

U.S. HISTORY: RECONSTRUCTION TO THE PRESENT
HIS 102-01 TTH 10:00-11:50 AM DONOVAN 1107

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Hours: T 3:30-5:30pm; W 10:45am-12:00pm, Th 9:00-9:45am, and by appointment

Course overview:

“A description and analysis of the principal forces involved in the growth of the U.S. from a society on the eve of massive industrialization into a technological consumer society. Features stressed will include the rise of the corporation, the development of an urban labor force, the changing role of government, and the integration of the U.S. into a global political and economic system.” (from the *SUNY-IT Undergraduate Catalog*).

In this course we will examine the different populations and conditions that have shaped U.S. society from the end of its Civil War up to the present. The events of the past 135 years or so explain a lot about contemporary U.S. society. We will balance our examination of economic and political forces with in-depth incursions into racial, gender, educational, and other social questions. Your goal for this class should be to gain the background knowledge and analytical tools necessary to use evidence from the past to inform your understanding of today’s society and your role in it!

Assigned Readings:

John M. **Murrin**, et. al., *Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People. Vol. II: Since 1863.* Concise 3rd Edition. (USA: Thomson-Wadsworth, 2004).
John **Hollitz**, ed., *Thinking Through the Past: A Critical Thinking Approach to U.S. History* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2001).

Some additional readings may be distributed in class.

All readings are available for purchase at the campus bookstore, and online at websites for new and used textbooks. A copy of Hollitz is available on reserve at the library; if I can obtain an extra copy of Murrin et. al., I will put that on reserve as well.

Grading:

Your grade in this course is based on the following. **It is your responsibility to keep track of your grades — you should keep all graded assignments on file at least until you receive your final grade.** You may find it useful to record your progress here as the semester progresses (letter/number — take the midpoint number from the online grading scale to estimate):

- | | | |
|----|--|---------------|
| 1. | 10% = Attendance and participation (begin with A+, one ½ letter grade off per unexcused absence): | _____ / _____ |
| 2. | 25% = Website review (topic and bibliography due 11 Sept., worth 5% ;
paper due 25. Nov, worth 20%) | _____ / _____ |
| 3. | 15% = Film review (due 25 Sept., 30 Oct., 20 Nov. OR 2 Dec.) | _____ / _____ |
| 4. | 20% = Film quizzes (on 23 Sept., 28 Oct., 18 Nov. AND 2 Dec.) (@ 5%: ___/___+___/___+___/___+___/___ = | _____ / _____ |
| 5. | 15% = Midterm (Thurs. 9 Oct.) | _____ / _____ |
| 6. | 15% = Final (week of 8 Dec., date TBA) | _____ / _____ |
| 7. | Extra credit: Anti-plagiarism workshop (dates TBA, A x .05) | _____ / _____ |
| | Extra film review (grade x .10) | _____ / _____ |

Details of the assignments are given below; I will also discuss the assignments in class and/or hand out more descriptions as needed. Please see my website for a general explanation of what my standards are for assignments and how I calculate grades.

Course Requirements and Policies:

Communications:

Office hours are your opportunity to get extra face-to-face help (with or without an appointment). I may be available at other times as well; make an appointment or come by and see if my office door is open. If I am not in when you telephone, please leave a message on the campus Voicemail system and I will try to respond by the next business day at the latest; the same goes for e-mail messages.

I will be using the new MySUNYIT web page for reinforcement of classroom announcements. For this to work, you **MUST** activate your SUNY-IT e-mail account, as this is the e-mail address used for group announcements. If you wish to receive your e-mail through another address (Hotmail, Yahoo, AOL, etc.), you must arrange to have messages forwarded from your SUNYIT account. This is not hard — you can set up both your e-mail account and automatic forwarding from the MySUNYIT page. If you experience difficulty doing this, contact me or Information Technology Services for assistance.

Attendance policy and class participation (5%):

Faithful attendance in the class is important. We have a lot to cover! An attendance roster will be circulated at each class meeting, and your signature on it is the official record for having attended each class. ***It is your responsibility to assign the attendance roster at each class meeting.*** Absences for religious observances will be excused as will be those for *genuine* medical reasons or family/personal emergencies. You must provide written documentation for medical absences, and must describe in writing (e-mail or note) any family/personal emergencies. Absences for university appointments on or off campus will not be excused.

However, we are adults, things happen, and they have their reasons. I allow one unexcused absence (i.e., I receive no notification or written explanation thereof) per student per term, but then will begin counting, reducing your attendance grade, which starts out at A+, by half a letter grade for each unexcused absence (e.g. if you have 3 unexcused absences, expect a A-; six unexcused absences, a B-, etc.). Lateness and early departures are also a problem, as they prove disruptive for your peers and instructor during discussions and activities and complicate record-keeping. If frequent, significant departure from compliance with class times is observed, a similar penalty will be applied to your grade.

Active participation in class discussions and preparation for them is required of all students. You are expected to come to each class having done the readings and having thought carefully about them. Your goal should not be to talk as much as possible or regurgitate facts easily figured out from the reading. Rather, you should aim to ask critical questions regarding the readings and other materials and to bring your insights to the attention of your peers and your instructor. Remember, though this material may be new to you, you also bring a new background, point of view, and intellect to it – so share your thoughts!

It will help you to bring your books, copies of the readings for the day, and/or really good notes to each class meeting. Additional structured discussions or group activities, film clips, slides, music, and literature may be used from time to time in class, and additional material (articles, websites) may be recommended to you for further reading – it is your responsibility to inquire regarding any missed content, should you miss a class.

A NOTE ON PREPARED WRITING ASSIGNMENTS IN GENERAL:

Each writing assignment is listed with a due date in the Course Schedule. These due dates are real; firm due dates enable you – and me – to plan. Assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the days listed, and any paper handed in after that point will be counted as **late**. Without an approved excuse, late assignments will be penalized a letter grade (e.g. from an A to B, B- to a C-) per class session overdue. Any assignment handed in more than 4 classes late (when you would receive an F for an otherwise A+ paper) will receive no higher grade than a 64, and may be accorded less points according to its quality.

Good, documented writing is what being a scholar is all about. For all writing assignments prepared outside of class you **MUST** document all information that is not your original thought, interpretation, analysis, or synthesis. This includes both direct quotes (phrases or sentences taken from another source, surrounded by quotation marks: “blah blah blah”) and paraphrases (rewordings and summaries of ideas or analyses that are not yours).

You may choose the system of citation you would like to use (Modern Language Association, American Psychological Association, University of Chicago/Turabian, etc.) as long as you are **CONSISTENT** and **THOROUGH**. All papers should utilize footnotes, endnotes, or citations within the text, and should include a works cited list (a.k.a. bibliography) at the end. Any paper handed in without some form of citations and works cited list will receive no higher grade than a D, regardless of the quality of the writing.

Plagiarism—passing off someone else's work as your own—is not just a violation of academic integrity or basic ethics—it *is a crime*. The *SUNY-IT Student Handbook*, available in print and online, states clearly that the instructor may assess a reasonable penalty for plagiarism (22 and ff.). Penalties can include failure for the assignment, the permanent placement of a letter describing the incident in your file, or even failure for the course (students may challenge these decisions before the Academic Conduct Board). To be clear, my procedure for dealing with plagiarism is as follows:

1. The first assignment found to contain significant amounts of copied material (more than the occasional missed quotation mark or forgotten footnote) will receive an F grade, equaling 0% in the final tally.
2. Then, I will assign the student either a rewrite of the paper or an alternate (stricter) assignment that **MUST** be handed in one week from the date of the return of the paper. The highest grade that paper can receive will be a B- (=80), but can be lower according to its quality. If the alternate assignment is not handed in by that date, or if it does not meet adequate standards for the class (missing citations, poor writing), the F=0 grade will remain. No late alternate assignments will be accepted.
3. The next incident of plagiarism by the same student will result in an F=0 grade for the assignment with no alternate assignment option, and a letter describing the incident will be placed in the student's folder.
4. If any other incidence of plagiarism should follow these first two actions, the student will receive an F for the course, and an additional letter of explanation will be placed in the student's file.

But please do not despair—proper documentation is not hard to do, and strengthens your writing! Guides for different systems can be found in the SUNY-IT library at the reference desk, and are also available online at the Learning Center’s website: <http://www.sunyit.edu/academics/offices/lc/>. We’ll discuss documentation issues in class, too. I encourage you to seek advice from the campus librarians or from the Learning Center (Donovan G155, x7310) as you write your papers. Of course, I also encourage you to contact me—by e-mail or telephone call (I’ll try to respond by the next business day at the latest), or come by my office—whenever you have questions about your sources or would like to show me a draft of some writing.

For that matter, the Learning Center offers workshops on plagiarism several times throughout the semester; I will announce the dates in class. I encourage you to attend one if you are not familiar with humanities-style writing or documentation. In fact, I will give **5% extra credit** (an A grade x .05 added to your total grade for the course) if you demonstrate that you have attended one of these workshops (tell the Learning Center director you are in my class; he will send a copy of the attendance list to me).

Should you need additional assistance or support, I also encourage you to utilize the facilities at the campus counseling center (Campus Center 208, x7160, <http://www.sunyit.edu/saf/offices/counseling>). The counselors there can offer advice on dealing with the pressure of long-term and voluminous assignments along with other classes, jobs, and/or family; suspected learning disabilities, how to work with them, and how to notify your instructors about them while maintaining confidentiality; and other issues that might interfere with your studies. Official communications from the director, Mary Brown-DePass, have official weight for faculty, including me.

Useful sources and resources for research in U.S. History:

The New York Times and the New York Times Index

Current issues of the New York Times are available online (www.nytimes.com, the account you’ll set up is free of charge). Somewhat less well known but even more useful for this class are our library’s holdings: we have the *NYT* on microfiche dating back to 1933, and its invaluable index, bound by year in large red volumes. Other libraries, like Hamilton College, have the newspaper on microfilm back to 1857 and its index; the Utica Public Library has the paper and indices as well. The *NYT*’s thorough indexing by topics and names is a powerful tool for research in U.S. history — using this, you may be able to find newspaper accounts of events and people, and can also gather dates to look for information in other newspapers and sources.

History Journals:

Journals are where historians submit concise sections of their research to be reviewed by their peers and published. Sometimes it is more efficient to read a journal article rather than an author’s entire book, as the subject matter and the writing is more focused on a specific topic — and it’s shorter! While SUNY-IT’s library does not subscribe to many history journals, more are available to us through interlibrary loan and at neighboring colleges. Also, many have their abstracts listed in online databases such as ABC-CLIO, ProQuest, Lexus Nexus, Expanded Academic ASAP, and InfoTrac, and some have full-text articles available online. For starters, try articles from

American Historical Review
The Journal of American History
The Journal of Women’s History

The Western Historical Quarterly
Journal of Social History
The William and Mary Quarterly

Comparative Studies in Society and History
The Historian
Labour History

Be sure to **ACCURATELY AND FULLY CITE** the information from journals or newspapers that provide the article, as well as the fact that you obtained the article from a database. Ask a librarian for assistance or bring me a printout if you experience difficulty figuring out who the author was, when or where the article was published, etc.

These databases also provide citations without the full articles, making you responsible for finding a copy of the article (most likely through Interlibrary Loan). Another database, *ABC-CLIO’s American History and Life*, is also useful for this class, but remember, it is just an index. Plan ahead so that you can order materials through ILL; sometimes the delivery takes a while!

Also, check if one of the libraries we have cooperative agreements with (Hamilton, Colgate, Utica College, MVCC, HCCC) have the materials. If you go to these libraries yourself, you can use your SUNY card to check out books and you can enter to use their reserve holdings. If you can’t travel far, materials ordered from these libraries will most likely arrive faster.

ASSIGNMENT: WEBSITE REVIEW (5% topic and annotated bibliography + 20% paper = 25% total):

It seems simplistic to say that the Internet is changing the way that we research and discuss history. As you know, anyone who knows a bit of HTML or can pay someone who does can post information to the web. There are some excellent sources out there for U.S. history, which, when properly cited, can and should be used for any and all of your assignments -- but be discriminating! In general, the websites of universities and reputable organizations are more reliable than those constructed by individuals (although there are exceptions).

Find a website that deals with historical content related to at least one of the geographic areas and/or issues covered in the texts we are using for this class [note: you may NOT review the websites provided by the textbook publishers, though you may use them as resources]. You can choose to look at a historical issue in any place or time encompassed by this course. To realistically limit your work, though, select a site or section of a site that deals with one specific historical figure or issue. For example, you could write about the presentation of the overview of the Spanish American War on the Library of Congress website (<http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/trask.html>), rather than try to review an entire, overarching site (H-US1918-45, the history of the U.S. between WWI and WWII (<http://www.h-net.org/~US191845>)).

This assignment will tie in with your **LIBRARY SESSION on Thursday, 4 Sept**. You will meet with librarian Ron Foster at the main desk of Cayan Library at our regular class time. There, Mr. Foster will introduce the variety of tools available at the library that you can use to investigate a theme in U.S. History and its presentation on an Internet web site. Prior to that class, you should spend a little time looking through the textbook and/or online trying to identify issues or events in the period that this class covers (1866-2003) that particularly interest you, and perhaps a little time looking at what is available on the Web. **USE THIS TIME** to explore your options, and to learn the mechanics of looking up information from various media.

In the following class, we will discuss what you found and where your research might go. Then, you must indicate to me in writing the web site that you intend to review (list the URL and give a 1-2 paragraph description), along with an annotated bibliography (meaning that you provide a short description of each source) of at least five (5) bibliographic sources apart from the course texts that you will use to review the site, due **Thursday, 11 Sept**. No more than two (2) sources in this annotated bibliography and your final paper may come from the Internet; in other words, if you don't know how to already, learn to look up newspaper and journal articles in print and on databases, and order material on Interlibrary Loan—you'll need it!

The final review of the site is due on **Tuesday, 25 Nov**. Approximate length should be 5-7 double-spaced pages (1500-2100 words) — that should be the minimum you need for answering the questions above. You are free to write more; speak with me if you are concerned about the length of your paper.

After a brief description of the subject presented by the website, you will address the following questions in your paper:

- Who is/are the author(s) of the site is (are) and what is the purpose of publishing this information on the Web?
- Does the site present one or more than one sides of an argument or conflict? What other sources could you use to demonstrate that an attempt at fair and balanced presentation was made, or that a bias is clear (hint: you need to use sources OTHER THAN web pages!)
- Does the site clearly indicate the sources of its information (e.g. its use of primary sources; other scholars' works, properly cited, etc)?
- Does the site encourage further learning (e.g. with links, recommended readings), or does it present itself as the “be-all and end-all” on a subject, playing down or ignoring the need to ask further questions?
- Does it use multiple media (pictures, sound, text) to present information, or does one type dominate? Is this a good or bad choice for the subject matter presented?

Some useful, “clearinghouse” sites to search for topics of interest, source recommendations, and reviews, are:

Humanities Network (H-Net) – Michigan State University

H-Net homepage: <http://www.h-net.org>

Both the main site, a clearing house for communication and information about and in support of the humanities, and the discussion network sites have archives that can be accessed for information. Also, free subscriptions provide you the opportunity to send inquiries to both leading and emerging scholars (I will raise your paper grade one half grade, e.g. B to B+, if you use one of these lists to send a question and get a helpful response: print out your e-mail and the response(s), and submit them with your paper). Some sites include book reviews, and links to free, online journals as well as other Internet resources.

Some useful discussion networks (consult the website for the full list) for this course include: H-AfroAm (African-American History), HAmIndian (American Indian History and Culture), HAmStdy (American Studies), H-CivWar (U.S. Civil War), H Education (History of Education), HEthnic (Ethnic and Immigration Studies), HFilm, H-Labor (Labor History), H-Local (Local History), H-Minerva (women and war), H-Pol (U.S. Political History) H-SAWH (Women and Gender in the American South), H-SHEAR (Early American Republic), H-South (History of the U.S. South), H-US1918-45 (History of the United States 1918-45), and H-USA (International Study of US History). Go to the “Discussion Links” page for their links.

History Matters (George Mason University)

<http://historymatters.gmu.edu>

The History Place (commercial but useful as an index)

<http://www.historyplace.com>

ASSIGNMENT: Film Quizzes and Film Review(4 @5% or 20% total; Review paper 15%)

We will watch 4 feature films in this class. I have selected them because they provide images that complement our readings and discussions — so pay attention! I will distribute a movie guide on the same day that we watch each film. When possible, I will put copies of the films on reserve in the library (you must watch the films in the viewing rooms at the library).

At the next class meeting (on 23 Sept., 28 Oct., 18 Nov. AND 2 Dec), the first activity will be a **brief quiz** on the film's content (multiple choice, short answer, or a combination of the two). No makeup quizzes will be given.

Then, you must write a scholarly review of one of films. This paper should be more than a summary of the main events of the film (remember, I've seen it already). You should use outside sources, starting with the class readings, to analyze the film. In your review, address the following issues:

- These films are fictional or fictionalized accounts of historical events and figures. Were facts, events or characters combined or dispensed with to make for a better story? How well does the film portray the historical issue(s) at hand?
- Is the movie strongly biased? And how much does that matter for the history lesson it is trying to impart?

The due date for this paper is, in one sense, up to you. The review of each movie will be due one week after we watch the movie in class (thus on **25 Sept., 30 Oct., 20 Nov. OR 2 Dec**). Approximate length should be 2-3 double-spaced pages (600-900 words, but again, you are free to write more).

I will issue a warning to all members of the class who have not taken the opportunity to complete any of the first three assignments, in order that they prepare to complete the fourth. I will also accept one additional review for **extra credit** (its grade x 0.10 added to your final grade), by the fourth due date (if you submit more than two, I will take the two highest grades for the review grade and extra credit grade). However, one review **MUST** have been submitted in accordance with a due date in order to receive extra credit for a second.

Midterm and Final (15% each, 30% total):

The midterm (**9 Oct.**) and the final (**week of 8 Dec.**) will be in-class exams, basically containing map quizzes, multiple choice questions, short identifications or definitions (1-3 sentences), and short essays (2-3 paragraphs) on issues raised in the readings. I will distribute study guides one week prior to the exams so that you can prepare your ideas and ask questions. No item that was not given on the study guide will be given as a test question.

Course Schedule:

Week 1:

Tues. 26 Aug. First class — introductions and syllabus review.

Thurs. 28 Aug. The U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction

Reading: Murrin, 449-470 (Ch. 17)

Week 2:

Tues. 2 Sept. Reconstructing Reconstruction (an in-class discussion of secondary sources)

Reading: Hollitz, 9-23 (Ch. 1)

Thurs. 4 Sept. Professor at conference — LIBRARY SESSION

Meet librarian(s) at the main desk of the library for an introduction to library facilities and research methods. This workshop has been designed to help you with your TOPIC and BIBLIOGRAPHY for the WEBSITE REVIEW.

*** Remember: Mon., 8 Sept. is the last day to add or drop a course without academic record.***

Withdrawal grade begins Tues., 9 Sept.

Week 3:

Tues. 9 Sept. Frontiers of Change, Politics of Stalemate

Reading: Murrin, 472-488 (Ch. 18)

Thurs. 11 Sept. Labor conditions in the late 19th century (analyzing available data and sources)

Reading: Hollitz, 24-52 (Ch. 2)

WEBSITE REVIEW TOPIC AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

Week 4:

Tues. 16 Sept. Economic Change and the Crisis of the 1890s

Reading: Murrin, 489-506 (Ch. 19) and begin Hollitz 81-113 (Ch. 4)

Thurs. 18 Sept. FILM: *Heartland or Hester Street*

Reading: finish Hollitz 81-113 (Ch. 4)

Week 5:

Tues. 23 Sept. An Industrial [and growing!] Society

Reading: Murrin, 507-533 (Ch. 20)

FILM QUIZ #1

Thurs. 25 Sept. Immigration Issues: A Thing of the Past?

Reading: Hollitz, 141-163 (Ch.6)

FILM REVIEW #1 DUE

Week 6:

Tues. 30 Sept. “Saving the Indians” (Why are they ‘saved’ for a separate section? Should they be?)

Reading: Hollitz, 53-80 (Ch. 3)

Thurs. 2 Oct. Progressivism...

Reading: Murrin, 535-563 (Ch. 21)

Study guide for Midterm exam distributed

Week 7:

Tues. 7 Oct. ...and Progress for Whom? (The Bungalow House)

Reading: Hollitz, 118-140 (Ch. 5)

Midterm review

Thurs. 9 Oct. — MIDTERM EXAM

Week 8:

Tues. 14 Oct. NO CLASS — MID-SEMESTER BREAK — RELAX!

Thurs. 16 Oct. Becoming a World Power

Reading: Murrin, 565-588 (Ch. 22)

Week 9:

Tues. 21 Oct. World War I and U.S. Society

Reading: Murrin, 589-615 (Ch. 23)

Thurs. 23 Oct. FILM: *Matewan or The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pitman* – The 1920s

Reading: Murrin, 616-643 (Ch. 24) and review Hollitz chs. 5 and 6

Week 10:

Tues. 28 Oct. The Great Depression and the New Deal

Reading: Murrin, 644-676 (Ch. 25)

FILM QUIZ #2

Thurs. 30 Oct. Reform During Hard Times and “From the Top Down”: Eleanor Roosevelt

Reading: Hollitz, 164-192 (Ch. 7)

FILM REVIEW #2 DUE

*** Remember: Friday, October 31 is the last day to officially withdraw (W Grade) from courses.***

Week 11:

Tues. 4 Nov. America During the Second World War

Reading: Murrin, 677-705 (Ch. 26)

*** It's Election Day...don't forget to exercise your right to vote, if you can!***

Thurs. 6 Nov. The Greatest Generation? The Detroit Race Riot of 1943

Reading: Hollitz, 193-217 (Ch. 9)

Week 12:

Tues. 11 Nov. The Cold War

Reading: Murrin, 706-734 (Ch. 27) and Hollitz 218-244 (Ch. 9)

Thurs. 13 Nov. FILM: *Salt of the Earth* or *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?*

Reading: Murrin 735-762 (Ch. 28); also begin Hollitz 245-279 (Ch. 10) AND 305-340 (Ch. 12)

Week 13:

Tues. 18 Nov. The Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Movement, and the Shaping of Politics to Come

Reading: Finish Hollitz 245-279 (Ch. 10) AND 305-340 (Ch. 12)

FILM QUIZ #3

Thurs. 20 Nov. America During its Longest War, 1963-1974: How did Vietnam define the era and the country?

Reading: Murrin, 763-789 (Ch. 29) and Hollitz, 280-304 (Ch. 11)

FILM REVIEW #3 DUE

Week 14:

Tues. 25 Nov. FILM: *Smoke Signals* or *George Washington*

WEBSITE REVIEW DUE (no reading — let's rest!)

Thurs. 27 Nov. NO CLASS — THANKSGIVING BREAK — RELAX!

Week 15:

Tues. 2 Dec. Economic and Social Change in the Late 20th Century

Reading: Murrin, 790-818 (Ch. 30) and begin Hollitz, 341-372 (Ch. 13)

FILM QUIZ #4

FILM REVIEW #4 DUE

Study guide for final exam distributed.

Thurs. 4 Dec. Power and Politics since 1974

Reading: Finish Hollitz, 341-372 (Ch. 13) and Murrin, 819-848 (Ch. 31)

Final exam review

FINAL EXAM:

Sometime the week of 8 Dec. — in this room, but exact date and time TBA.