

HIS 212-07 Syllabus  
The US Since 1865  
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

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McIver 232  
Monday: 6:00 PM – 8:50 PM

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Office Hours: M – 5:00 PM-6:00 PM  
and by appointment

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND THE SCOPE OF THIS COURSE**

This is a United States survey course; it is designed to provide a general overview of historical events from 1865 to the present. The course will not only provide an overview of history's major events and the significant figures of historical importance, it will also provide background on historical concepts and scholarly interpretations that allow for an understanding of cultural, social, political and economic history.

The study of history requires more than memorization of dates, names and events, although such facts are important. Understanding history means peeling back the layers of time to expose cultural, social, political, and economic conflict among various groups of ordinary folk – people who represent a cross section of America. Appreciating history also requires examination of how historians perceive, interpret, and write about the past – not all scholars agree and their assertions present a mosaic that constructs a picture of the past in a context that allows for a better understanding of America's development.

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### **COURSE GOALS**

- Comprehend the major events in US History since the Civil War and identify their causes, outcomes and the participants
- Evaluate the processes of change in the development of American society and culture from 1865 to the present
- Compare and contrast the experiences of different groups of people based on factors such as race, class, gender, religion, ethnic origin, and regional variation
- Understand how to evaluate historical texts and documents in order to draw conclusions about the past
- Analyze various arguments by historians to recognize the differences between facts and interpretations

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Required Texts (available in the University Bookstore)

Out of Many: A History of the American People, Volume II, brief 4<sup>th</sup> edition, Faragher et al.  
New American History, edited for the American Historical Association, Eric Foner.

- Readings, class preparation, and class participation

This course will require you to read and understand the various themes of history covered in the required texts. As such, you will be held to the assigned readings for each class meeting, which means you should make notes during your readings, you should formulate questions about the various arguments, facts and material covered, and you should consult outside sources if you have difficulty understanding some aspects of the texts. Outside sources are easily available from the Jackson Library and in many cases, the Internet. Please, don't come to class unprepared or with a total lack of ideas, questions, or comments.

- Class Participation

It is imperative that you participate in class discussions each and every class meeting. I welcome dissenting views, comments, and I will expect you to discuss your ideas and interpretations of the assigned materials for each class. Believe me, class will go smoother, faster, and be far more enjoyable if everyone is prepared and can intelligently discuss the material – why not participate? The alternative: a lecture for a full period, a long drawn out class, and in all probability a lack of real understanding of the material. To help you along, here's what I will require for each class period:

- A 3x5 inch index card with your name at the top, the date, and the topic of the respective class. Underneath, you should have two (2) questions that you can present to class that evolved as you read the texts. As well, any comments or observations about the readings that sparked a thought or required a response from you. These cards will be turned in at the end of class and will be used as part of your participation grade.

In addition, I will occasionally bring copied articles for you to read about a specific topic – I will provide you with the copied article and it will become part of the assigned reading for the next class meeting. As with all readings, I will expect you to read the article, which will be used to supplement the texts. In such cases, you should include questions, comments and thoughts on the index card that pertain to the supplemental material.

- Attendance

We only meet once a week, as this is the case, I will expect you each class unless you have an exceptional circumstance. If you find yourself unable to attend, then you need to e-mail me or better yet, give me a call, and let me know you will be absent and the reason why. It is your responsibility to let me know if you are going to be absent. I will allow for one excused absence during the semester, after that, a five (5)-point deduction in your final grade will be assessed for each class missed. Since we have a broad range of time and material to cover, it is imperative that you attend class. Being late to class is also a bad practice, if you enter class

late, please enter as quietly as possible and see me at the end of the class period so that I can appropriately mark your status on my roll for that day. Consistent tardiness will be reason enough for me to impose a grading penalty; so don't put you or me in that position.

- Tests and Exams

During the semester I will administer two (2) unit tests and a final exam. The unit tests will consist of a mix of identification, multiple choice, and one essay question that will require you to make connections among the readings, class discussions, and the lectures for those units of material covered. For each unit test I will allow one (1) sheet of notebook paper with handwritten notes, front and back if you so feel the need, which you will submit with your test at the end of class. No more than one (1) 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper will be permitted.

There will be a cumulative final exam that will test your knowledge as well as your comprehension of the materials, lectures, and class discussions from the entire semester. The final exam will be similar in format to the unit tests with the exception of three (3) essay questions. You should be prepared to make connections and pull together major themes and topics in your responses to the essay questions. As with the unit tests, I will allow for one (1) sheet of notebook paper with handwritten notes to be used for the exam that you will submit with your final exam.

- Library Assignment and Analytical Paper

This is a very straightforward exercise. I will ask you to submit a topic of your choosing that deals with a historical subject or problem in US history between 1865 and the twentieth century. After you submit your topic, you will be required to compose two (2) 3 to 5 page analytical papers that argue for or against the text (Out of Many: A History of the American People). For example, if you find that the text states that westward expansion completely devastated American Indian societies, you will need to find at least one (1) journal article from a reliable and credible historical journal that either supports the text, or refutes it. In addition to a journal article, I will ask that you use at least one (1) book from the Jackson Library that addresses your topic. The purpose of this exercise is to make you think critically about other sources aside from standard texts and to analyze scholarly debates in various areas of study. You should also use Eric Foner's work, The New American History as an additional source if appropriate to your topic.

We will discuss this exercise in future classes and I will provide full details. Additionally, I will allow plenty of time for you to complete your papers – so, don't panic and think this is something that is going to be enormously difficult.

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## COURSE GRADING

- Unit Test 1 20%
- Unit Test 2 20%
- Library Assignments / Analytical Papers 20%
- Final Exam 20%
- Class Participation 20%

## CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Reading assignments are specified below, you are responsible for the reading prior to class from the texts and from the handouts, which will be given out prior to the next class meeting. The two required texts are:

Out of Many: A History of the American People, Volume II, brief 4<sup>th</sup> edition, Faragher et al.  
*Abbreviated in the class schedule as (OM)*

New American History, edited by for the American Historical Association, Foner, Eric.  
*Abbreviated in the class schedule as (NAH)*

August 16<sup>th</sup>

### **Introduction to the class**

August 23<sup>rd</sup>

### **Reconstruction: 1865 – 1877**

Out of Many, pp. 321-343 (OM)

The New American History, Introduction and pp. 83-89 (NAH)

August 30<sup>th</sup>

### **Conquest and Survival: Moving Westward**

(OM) pp. 345-366

Fredrick Jackson Turner, The Problem of the West, pp. 1-13 and Handout, pp. 1-3

September 6<sup>th</sup>

### **Labor Day Holiday – No Class**

September 13<sup>th</sup>

### **The Incorporation of America, 1865 – 1900**

(OM) pp. 367-387

Biographical Handouts: Thomas Edison and Samuel Gompers (NAH) pp. 93-103

September 20<sup>th</sup>

### **Commonwealth and Empire, 1870-1900**

(OM) pp. 388-406

(NAH) pp. 103-115

September 27<sup>th</sup>

### **Urban America and the Progressive Era, 1900-1917**

(OM) pp. 407-426

*\*Unit Test 1*

October 4<sup>th</sup>

### **World War I, 1914-1920**

(OM) pp. 427-444

Handouts: World War I – read all

Biographical Handouts: Alice Paul and General John J. Pershing

October 11<sup>th</sup>

### **Fall Break – No Class**

October 18<sup>th</sup>

### **The Twenties, 1920-1929**

(OM) pp. 445-461

(NAH) pp. 119-128

**\*\* *Library Assignment – First Analytical Paper Due***

- October 25<sup>th</sup>      **The Great Depression and the New Deal, 1929-1940**  
(OM) pp. 462-479  
(NAH) pp. 128-133
- November 1<sup>st</sup>      **World War II**  
(OM) pp. 480-504  
Handouts: World War II – read all  
Biographical Handout: A. Phillip Randolph
- November 8<sup>th</sup>      **The Cold War**  
(OM) pp. 505-526  
*\*Unit Test 2*
- November 15<sup>th</sup>      **The Civil Rights Movement, 1945-1966**  
(OM) pp. 544-567  
(NAH) pp. 143-157
- November 22<sup>nd</sup>      **War Abroad, War at Home, 1965-1974**  
(OM) pp. 568-597  
Handouts: read all
- November 29<sup>th</sup>      The Conservative Ascendancy  
(OM) pp. 598-624  
*\*\* Library Assignment – Second Analytical Paper Due*
- December 6<sup>th</sup>      **Towards a Transnational America, Since 1988**  
(OM) pp. 625-648  
Biographical Handout: Jessie Jackson  
Review and Discussion on Final Exam  
Wrap Up
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**Final Exam: Date and Time TBA**