

History 3071
Origins of Modern America: The United States, 1877-1917

Instructor: John Paul Hill
Office: 301A LeConte Hall
Office Hours: MWF, 9:30-10:30; and by appointment
E-mail: jopahill@uga.edu

Required Texts:

Fink, *Major Problems in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era*
Alger, *Ragged Dick*
Bellamy, *Looking Backward*
Chopin, *The Awakening*
Sinclair, *The Jungle*
Three Negro Classics

Course Description:

This course covers the social, diplomatic, and political trends in the United States between 1877 and 1917. This period corresponds to two important eras in American history: the Gilded Age (1877-1900) and the Progressive Era (1900-1917). During the Gilded Age, the United States underwent a transformation from a predominately rural, homogeneous, and fundamentally agrarian society into an increasingly industrial and diverse urban nation. The period saw the rise of the Robber Barons, individuals such as John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and John Pierpont Morgan who amassed massive fortunes by establishing industrial monopolies. It also witnessed a sharp increase in problems associated with rapid industrialization: low pay, squalid living conditions, and dangerous and unhealthful working environments.

The problems associated with industrialization ushered in the reform movement known as the Progressive Era. The Progressives tried to ameliorate the harsher aspects of society by introducing reforms that would make the government more responsive to the people's needs. Unfortunately, although the Progressives won passage of several important pieces of legislation—the Pure Food and Drug Act is one example—the men and women of the Progressive movement were sometimes misguided elitists who believed scientific management could remedy all of society's ills.

The course concludes with an examination of the buildup to America's involvement in World War I. We will study the outbreak of the war in Europe, President Woodrow Wilson's response to the beginning of hostilities, and the events that caused us to declare war in 1917.

Course Structure:

Generally, Mondays and Wednesdays will be reserved primarily for lectures. Fridays will be discussion days focusing on the readings for the week. The lectures will survey broad developments that shaped U.S. history. The discussions will explore selected topics in more detail.

Course Objectives:

To study history is to live over again the story of the past, to meet familiarly great men and notable women, and to see the outcome of their actions more clearly than the actors saw it themselves. It is to

have at one's disposal authentic facts about the past. More than this, the reading of history enlarges our experience, and enables us to judge present issues and to forecast the future of situations through our knowledge of similar situations in the past. For these reasons, history is a study of the utmost importance for everyone, and especially for citizens of a democracy, who have to make up their minds about issues of government, in order that they may help to determine public policies and actions.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Reading: This is a reading intensive course; therefore, it is imperative that you complete all assigned readings. Assignments are listed below.

2. Discussion: The Friday discussions will cover the Fink text or one of the other assigned readings. As you read the assignment, keep the following questions in mind: What are the author's thesis and other main themes? How well are they supported? To what extent do they agree with other articles on the same or similar subject, or with the text? Are the author's views internally consistent (is the author every self-contradictory)? Make brief notes on your reading (too many notes can be almost as harmful as no notes) designed to jog your memory later. It is important to make these notes during or immediately after the reading assignment. To delay is to run the risk of forgetting.

Each student must come to discussions prepared to talk, exchange views, disagree, and find common ground. All participants should feel compelled to say something during a discussion. What is important in a discussion is to come armed with information; to try to express yourself clearly (but better unclearly than not at all); to think through a topic, to be prepared to change your views if necessary and to be ready to disagree (and to accept disagreement) with courtesy. All participants (including me) should feel free to ask each other questions at any time.

3. Comparative Book Review: Students are to select two outside books on one of the periods covered in this course and compare and contrast them in a book review. Please feel free to consult me if you need book recommendations. I must approve all books.

Like most pieces of writing, your review should begin with an introduction that lets your reader know what the review will say. The first paragraph should mention the authors' names and the titles. You should also include a very brief overview of the contents of the books, the purpose or audience for the books, and your reaction and evaluation. In the body of the paper, you should give a summary of the main points of each book, quoting and paraphrasing key phrases from the authors. Be sure to emphasize how the authors' arguments differ (if at all). Next, you must provide your appraisal of the two books. In short, which book did you find more convincing and why? Like other essays, book reviews usually end with a conclusion that ties together issues that the author raises in the review and provides a concise comment on the books.

Examples of comparative book reviews can be found in the book review section of most historical journals. Excellent journals to consult include *Reviews in American History*, *The Journal of American History*, *The American Historical Review*, and *The Journal of Southern History*.

Papers should be typed, double-spaced, and five to six pages in length with one inch margins. (Note: I am less likely to penalize papers that exceed the page limit than papers that fall short of it.) A title page should accompany the paper. No paper extensions will be granted. Papers will be penalized ten points (out of 100) for every day that they are late. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. The paper is due Wednesday, November 19, at the beginning of class.

Examinations:

There will be two examinations, a mid-term on Friday, October 10, and a final at the University-designated time. Exams will consist of essay questions drawn from the lectures and the assigned readings. Exam answers should be written in blue or black ink. Please bring Blue Books.

Grading:

Class discussion:	10%
Book Review:	30%
Mid-term:	30%
Final:	30%

Attendance:

To do well in this course, you must attend class. You may miss up to four classes without penalty. For each absence thereafter, I will subtract five points from your final average.

If you arrive after roll has been called, it is your responsibility to inform me that you should be counted present for the day. Please do so at the end of class.

Only the direst emergency such as a severe illness or a death in the immediate family should occasion a missed exam. If at all possible, please inform me before the exam if such an emergency exists. Make-up exams are scheduled at my convenience.

Because your performance in discussion determines your class participation grade, it is essential that you attend classes designated for discussion.

Classroom etiquette:

Please turn off cell phones and other electronic devices before class.

Students with disabilities:

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations in order to participate in course activities or meet course requirements should contact me before the end of the first week of class.

Academic honesty:

All academic work at the University of Georgia must meet the standards contained in "A Culture of Honesty." Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

Course Calendar:

**The course calendar is a general plan for the course; I may need to announce deviations from time to time.

Week 1
Aug. 18-22

One Version of the American Dream

	Reading: Fink, ch.2 (Carnegie, George); start Alger, <i>Ragged Dick</i>
Week 2 Aug. 25-29	Capitalism, Industry, and the American Dream Reading: finish Fink, ch. 2; discuss Alger
Week 3 Sept. 1-5	No class on Monday, September 1 The Growth of the Cities and the New Working Class Reading: Fink, ch. 5 (documents 1, 3, 4, and first essay); start Sinclair, <i>The Jungle</i>
Week 4 Sept. 8-12	Immigration and Ethnicity Reading: Fink, ch. 5 (documents 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, and second essay); discuss Sinclair
Week 5 Sept. 15-19	Politics in the Gilded Age Reading: Fink, ch. 6; start Bellamy, <i>Looking Backward</i>
Week 6 Sept. 22-26	Responses to the Problems of the Gilded Age Reading: discuss Bellamy
Week 7 Sept. 29-Oct. 3	The New South and the Problem of Race Reading: Fink, ch. 4; Washington, <i>Up From Slavery</i> , chs. 1-3, 10, and 14 in <i>Three Negro Classics</i> ; Dubois, <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> , chs. 1-3 and 6 in <i>ibid.</i>
Week 8 Oct. 6-10	The Wild West Reading: Fink, ch. 3 Mid-term examination: Friday, October 10
Week 9 Oct. 13-17	The 1890s: Depression and Agrarian Protest Reading: Fink, ch. 7
Week 10 Oct. 20-24	The Triumph of Jim Crow Reading: Fink, ch. 10; Washington, chs. 14-17; Dubois, chs. 8-9; start Chopin, <i>The Awakening</i>
Week 11 Oct. 27-31	Women and Family Life Reading: Fink, ch 8 (second essay) and ch. 11 (second document); discuss Chopin No class on Friday, October 31
Week 12 Nov. 3-7	Cultural Life Reading: Fink, ch. 11
Week 13 Nov. 10-14	Foreign Affairs: American Expansionism Reading: Fink, ch. 9
Week 14	The Rise of Progressivism

Nov. 17-21

Reading: Fink, ch. 12

Book review due: Wednesday, November 19

Week 15

Nov. 24-28

Thanksgiving Break

Week 16

Dec. 1-5

Progressivism: Its Triumphs and Failures

Reading: Fink, ch. 13

Week 17

Dec. 8, 9*, 12

World War I

Reading: Fink, ch. 15 (documents 1 and 7 and third essay)

Final exam: Friday, December 12, 8:00-11:00 am

*The University shall operate on a Friday schedule on Tuesday, December 9. This is done to equalize the class minutes between MWF and TTh classes and to provide an equal number of class meetings for courses that may meet only once per week.