This course focuses on topics in U.S. social, political and cultural history between 1900 and 1940. In this first half of the 20th century ("the American Century") the United States economy took on a global aspect, foreign policy turned isolationist, roles for women expanded and the U.S. was transformed from a largely agricultural and rural nation to one that was urban and metropolitan. Northern racial ghettos formed and erupted, immigration was restricted, radicals were deported and the capitalist market surged, only to tank into depression. The U.S. responded with uncertainty toward the rise of totalitarian governments in Europe and offered no haven to those seeking refuge. At the same time the succession of progressive politics, World War, prosperity and depression shaped a reform political regime that redrew the contours of the American political economy. 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.

Expected outcomes:

- A critical understanding of key texts regarding U.S. history, 100-1940;
- An understanding of the role of politics, economics, social forces, culture and technology in shaping early 20th century U.S. society;
- An understanding of broad trends in reform and social policy and their roles in redefining the contours of capitalism;
- Read monographs regarding the Progressive-New Deal period critically and analytically and lead class discussion on assigned topics;
- An appreciation for the complexity of historical experience and examples of the influence of prime variables like race, gender, class, culture and economics on American history;
- Write a well defined, carefully researched and cogently argued paper.

Weekly Assignments: Reading selections will be drawn from the following assigned books and articles.

S Scan available; E Electronic version available from Library *Suggested Reading

I. Definitions and Debates

II. Muckrakers and Reformers: Society In Need of Improvement


https://books.google.com/books?id=tdf8na3fqNUC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

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http://www.gutenberg.org/files/57125/57125-h/57125-h.htm

*Frances Kellor, “Out of Work”

https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044020509055;view=1up;seq=16 or https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__archive.org_details_outworkastudyem01kellgoog&d=DwIBAg&c=8v77JlHZOYsReeOxyXyDU39VUUzHxyfBUh7fw_ZfBDA&r=vI9fXfFok4hoD4fFmmeKCAaYUyzYRId9GUBU9CibYA&m=GWt_tlmPSw3vIlMr1190Hnc8GCWLFlvYT-9PFKtuijENY&s=kRxoZhZRIOXsnD8Hrl4uXqVsjXR7aLJ9dwPdXRMnTOg&c=

*Louis Brandeis, “Other People’s Money And How The Bankers Use it” viii-x
III. Major Trends in Progressive Reform


Leon Fink, *The Long Gilded Age: American Capitalism and the Lessons of a New World Order*, Intro 1, 3-5.


IV. Presidential Progressivism


**V. The Progressives and the War**


**VI. Roaring Twenties: What Happened to the Progressive Movement?**


Frank Striecker, *Affluence for whom?—another look at prosperity and the working classes in the 1920s* *Labor History* Volume 24, 1983 - Issue 1.

http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=07cb54d4-254d-4c0f-a7ad-8dc7b4ec3088%40pdc-v-sessmgr05


VII. Emerging Agendas: State, Labor and Class


Irving Bernstein, *The Lean Years*, (1960), 47-143; 190-244.


*Sarah Phillips, This Land, This Nation: Conservation, Rural America and the New Deal* (2007), 21-73.
Emerging Agendas: Gender and Race


Sheldon Stromquist, *Reinventing the People*, (2006), 107-190


Cheryl Hicks, *Talk with You Like a Woman, 1890-1945*, (2010), 23-52; 125-158; 182-236.


*David Levering Lewis, When Harlem was in Vogue* (1979).


https://www.trumanlibrary.org/educ/betweenthewars/Reinterpreting1920s.pdf


IX. Crash


X. The New Deal and the Depression

Irving Bernstein, *The Lean Years*, (1960), 247-286
*M Michael Hiltzik, *The New Deal: A Modern History*
*Anthony J. Badger, *The New Deal: Depression Years.*

*Franklin Delano Roosevelt, First Inaugural, March, 1933.*

XI: Beyond First Efforts - New Deal Reform

Sarah Phillips This Land, *This Nation: Conservation, Rural America and the New Deal* (2007), 74-149. (TVA)

*Daniel Worster, *The Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s* (1979), chs. 1,3,4, 5


XII. Try Again…


*Susan Ware, Beyond Suffrage: Women in the New Deal* (1981).


*Films of the 1930s: Roaring Twenties* (1939); *My Man Godfrey* (1936); *Gabriel Over the White House* (1933); *Grapes of Wrath* (1941).

XIII. Global and Urban Perspectives

Wolfgang Schivelbusch *Three New Deals: Reflections on Roosevelt's America, Mussolini's Italy, and Hitler's Germany*, 1933-1939, 49-184.


Present Research Papers.
COLLATERAL ASSIGNMENTS:

The assignments in this course are designed to train students for research, writing and teaching. Reading, leading class discussions and participating in them are integral to successfully completing the work for this class.

Each session will have a discussion leader who will prepare a short synopsis of the reading to be presented and then e-mailed to participants after the class discussion of the readings. The presentation should focus on major historical issues and pose interpretive/analytic questions to promote a discussion of pivotal issues. How is the study structured? What is the evidence base; how solid is the argument? Where does it fit in the historiography?

The major burden of the discussion leader is to lead a conversation around the topic of the day. The thing to avoid is the presentation of questions that are really another form of lecture. Questions should not be convoluted, complicated, or able to be answered by a yes or no. They should be 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 a second reader whose function will be to read an additional book on the topic and present a brief summary of the related reading, as well as a selection of reviews.

Writing Assignments: The assignments are keyed to specific sessions.

Session 4. Select a monograph on “presidential progressivism” and write a 4 page review that: within a critique of the book, summarizes the central argument and discusses the methodology and sources.

Session 5. Submit a proposal for your paper. 1 page: topic, sources, approach

Session 7. Go back to year 1920 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 1920 paper and compare its treatment in 1930 and then in 1940. Four pages. You may compare treatments of workers, women, immigrants, race issues, politics, urban growth projects, business, culture, reform, 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 an approved topic. We will discuss the number of books and articles and other relevant issues for this paper in class. OR Define a topic in 1900-1940 American history and based upon research in contemporaneous newspapers and magazines/journals write a documented analytic essay approximately 15 pages in length.
The paper will obviously be limited in scope. But you can look at an issue as it was reported - recognizing that errors often do creep into reports when an observer writes against a deadline, is forced to depend upon random testimony; and often it lacks context. Do not settle upon a single circumstance or event; build a base of information that relates thematically to your topic.

Your paper should be based exclusively on what can be learned from the primary research. You may use secondary sources to provide context your information should come from the primary sources. Footnote your material with brief citations.

Start early. Reserve a good bit of time to organize and write the paper.

By the fifth session you will need to hand in a brief outline of your subject and your secondary sources for approval. The paper will be due the last week in November. There is a one week grace period. If you hand in your paper late your grade will reflect the tardiness.

Please consult with me about any problems or questions.

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.