

***N.B.: This is a draft syllabus. I have not yet separated the required readings from the suggested readings. And the list may change a bit.***

**History 75300: Topics in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era**  
**Professor Thomas Kessner**

**Thurs. 2:00-4:00**  
**212.817.8437**

This course focuses on a number of the major themes of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. Between 1877-and 1920 the United States was transformed from a largely agricultural and rural nation to one that was industrial and urban. In this era of rising Big Business, Industrial Revolution and the emergence of American's global influence, its post Civil War racial and immigrant absorption policies are cast; Populist, labor and socialist reformers offer their versions of a Better Way; and the political lineaments for Modern America are forged. We also look at social change and the multifaceted cultural transformations that marked these years.

Readings will include a sample of classic works along with a selection of more recent monographs and interpretive studies.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Study the history of a pivotal era in American history with its notable transformations.
2. Critically review and analyze key historical studies for the GAPE period.
3. Investigate the role of politics, economics, social forces, culture and technology in shaping GAPE society.
4. Examine essential changes in class, gender and race relations
5. Examine developments in America's cultural traditions and its expanding diversity.
6. Explore how a unique American capitalism was shaped in this era.
7. Analyze the U.S.'s expanding role in global politics and economics.
8. Write a well defined, carefully researched and cogently argued paper.

**Weekly Assignments:**

**\*Required; S Scan available; E Electronic version available from Library; ^Supplementary**

**1. GAPE: An Overview**

Hays, Samuel P. *Response to Industrialism, 1885-1914*. (1957). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014.

Edwards, Rebecca. "Politics, Social Movements, and the Periodization of U. S. History," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* Vol. 8, No. 4 (Oct. 2009), pp. 463-473.

Schneirov, Richard. "Thoughts on Periodizing the Gilded Age: Capital Accumulation, Society, and Politics, 1873-1898," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* Vol. 5, No. 3 (Jul. 2006), pp. 189-224.

Campbell, Ballard. "Comparative Perspectives on the Gilded Age and Progressive Era," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Apr. 2002), pp. 154-178.

Miller, Worth Robert. "The Lost World of Gilded Age Politics" *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 1, no. 1 (Jan. 2002): 49-67.

Perry, Elizabeth Israels. "Men Are from the Gilded Age, Women Are from the Progressive Era," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* Vol. 1, No. 1 (Jan. 2002), pp. 25-48.

## 2. An Age of Excess

Ginger, Ray. *Age of Excess: The United States from 1877 to 1914*. (1975). Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press, 1989, pp. 19-52.

Edwards, Rebecca. *New Spirits: Americans in the "Gilded Age," 1865-1905*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 13-59, 79-100.

Josephson, Matthew. *The Robber Barons: The Great American Capitalists, 1861-1901*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1962, 2011, pp. 192-215; 253-346; 404-454.

Stiles, T. J. *The First Tycoon: The Epic Life of Cornelius Vanderbilt*. New York: Vintage Books, 2010, pp. 336-517.

Strouse, Jean. *Morgan: American Financier*. New York: Random House, 1999, pp. 222-261; 301-324; 339-360; 391-415.

Nasaw, David. *Andrew Carnegie*. London: Penguin, 2008, pp. 89-193; 343-360; 405-448.

Horatio Alger, *Ragged Dick*. [http://www.pagebypagebooks.com/Horatio\\_Alger/Ragged\\_Dick/](http://www.pagebypagebooks.com/Horatio_Alger/Ragged_Dick/)

Twain, Mark, and Charles Dudley Warner. *The Gilded Age*. (1873). New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

## 3. Making Business Big

White, Richard. *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2012, pp. 140-224; 230-277; 326-369; 507-517.

Chandler, Alfred Dupont. *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002, pp. 1-12; 79-207; 240-289; 315-348; 363-382; 411-418; 482-500.

John, Richard R. *Network Nation: Inventing American Telecommunications*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010, pp. 52-64; 114-237; Or

Wolff, Joshua D. *Western Union and the Creation of the American Corporate Order, 1845-1893, 2013*.

Lamoreaux, Naomi R. "Partnerships, Corporations, and the Theory of the Firm," *The American Economic Review* Vol. 88, No. 2, Papers and Proceedings of the Hundred and Tenth Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association (May, 1998), pp. 66-71.

John, Richard R. "Elaborations, Revisions, Dissents: Alfred D. Chandler, Jr.'s, *The Visible Hand* after Twenty Years," *Business History Review*, 71 (Summer 1997), pp. 151-200.

Rosen, Christine M. "The Role of Pollution Regulation and Litigation in the Development of the U.S. Meatpacking Industry, 1865-1880," *Enterprise and Society: The International Journal of Business History* (June 2007), pp. 297-347.

## 4. The Populist Movement

Postel, Charles. *The Populist Vision*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 137-289.

Goodwyn, Lawrence. *Democratic Promise: The Populist Moment in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1976, pp. 264-332.

Hofstadter, Richard. *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (1954). New York: Vintage Books, 1995, pp. 23-130.

Johnson, Robert D. "'The Age of Reform': A Defense of Richard Hofstadter Fifty Years On," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, Vol 6., No.2 (April, 2007), pp. 127-137.

## 5. Working Class life and Labor

- O'Donnell, Edward T. *Henry George and the Crisis of Inequality: Progress and Poverty in the Gilded Age*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2015, pp. 128-166; 33-96.
- Gage, Beverly. *The Day Wall Street Exploded: a Story of America in Its First Age of Terror*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 11-124.
- Avrich, Paul. *The Haymarket Tragedy*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 55-293.
- Andrews, Thomas G. *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010, pp. 157-286.
- White, Richard. *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2012, pp. 278-325.
- Garraty, John A. United States, Congress, Senate, and Committee on Education and Labor. *Labor and Capital in the Gilded Age: Testimony Taken by the Senate Committee upon the Relations between Labor and Capital, 1883*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1968, pp. 1-37; 53-128.
- Rosanne Currarino. "The Politics of More: The Labor Question and the Idea of Economic Liberty in Industrial America." *Journal of American History*, Vol. 93, No. 1 (June, 2006), 17-36.

## 6. The Rise of the Modern Metropolis

- Cronon, William. *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1991, pp. 23-148; 200-341.
- Beckert, Sven. *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-1896*. Cambridge, UK; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 172-334.
- Kessner, Thomas. *Capital City: New York City and the Men behind America's Rise to Economic Dominance, 1860-1900*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003, Ch. 3-6.
- \* Gandy, Matthew. *Concrete and Clay: Reworking Nature in New York City*. Cambridge, Mass. ; London: MIT press, 2003, pp. 1-96.

## 7. Immigration

- Higham, John. *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2008, pp. 12-105.
- Bodnar, John. *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008, pp. 1-56, 85-116; 169-205.
- Kessner, Thomas. *The Golden Door: Italian and Jewish Immigrant Mobility in New York City, 1880-1915*, 1977, pp. 161-177. S
- Jacobson, Matthew F. *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999, pp. 138-170; 203-245
- Lee, Erika. *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2003, pp. 23-145.
- Ngai, Mae M. "The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924," *The Journal of American History* Vol. 86, No. 1 (Jun., 1999), pp. 67-92.
- Bukowczyk, John J. "Forum: Future Directions in American Immigration and Ethnic History: Introduction," *Journal of American Ethnic History* Vol. 25, No. 4 (Summer, 2006), pp. 68-73.
- Gerber David A. "Immigration Historiography at the Crossroads," *Reviews in American History* Vol. 39, No. 1 (March 2011), pp. 74-86.

## 8. Race

- DuBois, W.E.B. *The Souls of the Black Folk*. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/408/408-h/408-h.htm>
- Washington, Booker T. *Up From Slavery*. <http://pinkmonkey.com/dl/library1/slavery.pdf>
- Osofsky, Gilbert. *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto: Negro New York, 1890-1930*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966. pp.1-105. S
- Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth. *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996, pp. 1-146.
- Hale, Grace Elizabeth. *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1998, pp. 13-239.
- Kenneth Goings and Raymond A. Mohl, eds., "Towards a New African American History," *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (March, 1995), pp. 283-295.
- Eric Arnesen, "Up From Exclusion," *Reviews In American History*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Mar. 1998), pp. 146-174.

## 9. Women and Gender

- Cott, Nancy. *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987.
- D'Emilio, John, and Estelle B Freedman. *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*. (1988). Chicago, Ill.; London: University of Chicago Press, 2012, pp. 171-238.
- Chauncey, George. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Makings of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*. New York: Basic Books, 1994, pp. 131-271.
- Bederman, Gail. *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995, pp. 1-44; 121-216.
- Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* Vol. 75, No. 1 (Jun., 1988), pp. 9-39.
- Katherine M. O'Bryan, "Brief Historiography of the Interpretation of Gender in Women's History," <https://katherineobryan.wordpress.com/brief-historiography-of-womens-history/>
- Scott, Joan. "Unanswered Questions," *American Historical Review* Vol. 113, No. 5, (Dec. 2008), pp. 1422-1429.

## 10. Reform

- Sklar, Martin J. *The Corporate Reconstruction of American Capitalism, 1890-1916: The Market, the Law, and Politics*. Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988, pp. 1-324.
- Bellamy, Edward. *Looking Backward*. (1888). <http://pinkmonkey.com/dl/library1/digi381.pdf>
- Riis, Jacob. *How the Other Half Lives*. (1890)  
<http://depts.washington.edu/envir202/Readings/Reading01.pdf>
- Addams, Jane. *Twenty Years at Hull House*. (1912).  
<http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/addams/hullhouse/hullhouse.html>
- Jackson, Helen Maria Fiske Hunt, and Andrew Frank Rolle. *A Century of Dishonor*. (1881). New York: Harper Torchbook, 1965.

## 11. The Historiography of Progressivism

- Hofstadter, Richard. *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.*, pp. 131-271.
- Rodgers, Daniel T. *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998, pp. 33-208; 235-266.

- Dawley, Alan. *Struggles for Justice: Social Responsibility and the Liberal State*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Filene, Peter G. "An Obituary for 'The Progressive Movement'" *American Quarterly* Vol. 22, No. 1 (Spring, 1970), pp. 20-34.
- Rodgers, Daniel T. "In Search of Progressivism," *Reviews in American History* Vol. 10, No. 2 (December 1982), pp. 113-32.
- Johnston, Robert D. "Re-Democratizing the Progressive Era: The Politics of Progressive Era Political Historiography," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* Vol. 1, No. 1 (Jan. 2002), pp. 68-92.
- Diner, Steven J. "Linking Politics and People: The Historiography of the Progressive Era," *OAH Magazine of History* Vol. 13, No. 3, The Progressive Era (Spring, 1999), pp. 5-9.

## 12. Progressives in the White House

- Herbert Croly, *The Promise of American Life*. (1909). pp. 100-214 (Ch. V – VII)  
<https://archive.org/details/promiseamerican00crolgoog>
- Roosevelt, Theodore, *Autobiography*. (1913-1916). pp. 379-540.
- Cooper, John Milton. *The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1983, pp. 379-540.
- Link, Arthur S. *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1910-1917*. New York: Harper, 1954, pp. 54-80; 197-282.
- Link, Arthur S. "What Happened to the Progressive Movement in the 1920's?" *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (Jul., 1959), pp. 833–851.
- Knock, Thomas J. *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

## 13. The Progressives and the War

- Kennedy, David M. *Over Here: The First World War and American Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980, pp. 3-143.
- McGerr, Michael E. *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920*. New York: Free Press, 2003, pp. 77-319.
- Edwards, Rebecca. *New Spirits: Americans in the "Gilded Age," 1865-1905*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 183-255.
- Flanagan, Maureen A. *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms, 1890s-1920s*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 141-241.
- Higham, John. *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2008, pp. 131-263.

### COLLATERAL ASSIGNMENTS:

The assignments are designed to help train students and to prepare them for research, writing and teaching. Reading, leading class discussions and participating in them are integral for this course. Each session will have a discussion leader who will prepare a short synopsis of the reading to be emailed in advance of class and lead a discussion on the reading.

The discussion should focus on major historical issues and pose interpretive/ analytic questions to promote a discussion of pivotal issues. Avoid the presentation of questions that are really another form of lecture. Questions should be direct and open ended and they should be part of a well thought out

organized presentation. Asking good questions is critical not only for doing good research but also for running good classes.

Each topic will also have an assigned second reader who will offer a critique of the reading based on the review literature and the reader's own evaluation.

Some sessions may also have a second presentation based on a supplementary reading.

**Writing Assignments:**

Session 3. Submit review of a book dealing with the transforming economy. 1000 words.

Session 5. Submit your topic for a historiographic paper that will be due before session 12.

Session 7. Go back to year 1880 for your birthday and look up the *NY Times* (or other daily) for that day. Read it in its entirety, including reviews and ads. *Write a three page* description of the day and what you find historically noteworthy. Then select a single theme from the 1880 paper and compare its treatment in 1900 and then in 1918. *Four pages*. You may look at changes in the foreign policy, in ethnic or race relations, in politics or entertainment, or even at the changes in advertising strategy and format. Do not use any sources beyond the paper. Total seven pages.

Session 12. Submit a 12-15 page historiographic paper on one of the following topics: foreign policy; gender, race, labor, immigration, culture. We will discuss the number of books and articles and other relevant issues for this paper in class.

There is a one week grace period. If you hand in your paper late your grade will reflect the tardiness.

Feel free to consult me with any problems or questions. If you want a copy back submit two copies of your paper.

N.B.: Keep copies of everything you submit. Your papers should be your own work and reflect your own research. Where you have relied on outside sources for material make sure that this is noted. Quotes should be marked off to indicate they are not your words and they should be footnoted. Do not use previously submitted papers, purchased material or any other form of work that is not your own. The consequences of plagiarism can be serious. Enough said.