

The United States and the World from 1850 to Present

Student Syllabus

“The United States and the World, Part 2 examines the history of the United States between 1850 and the present. During this period the United States came to play an increasing role on the global stage after its civil war, notably in late 19th century imperialism, the global depression, and two world wars and the Cold War. This course pays particular attention to world historical themes that marked the period, including industrialization, population growth, citizenship, science and technology, urbanization and suburbanization, and the exploitation of natural resources (notably the impact of the increasing reliance on petroleum after 1900). By placing America within the world, we seek to question ideas such as US exceptionalism and the historical roots of U.S. hegemony, as well as more generally the utility of national histories. Finally, this course seeks to incorporate the study of culture, race, class and gender into a new globalized U.S. history.

This syllabus is intended for undergraduate students. It consists of the three parts: the title of each week’s work, together with the reading assignments and titles of the lectures. The required readings are intended to be pulled together as a Class reader. The use of a textbook is optional and at the discretion of the instructor.

Teachers are also referred to the “Teacher’s Syllabus” that accompanies this undergraduate syllabus. It consists of selected readings aimed at assisting your preparation of each lecture, and presumes some prior training or experience with United States history.

Week 1: The Gold Rush and Civil War

Lecture 1: Looking Backward, Looking Forward

Lecture 2: The Civil War in its International Context

Lecture 3: Reconstruction: Promise and Failure to 1877

*Kenneth N. Owens, “We Will Make Our Fortunes No Doubt of It? : The Worldwide Rush to California,” in Kenneth N. Owens ed., *Riches for All: The California Gold Rush and the World* (University of Nebraska Press, 2002).

*Thomas Bender, “Freedom in the Age of Nation-Making,” in *A Nation among Nations: America’s Place in World History* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2006).

*Rebecca J. Scott, “Fault Lines, Color Lines, and Party Lines: Race, Labor, and Collective Action in Louisiana and Cuba, 1862-1912) in Frederick Cooper, Thomas C. Holt, and Rebecca J. Scott, *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in PostEmancipation Societies* (The University of

North Carolina Press, 2000).

Week 2: Agriculture and Industry

Lecture 1: Reconstruction in a World Perspective: Contract Society

Lecture 2: Immigration from Europe, Mexico, and Asia

Lecture 3: Clearing the Land: Market-oriented Mining, Deforestation, Whaling

*Sven Beckert, "Emancipation and Empire: Reconstructing the Worldwide Web of Cotton Production in the Age of the American Civil War," in *The American Historical Review* v. 109 no. 5 (2004).

Week 3: The New Urbanity: Space, Society, and Politics (1880-1914)

Lecture 1: Space: Physical Transformations of the City Landscape

Lecture 2: Social Patterns: New Work and Amusement Opportunities for Immigrants, Women, and the Working Class

Lecture 3: Politics

*Gray Brechin, "The Pyramid of Mining," in *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Run* (University of California Press, 1999).

*Thomas Bender, "The Industrial World and the Transformation of Liberalism," in *A Nation among Nations: America's Place in World History* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2006).

Week 4: Conflict Abroad, Conflict Within

Lecture 1: Imperialism

Lecture 2: World War I: Domestic

Lecture 3: World War I: Bankers to the World

*Michael Adas, "Engineer's Imperialism" in *Dominance by Design: Technological Imperatives and America's Civilizing Mission* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006).

*Nell Irvin Painter, "The White Man's Burden," in *Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877-1919* (W.W. Norton & Company, 1987).

Week 5: A New America, a New World?

Lecture 1: Limits of Citizenship and Democracy

Lecture 2: Global Depression

Lecture 3: Reaction to Depression

*Dietmar Rothermund, "The Political Consequences of the Depression: Fascism in Europe, Populism in Latin America and Freedom Movements in the Colonies," "From Depression to War: Rearmament and Economic Growth," and "The Aftermath," in *The Global Impact of the Great Depression, 1929-1939* (London, New York: Routledge, 1996).

*Dirk Hoerder, "From Euro- and Afro-Atlantic to Pacific Migration System: A Comparative Migration Approach to North American History," in Thomas Bender ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (University of California Press, 2002).

* Alice Kessler-Harris, "In the Nation's Image: The Gendered Limits of Social Citizenship in the Depression Era," in *Journal of American History* v. 86 no. 3 (1999).

Week 6: The Military Industrial Complex and Struggles over Inclusion

Lecture 1: World War II on the Homefront

Lecture 2: The Bomb

Lecture 3: The Petroleum Revolution: The U.S. and the World Energy Market

*Richard Heinberg, "Party Time," in *The Party's Over: Oil, War, and the Fate of Industrial Societies* (Gabriola, BC: New Society Publishers, 2003).

*John W. Dower, "Gifts from Heaven" and "Victor's Justice, Loser's Justice," in *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (W.W. Norton & Company, 1999).

Week 7: Suburban Nation

Lecture 1: Fueling the American Dream

Lecture 2: Nuclear Family, Nuclear Holocaust

Lecture 3: Production and Reproduction

* Stephen Whitfield, "Politicizing Culture: Suspicious Minds," in *The Culture of the Cold War* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).

* Michael Adas, "Imposing Modernity" in *Dominance by Design: Technological Imperatives and America's Civilizing Mission* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006).

* Rickie Solinger, "Introduction" and "The Population Bomb and the Sexual Revolution: Toward Choice," in *Wake Up Little Susie: Single Pregnancy and Race Before Roe v. Wade* (Routledge, 1992).

Film: The End of Suburbia

Week 8: The Demographic Bump

Lecture 1: Dilemmas of Managing the World

Lecture 2: Freedom Dreams?

Lecture 3: Delusions of Revolution

* Larry Addington, *America's War in Vietnam: A Short Narrative History* (Indiana University Press, 2000).

Film: The Fog of War

Week 9: Paradox of Peace

Lecture 1: Cold Realities

Lecture 2: Hippies to Yuppies

Lecture 3: End of the Cold War

* Le Ly Hayslip, *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places* (Doubleday, 1989).

* Susan Douglas, "Introduction," in *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media*

(Crown, 1994).

Week 10: A Global Nation

Lecture 1: Casino Economy: Neo-liberalism and New Communications Technology

Lecture 2: Globalization and its Discontents

Lecture 3: The Price of Prosperity

*Rob Kroes, "American Empire and Cultural Imperialism: A View from the Receiving End," in Thomas Bender ed., *Rethinking American History in a Global Age* (University of California Press, 2002).

*James Howard Kunstler, "Running on Fumes: The Hallucinated Economy" in *The Long Emergency: Surviving the Converging Catastrophes of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2005).