You will be doing a lot of reading this semester. Do it carefully. This course, if it works, will serve several purposes. It will prepare you for your written and orals examinations, but, more importantly, it will give you the basis to put together your first syllabi. Most of the books listed below have been published in the last few decades; some are more ancient; a few are methodologically innovative. All, I think, are well-written and have something to contribute to ongoing debates.

Because it carries 5 credits, instead of the usual 3, students will be expected to read the equivalent of two monographs a week. There will be short papers assigned periodically and a departmental final. Our objective is to give you a short-order, preliminary, abbreviated introduction to the field, one that introduces you to critical elements, questions, issues, structures in U.S. political, economic, social, cultural, and gender histories, wherever possible and fitting, with a global perspective.

We will steamroll our way through the past century and a half, providing you with what we hope will be the basic building blocks, the questions, areas of inquiry, and bibliography out of which you can structure your first and subsequent years of teaching and research. Our topics are the standard ones that you will need to cover in your teaching and which we hope will serve as a foundation for future research: Reconstruction; Industrialization and American Capitalism; Immigration; Political Movements and Campaigns from Populism to Progressivism, the New Deal, the Great Society, and the Conservative Responses to each; Feminism and Gender Politics; Racism, Civil Rights, and White Supremacy; Imperialism, World Wars, and Cold Wars; Urbanization and Suburbanization; Neoliberalism, Deindustrialization and Globalism; Culture, Media, and Communications; The Politics of Identity and Difference.

Assignments: Readings

In addition to the assigned monographs, I want you to read the relevant sections in a college-level textbook on the subject/issues/time period covered by the primary reading. I have included several novels and autobiographies as optional readings. I will ask for volunteers to read and report on these books.

Assignments: Writing:

(1) One student each week will be asked to read the review literature on one of the books assigned as common reading and prepare an essay of no more than 1,000 words on how the book fits (or doesn’t fit) into the larger historiography, what it contributes to the literature, how critics responded to it when published. This essay will be shared with classmates. It should be sent out electronically by 5 PM on the Sunday before class.
One student each week will report on the “textbook” coverage of the subject under discussion and circulate to classmates a “review” of that coverage.

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

Assignments: Films

There are a few films and videos assigned. You should view these at home; they are readily available.

Attendance:

I fully expect every student to attend every class. If you cannot, for the most dire of reasons, make a class, you must contact me in advance by email.

Weekly Reading Assignments:

January 28: Reconstruction.

Eric Foner, Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution (1988)

W.E.B. DuBois, Souls of Black Folk (1903), chapters I, III, IV, VII, VIII, IX, XII, XIII.

February 4: Industrialization and the Gilded Age

Richard White, The Republic for Which it Stands: The United States During Reconstruction and the Gilded Age (2017)

February 11: Populism, Progressive, and Politics


Optional reading: Richard Hofstadter, American Political Tradition, chapters 7-12 (1948)

February 25: The Peopling of America


Aristide Zolberg, A Nation by Design: Immigration Policy in the Fashioning of America (2009), chapters 1, 7-11, conclusion.

March 4: Roaring Twenties? Depressed Thirties?


Daniel Worster, The Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s (1979)

March 11: **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 18: **Race and Class in the American City**  

March 25: **Civil Rights and Black Liberation Struggles**  
Christopher Schmidt, *The Sit-Ins: Protest and Legal Change in the Civil Rights Era* (2018)  
Film: *Eyes on the Prize*, Part I, any 50-minute episode on You Tube  

April 1: **Great Societies, Welfare States, and the Roots of Social Conservatism**  

April 8: **Resisting the Straight Male State**  

April 15: **World Wars to Cold Wars**  
Film: *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956)  

April 29: **Looking Forward—and Back**  

May 6: **Brave New Worlds I**  
May 13: **Brave New Worlds II**


Timothy Snyder, *Road to Unfreedom* (2018), chapter 1.