

HIST 3220: The US in the Twentieth Century



Required Texts:

Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order* (1967)

Timothy McCarthy and John McMillian, *Protest Nation* (2010)

Daniel Rodgers, *The Age of Fracture* (2011)

This course is designed to introduce students to the wide sweep of American experience in the twentieth century—from Progressive Era battles over economic power, poverty, and immigration to the traumatic period of depression and war in the 1930s and 1940s; from the crises over race and equality that roiled a prosperous, postwar America in the 1950s and 1960s to the challenges of globalization, deindustrialization and diversity that have faced the country in recent decades.

This syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary. All students are expected to comply with University and History Department policies on academic honesty. I will report any violation of these standards to the Dean of Students, and any act of plagiarism will result in a grade of "F" for the assignment and, possibly, the course. The GSU policy on academic honesty is published in *On Campus: The Undergraduate Co-Curricular Affairs Handbook*.

Detailed descriptions of all assignments will be discussed in class.

Attendance Policy: You are allowed TWO absences, no questions asked—though missing any class is not recommended. After the first two, each absence will decrease your final grade by half a letter. We will not meet on every scheduled class session of the semester, so your attendance and participation when we *do* meet is all the more essential for your success in this course.

Examination Make-Up Policy: If you miss an examination without a valid excuse, properly documented, you will receive an F on that exam. If you have a conflict that cannot be avoided, you must talk with me before hand about a possible make-up examination.

Keeping Up: The website <http://gelatoorphans.wordpress.com> is where you can find information about the course, syllabus, readings and assignments. If you have any questions about the expectations for the course, check this site or contact me. I will send information

about the course to your student e-mail address, so plan to check your GSU address or have messages forwarded from your GSU account to whatever e-mail you prefer to use.

Deadlines: All deadlines are hard and fast. Assignments will be docked one half a letter grade for each day they are late. If you foresee difficulties completing an assignment on time, it is your responsibility to contact me before the due date.

Midterm and Final: The two exams will consist of short answer and essay questions about the lectures, readings, and class discussions.

Blog Posts: This course does not require you to post about the readings for every class session. Instead, you will be expected to write five thoughtful blog posts over the course of the semester (including, in some cases, responses to other students' posts). These posts will typically involve reflecting on the readings, identifying additional primary sources, and explaining how they relate to the themes of the class. This is not a toss-off assignment. Your posts will be graded according to the following criteria:

1. Does the post do what the assignment calls for?
2. Does the post show serious and thoughtful engagement with the readings and documents?
3. Does the post show evidence of creative effort?
4. Is the post written in a clear and grammatically correct style?
5. Is it turned in on time?

Participation: Attendance is mandatory; reading assigned texts and participation in class discussions are required. You are expected to share ideas about assigned readings in each and every class meeting and you will be evaluated after each class. Your participation grade may include periodic quizzes to ensure that you are keeping up with the readings, as well as other in-class assignments.

Grade Weight:

Midterm:	30%
Blogs:	30%
Final:	30%
Participation:	10%

Grade Scale:

A+	100	C+	78
A	95	C	75
A-	90	C-	70
B+	88	D	68
B	85	D-	65
B-	80	F	60 or less

SCHEDULE

Readings from *Protest Nation* are marked with an asterisk (*); all others are available in Wiebe, Rodgers, or online at gelatoorphans.wordpress.com.

Mon. Aug. 26 – Introduction

Wed. Aug. 28 – From Gilded to Progressive

- Wiebe, Chap. 1 & 3

Wed. Sept. 4 – Meet Jim Crow

- Wiebe, Chap. 4
- Clip: [Ada Jones, “If the Man in the Moon Were a Coon” \(1907\)](#)
- **Blog 1:** Write a short post (300 words) on the class blog about the differences or similarities you see between our time and the turn of the twentieth century period described by Wiebe.
- **Due: Wed by 8am**

Mon. Sept. 9 – Progressivism at High Tide

- Wiebe, Chap. 7-8

Wed. Sept. 11 – The Great War

- Wiebe, Chap. 9-10
- [W.E.B. Du Bois, “My Impressions of Woodrow Wilson”](#)
- [Eugene Debs, “Address to the Jury” \(1918\)](#)

Mon. Sept. 16 – The Roaring Twenties

- Wiebe, Chap. 11
- **Blog 2:** We will meet in the Southern Labor History Archives on the 8th floor of Library South for class. You will find a document related to unions and the labor movement in the 1920s. Compare your document with a classmate’s, and write a 300 word post on the class blog about what the documents tell you about American politics and culture in the 1920s.
- **Due: Wed by 8am**

Wed. Sept. 18 – Capitalism in Crisis

- Richard Hofstadter, “Herbert Hoover and the Crisis of American Individualism” (1948)
- [Malcolm Cowley, “The Bonus Army” \(1932\)](#)
- [FDR, “The Only Thing We Have to Fear Is Fear Itself” \(1933\)](#)

Mon. Sept. 23 – Reinventing America in the 1930s

- [Huey Long, “Every Man a King” speech \(1934\)](#)
- [Austen Bolam, “More Time Is Needed” \(1935\)](#)
- [Norman Thomas, “Is the New Deal Socialism?” \(1936\)](#)

Wed. Sept. 25 – Film: *Cradle Will Rock* (1999)

Mon. Sept. 30 – The Fight against Fascism

- FDR, “[Four Freedoms](#)” speech (1941)
- Browse [documents related to World War II](#) at the Digital Public Library of America; print out an image or text that you find interesting and bring it to class to discuss

Wed. Oct. 2 – **Midterm**

Mon. Oct. 7 – The Spectre of Communism (no class)

- [The Long Telegram](#) (1946)
- Clips: [Army McCarthy hearings](#) (1954), [The House in the Middle](#) (1954)
- **Blog 3:** After reading the Long Telegram and viewing the above clips, use *Proquest Historical Newspapers* to find a historical document from the early Cold War era (1946-1968) that shows people’s fear of nuclear annihilation. Write a 500 word post on the class blog about the document you read and compare it to your own personal experience (or lack thereof) of fear for your own safety (due to terrorism, crime, etc.).
- **Due: Wed by 8am**

Wed. Oct. 9 – Cold War Discussion

Mon. Oct. 14 – Rock, Race, and Rebellion in the 1950s

- Allen Ginsberg, “Howl” (1956)*
- Betty Friedan, “The Feminine Mystique” (1963)*
- Newton Minow, “[Vast Wasteland](#)” speech (1961)
- Clips: The Chords, “[Sh-Boom](#)” (1954), Chuck Berry, “[Maybellene](#)” (1955), [Blackboard Jungle](#) trailer (1955), [The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit](#) trailer (1956)

Wed. Oct. 16 – Black Freedom

- [Southern Manifesto](#) (1956)
- Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from a Birmingham Jail (1963)*

Mon. Oct. 21 – The Eve of Destruction

- Wikipedia, “[Cuban Missile Crisis](#)”
- Clips: [Richard Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev, “Kitchen Debate”](#) (1959), [Barry McGuire, “Eve of Destruction”](#) (1965)

Wed. Oct. 23 – Searching for the Great Society

- Port Huron Statement (1962)*
- LBJ, “[Great Society](#)” speech (1964)
- Clips: Bob Dylan, “[Like a Rolling Stone](#)” (1965), “[Freedom 101](#)” (2007)

Mon. Oct. 28 – Film: *The Pruitt Igoe Myth* (2011)

Wed. Oct. 30 – Black/Brown/Yellow/Gray/Pink Power

- Rodgers, Chap. 4-5

- Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet” (1964)*
- Carl Wittman, “Refugees from Amerika: A Gay Manifesto” (1970)*

Mon. Nov. 4 – The Quagmire

- Interview with Tim O’Brien (2009)
- William Giles letters to Ernestine Lott (1967-1968)
- Noam Chomsky, “The Responsibility of Intellectuals” (1969)*
- Clip: Country Joe McDonald, “I Feel Like I’m Fixin’ to Die Rag”

Wed. Nov. 6 – The 1970s

- Phyllis Schlafly, “What’s Wrong with ‘Equal Rights’ for Women?” (1972)

Mon. Nov. 11 – Reagan and the New Right

- Rodgers, Chap. 1-2

Wed. Nov. 13 – Film: *Roger and Me* (1989)

- Rodgers, Chap. 6
- Clips: Bruce Springsteen, “The River” (1980), Public Enemy, “Black Steel in the Hour of Chaos” (1988)

Mon. Nov. 18 – Film: *How to Survive a Plague* (2012)

- **Blog 4:** We will watch *How to Survive a Plague* in class on the 18th. Please watch the film *Paris Is Burning* (1990) outside of class (it is available on YouTube). Write a 500 word post about the differences between the two films—how do they differently portray gay life in the 1980s and early 1990s? What separates the characters in the two films, and how do they see the world?
- **Due: Wed by 8am**

Wed. Nov. 20 – Film discussion

Mon. Dec. 2 – The 1990s: Slackers, Blowjobs, and the New Economy

- Rodgers, Chap. 7
- Thomas Frank, “The Rise of Market Populism” (2000)
- **Blog 5:** Write 500 words on what you believe are the three major themes of American history in the 20th century.
- **Due Wed by 8am**

Wed. Dec. 4 – The 2000s: America’s Terrible, Horrible, No-Good, Very Bad Decade

- Rodgers, Epilogue 9/11
- The Economist, “American Values: The Triumph of the Religious Right” (2004)
- Mike Davis, “Obama at Manassas” (2009)

Mon. Dec. 9 – **Final**