History 80010: Literature of American History II

This course covers significant themes and developments in U.S. history from the end of the Civil War to the late 20th century. Major themes include: the aftermath and legacy of slavery, the emergence of the United States as a global power, the rise and consolidation of the American state, and the struggle for national inclusion: race, rights, and citizenship. We will also discuss issues of periodization and highlight recent developments in methodology related to our period.

The broad objectives of the course include helping to prepare students for a written departmental exam, to provide a substantive foundation for students to teach their own U.S. history courses, and to expose students to modes of inquiry, subfields, and bibliographies that will aid in future research and teaching. Given these broad ambitions, this 5-credit course is necessarily demanding. In general, students will be expected to read the equivalent of two monographs a week and to be prepared to engage in rigorous yet wide-ranging discussions. The course will proceed chronologically as well as thematically and will consider questions, debates, issues, and dilemmas that arise from political, legal, cultural, economic, social, race, and gender histories of this period. In keeping with recent trends in the field, we will also regularly consider U.S. history from a global perspective.

Reading Assignments
There is necessarily a lot of reading in this course. Read both carefully and strategically, i.e. you do not have to read every word). In addition to the assigned texts, you will be reading the relevant sections in a college-level textbook on the subject/issues/time period covered by the primary reading. There are also optional readings. Each week, one student will report on these additional readings.

Writing Assignments
In lieu of a longer historiographical paper, each week one student will be asked to read the review literature (book reviews and review essays) on one of the books assigned as common reading and prepare an essay of approximately 1,000 words on the book’s relationship to the larger historiography as well as its reception by the profession. Please note: you must circulate this essay to me and to the class by 7 p.m. on the Sunday before class. Each student will write several such papers.

There will be a final departmental examination at the end of the semester.

Attendance and Participation
Attendance is mandatory. If exigent circumstances arise and you absolutely cannot come to class, you must contact me in advance by email. I expect every student to participate
fully in every class. In addition, each week, one of you will introduce the readings for the class.

**Class Schedule**

**January 27: Reconstruction.**

**February 3: Industrialization and the Gilded Age**

**February 10: An American Empire?**

**February 17: NO CLASS (CUNY Holiday)**

**February 24: The Age of Reform: Populism and Progressivism**
Optional reading: Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform*, chapters I-V

**March 2: Repression and Depression: 1920s-1930s**
Optional Reading: F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

**March 9: New Deals**
Alice Kessler Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men and the Quest for Citizenship in 20th Century America* (2001), chapters 1-4

**March 16: Immigration and Citizenship**

**March 23: Urban Crises**

**March 30: Civil Rights and Black Liberation Struggles**
- Christopher Schmidt, *The Sit-Ins: Protest and Legal Change in the Civil Rights Era* (2018)

**April 6: Welfare States and the Roots of Social Conservatism**

**April 13: NO CLASS (Spring Break)**

**April 20: Resisting the Straight Male State**

**April 27: Cold Wars**
  Optional Film: *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956)

**May 4: Neoliberalisms**: Domestic and Global

**May 11: Possible Futures**
Timothy Snyder, *Road to Unfreedom* (2018), chapter 1