23	America's Gilded Age: 1870-1890  NO CLASS ON 1/19 - MLK Holiday	<u>The American Yawp (YAWP) Ch. 16: Capital and Labor and Ch. 17: The West</u>  <u>Primary Source Reader (PSR): Andrew Carnegie, <i>Gospel of Wealth</i> (1889); The "Omaha Platform" of the People's Party (1892); Frederick Jackson Turner, "Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893); Helen Hunt Jackson, <i>Century of Dishonor</i> (1881)</u>	
3	1/26-30	Freedom's Boundaries at Home and Abroad: 1890-1900	YAWP Ch. 18: Life in Industrial America  PSR: Henry Grady, <i>The New South</i> (1886); Ida B. Wells-Barnett, "Lynch Law in America" (1900); Jacob Riis, <i>How the Other Half Lives</i> (1890)	
4	2/2-6	Progressive Era: 1900-1916	YAWP Ch. 19: American Empire and Ch. 20: The Progressive Era  PSR: Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden" (1899); Mark Twain, "The War Prayer" (ca.1904-5); Eugene Debs, "How I Became a Socialist" (April, 1902); Alice Stone Blackwell, <i>Answering Objections to Women's Suffrage</i> (1917)	<b>PSA 1 due on 2/6</b>
5	2/9-13	The United States and WWI: 1916-1920	YAWP Ch. 21: World War I & Its Aftermath  PSR: Woodrow Wilson Requests War (April 2, 1917); W.E.B. DuBois, "Returning Soldiers" (May, 1919); Lutiant Van Wert describes the 1918 Flu Pandemic (1918)	<b>Quiz 1 (Ch. 16-21) due on 2/13</b>
6	2/16-20	Boom to Bust: 1920-1932	YAWP Ch. 22: The New Era	

			PSR: Warren G. Harding, "Return to Normalcy" (1920); Ellen Welles Page, "A Flapper's Appeal to Parents" (1922); Alain Locke, "The New Negro" (1925)  <b>Exam 1 (Ch. 16-21) in class on 2/20</b>	
7	2/23-27	The New Deal: 1932-1940	YAWP Ch. 23: The Great Depression  PSR: <i>Second Inaugural Address of Franklin D. Roosevelt</i> (1937); Lester Hunter, "I'd Rather Not Be on Relief" (1938); Bertha McCall, <i>America's Moving People</i> (1940)	
8	3/2-6	World War II: 1941-1945	YAWP Ch. 24: World War II  PSR: <i>The Atlantic Charter</i> (1941); Franklin D. Roosevelt, <i>Executive Order No. 9066</i> (1942); <i>Harry Truman Announcing the Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima</i> (1945)	
9	3/9-13	Cold War: 1945-1953	YAWP Ch. 25: The Cold War  PSR: <i>The Truman Doctrine</i> (1947); <i>Joseph McCarthy on Communism</i> (1950); <i>Lillian Hellman Refuses to Name Names</i> (1952)	<b>PSA 2 due on 3/13</b>
10	3/16-20		<b>NO CLASS - Spring Break</b>	
11	3/23-27	An Affluent Society: 1953-1960	YAWP Ch. 26: The Affluent Society  PSR: <i>Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka</i> (1954); <i>Richard Nixon on the American Standard of Living</i> (1959); <i>John F. Kennedy on the Separation of Church and State</i> (1960); <i>Rosa Parks, Life in Montgomery, Alabama</i> (1956-8)	<b>Quiz 2 (Ch. 22-26) due on 3/27</b>
12	3/30-4/3	The 1960s: 1960-1968	YAWP Ch. 27: The Sixties  PSR: Lyndon Johnson, <i>Voting Rights and the American Promise</i> (1965); National Organization of Women, "Statement of Purpose" (1966); <i>The Port Huron Statement</i> (1962)  <b>Exam 2 (Ch. 22-26) in class on 4/3</b>	
13	4/6-10	The Conservative Turn: 1969-1988	YAWP Ch. 28: The Unraveling  PSR: <i>Nixon Announcement of China Visit</i> (1971); Jimmy Carter, "Crisis of Confidence" (1979);	

			Gloria Steinem, <i>Equal Rights for Women</i> (1970); <i>Native Americans Occupy Alcatraz</i> (1969)	
14	4/13-17	Culture Wars: 1989-2004	YAWP Ch.29: The Triumph of the Right  PSR: <i>First Inaugural Address of Ronald Reagan</i> (1981); <i>Statement of AIDS Patients</i> (1983); <i>Statements from the Parents Music Resource Center</i> (1985); <i>Phillis Schlafly, Women's Responsibility for Sexual Harassment</i> (1981)	PSA 3 (Purdue Archives) due on 4/17
15	4/20-24	The Recent Past	YAWP Ch. 30: The Recent Past  PSR: <i>Bill Clinton on Free Trade and Financial Deregulation</i> (1993-2000); George W. Bush, <i>The Post-9/11 World</i> (2002); <i>Obergefell v. Hodges</i> (2015)	Quiz 3 (Ch. 27-30) due on 4/24
16	4/27-5/1	Review and Exam 3	<b>Exam 3 (Ch. 27-30) in class on 5/1</b>	
Final			There will be NO final exam.	

## Assignments and Grading

### Assignments

The following assignments, in addition to weekly reading, will comprise your graded work in the course:

### Quizzes

There will be 3 quizzes, worth 25 points each, for a total of 75 points. Quizzes are open-book and will be taken via Brightspace on your own time. There will be 5 questions, and you will have 20 minutes to complete the quiz once you begin. Although quizzes are open-book, the expectation is that students will have read the material in advance in addition to attending lectures and can therefore quickly double check their answers in the allotted time. The format of the quizzes is multiple choice and will cover the chapters indicated on the course schedule.

### Primary Source Analysis

Over the course of the semester, you will write three Primary Source Analyses, each worth 50 points, for a total of 150 points. Two of these analyses will be over a primary source of your choosing, and the third will be from a source found in the Purdue University Archives and Special Collections. Each review should be 12-point Times New Roman (or similar) font, double-spaced, and total no less than one-and-a-half pages submitted by 11:59 PM on the date indicated in the course schedule via Brightspace. The objective of these analyses is to work like a historian by a) critically analyzing a primary source, b) integrating the primary source into secondary source reading, and c) practicing thoughtful yet concise writing.

For Primary Source Analysis 1, you should choose one of the primary sources from chapters 16-21 of the [American YAWP Primary Source Reader](#). For Primary Source Analysis 2, you should choose one of the primary sources from chapters 22-26 of the [American YAWP Primary Source Reader](#). Note: You may choose any text source listed within these chapters and are not limited to only primary sources that have been assigned as weekly reading. There is no need for any further research into outside sources; the primary source itself plus *The American Yawp* and your lecture notes are all you will need to successfully analyze the source. Outside sources or use of AI in the writing process is not allowed.

For Primary Source Analysis 3 (Purdue Archives), you will access the [e-Archives](#) holdings of the Purdue Archives for a **text** source of your choosing from 1870 to present day. (Alternatively, you may also access the physical holdings in the Purdue Archives for this assignment. If this is something you would like to do, please work with Dr. G to assist you in setting up an appointment.) Since you will be utilizing the archives for this assignment, there *may* be a need to research using outside sources to establish the source's context, author, etc. If you do use outside sources, you **MUST CITE** your source. For this reason, PSA 3 will utilize a "Works Cited" section. Please see the citation guide in the "Course Resources" module for full details. **Use of AI in the writing process is not allowed.**

For all analyses, your submission should be three paragraphs of roughly the same length. The first paragraph should be a summary of the primary source including who wrote it, what it is about, etc. The second paragraph should be placing it in its historical context using specific references to the class texts. For example: Why is the document important? Why was it important at that specific time? What was happening culturally and politically at the time? The final paragraph should be your personal impression (analysis) of the document and whether it accurately represents the time-period. For example: Was it what you expected? Did it enhance your understanding of the time-period? Did the author seem to have a bias, ulterior motives, or omit certain details? A detailed rubric is provided at the end of the syllabus (page 9) and on Brightspace.

This analysis should be a historical and scholarly one that cites any source that you either directly quote or summarize using in-text citations from the Modern Language Association (MLA) style book. For detailed guidelines, see the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL):

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/mla\\_in\\_text\\_citations\\_the\\_basics.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_in_text_citations_the_basics.html).

### Exams

There will be three in-class exams, as indicated on the course schedule. Exam 1 will cover chapters 16-21, Exam 2 will cover chapters 22-26, and Exam 3 will cover chapters 27-30. Each exam will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer and essay, and a study guide will be provided one week in advance of each exam. There will be NO cumulative final exam for this course.

### Grading

Grades in this class reflect the sum of your achievement throughout the course. You will accumulate points as described in the assignments above, with each assignment graded according to a rubric found on Brightspace. At the end of the semester, final grades will be calculated by adding the total points earned and translating those numbers (out of 100) into the corresponding letters. *There will be no partial points or rounding, and the class will not be graded on a curve.*

### Point Distribution

Quizzes (3 @ 25 points each)	0-75 points
Primary Source Analysis (3 @ 50 points each)	0-150 points
Exams (3 @ 100 points each)	0-300 points
Total	0-525 points

### 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	0-59%

## Course Policies

### Email

I am available via email from 9:00-5:00 Monday through Friday. (You are welcome to email me outside of these hours, but I will not respond until I am “in” the office.) Although I try to respond to emails as quickly as possible, please allow up to 24 hours for a response to your message. All emails should follow standard professional and academic protocol, including a greeting (Dear Dr. or Professor Gaarder/G), closing signature (Sincerely/Best/Regards plus your full name), and a clearly stated purpose. Before sending an email asking for information or clarification, check to see if the answer to your question may be found in the syllabus and/or on Brightspace.

### Missing Assignments

Assignments and due dates are arranged strategically to help you succeed in the course. You should turn in all work by the due date, and failure to submit work on time and in accordance with the assignment parameters will result in a failing grade for the missed assignment. After the due date, accommodation for missed assignments is at the discretion of the instructor.

I do also understand that sometimes issues arise. Communication is key—please reach out to me as soon as possible and *within one week* of the missed assignment. The amount of help I can provide is severely limited if you don’t reach out before or soon after an assignment is due. I want you to do your best during this course; remember that my goal is your success, but I must temper this with academic equity for your peers.

### Office Hours

Office hours are your chance to have some one-on-one time with me to talk about anything course or college related. I would like the chance to meet with as many of you as possible, so please utilize these hours as they are set up just for you.

My physical office is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of University Hall (in the CLA Dean’s office suite), and my door is always open. You must check in with the receptionist at the front desk prior to visiting me. (If the receptionist is not there, you will need to ring the doorbell attached to the front desk.) As my office is within the CLA Dean’s suite, you cannot just walk back unattended. I will have open office hours each Tuesday from 1:00-2:00 pm for the duration of the semester. Additionally, I will be available to meet virtually during this time and/or by appointment.

### Attendance

To be successful in this course, regular attendance is important. We will be utilizing the iClicker mobile application to record attendance this semester. You may join our section using the following code: <https://join.iclicker.com/HIFL>.

You are allowed three (3) unexcused absences without penalty. Four (4) or more unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your final grade by *one level per absence*. For example: you earned an A+ in the course, but you have 5 unexcused absences, so your grade is lowered to an A-.

Students may request that an absence be excused for the following reasons:

1. Illness that requires a doctor, clinic, or emergency room visit (documentation required).
2. Grief ([following university guidelines](#)).
3. Jury Duty (documentation required).
4. Military Training (documentation required).

Illness that does not require a doctor, clinic, or emergency room visit is not automatically excused. Regular or standing appointments with healthcare professionals or others are not automatically excused. Use your allotted three (3) absences carefully. All requests for excused absences should be emailed to the instructor *and* your TA within one week of the missed class period. If you arrive 15 minutes or more after the beginning of class, you will be marked as absent.

## University Policies and Procedures

### Attendance - University Policies

The University expects that students will attend classes for which they are registered. At times, however, either anticipated or unanticipated absences can occur. The student bears the responsibility of informing the instructor in a timely fashion, when possible. The instructor bears the responsibility of trying to accommodate the student either by excusing the student or allowing the student to make up work, when possible. The University expects both students and their instructors to approach problems with class attendance in a manner that is reasonable.

For unanticipated or emergency conflicts, when advance notification to an instructor is not possible, the student should contact the instructor/instructional team as soon as possible by email, through Brightspace, or by phone. In cases of bereavement, quarantine, or isolation, the student or the student's representative should contact the Office of the Dean of Students via [email](#) or phone at 765-494-1747. Our course Brightspace includes a link to the Dean of Students under 'Campus Resources.'

### Academic Integrity

*“As a Boilermaker pursuing academic excellence, I pledge to be honest and true in all that I do. Accountable together—we are Purdue.”*

Plagiarism refers to the reproduction of another's words or ideas without proper attribution. This includes, but is not limited to, published and unpublished written works, images, and artistic works. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses and will be treated as such in this class. You are expected to do your own work and to accurately cite all necessary materials. Cheating, plagiarism, and other dishonest practices 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 you are familiar with Purdue's academic integrity policies: <https://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academic-integrity/index.html>.

### Special Requirements and Assistance

I am committed to making learning experiences accessible. 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. We all learn differently, and I am here to help you do your best in this course. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at [drc@purdue.edu](mailto:drc@purdue.edu) or by phone: 765-494-1247.

### Inclusion

Each member of our classroom has something of value to contribute. Please be respectful of our diverse identities, experiences, beliefs, and values. Discriminatory speech and behavior will not be tolerated.

*A link to Purdue's [Nondiscrimination Policy Statement](#) may be found on Brightspace.*

## **Mental Health Statement**

Working toward your academic and professional goals at college brings with it unique experiences and problems. I want to let you know that you are not alone, and I am here for you.

**If you find yourself beginning to feel stressed, anxiety, and/or feeling overwhelmed**, try WellTrack (<https://purdue.welltrack.com>). 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 (<http://www.purdue.edu/odos>). Drop-in hours are M-F, 8 AM to 5 PM.

**If you find yourself struggling to find a healthy balance between academics, social life, stress, etc.** sign up for free one-on-one virtual or in-person sessions with a Purdue Wellness Coach at RecWell. Student coaches can help you navigate through barriers and challenges toward your goals throughout the semester. Sign up is completely free and can be done on BoilerConnect.

**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 on the second floor of the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours. The CAPS website also offers resources specific to situations.

## **Basic Needs**

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. There is no appointment needed and Student Support Services is available to serve students 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

Please review the Emergency Preparedness website for additional information:  
[https://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency\\_preparedness/](https://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency_preparedness/).

## **Disclaimer**

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines, and grading are subject to change that may be necessitated by a revised calendar or other circumstances beyond the instructor's control. Relevant changes to this course will be posted on Brightspace and I will also notify you by email.

Note: If you don't fulfill the requirements for the Initial Course Participation (ICP) in time, it could lead to the revocation of your financial aid.

## Rubric

### Primary Source Analysis

	A (10 points)	B (8 points)	C (7 points)	D (6 points)	F (2 points)
<b>Paragraph 1: Synopsis</b>	The first paragraph is a thorough description of the primary source, including a description of the author and summary of the text. The main points of the text should be covered.	The first paragraph provides some of the major points of the primary source, but not all.	The first paragraph provides a cursory summary of the primary source, which suggests the student did not read it.	The first paragraph is very general, which suggests the student did not read it.	There is no first paragraph describing the primary source.
<b>Paragraph 2: Context</b>	The second paragraph provides historical context relating to the document (what was happening at the time). It is clear that the student has thoroughly read the textbook in order to provide historical context and has explained the <i>significance</i> of the document within history.	The second paragraph provides <i>some</i> historical context relating to the document (what was happening at the time). It is clear that the student has read the textbook in order to provide historical context and has partially explained the <i>significance</i> of the document within history.	The second paragraph provides a broad historical context (a description of the time-period) that <i>does not</i> directly relate to the document. Nevertheless, it is clear that the student has read the textbook in order to provide historical context.	It is clear that the student used outside sources or AI. This constitutes plagiarism and will result in a failing grade.	The student used their opinion rather than the textbook to provide historical context, or there is no second paragraph providing historical context for the document.
<b>Paragraph 3: Analysis</b>	The student provides <i>thoughtful</i> commentary on the document, explaining, for example, how they have better understood the time period as a result, how the document represents or does not represent the historical period accurately (in other words, did it seem true to what was happening), and any questions about the document.	The student provides commentary on the document, explaining, for example, how they have better understood the time period as a result, how the document represents or does not represent the historical period accurately (in other words, did it seem true to what was happening), and any questions about the document.	The student provides commentary on the document, explaining how they understood the time-period better as a result.	The student provides basic and/or shallow commentary on the document. The paragraph is vague and lacks critical thought about the primary source.	There is no third paragraph for this designed purpose.
<b>Spelling, Grammar, &amp; Page Count</b>	0-1 spelling or grammar errors. The review is no shorter than one page and no longer than one-and-a-half pages.	1-2 spelling or grammar errors. The review is no shorter than one page and no longer than one-and-a-half pages.	2-3 spelling or grammar errors. The review is no shorter than one page and no longer than one-and-a-half pages.	4 spelling or grammar errors. The review is less than one page or longer than one-and-a-half pages.	More than 4 spelling or grammar errors. The paper is less than one full page or longer than one-and-a-half pages.
<b>Citations</b>	Proper citations for references to both primary and secondary sources.	Citations for all references to primary and secondary sources but not formatted correctly.	1-2 citations are missing and/or improper formatting.	3-4 citations missing; major mistakes in citations.	Very few or no citations.