

AMH 2020: American History from 1877 to Present
University of Florida
Department of History
Summer A 2021

Instructor: Kaitlyn Muchnok

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Office Hours: Wednesday 10: 00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. & by appointment

Class Meeting Times: MTWRF, 3:30 P.M. to 4:45 P.M. (Period 6)

Section Number: 01C8 (in person) & 01C7 (virtual)

Room: CBD 0220

Course Description: This survey course covers American history from Reconstruction's end to the present day with an emphasis on the political, intellectual, social, and cultural realms. Many people believe the study of history includes memorizing facts and dates. This information is very important, but it is not the discipline's primary goal. The purpose of studying history is to learn about the past, develop skills in critical thinking, analysis, interpretation of evidence, and academic writing. In general, historians ask specific questions about the past including: What happened? Why did it happen? Does it matter? How does our own personal bias shape our answers to these questions? Learning how to pursue the question-answer part of history will be a central goal of this course.

More specifically, this class will examine how the United States rapidly grew throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, fought two world wars, expanded voting and citizenship rights, fought contentious racial, class, and gender battles, emerged as a world power, and exploded economically. We will pay special attention to the historical themes and issues that remain relevant to today's world. These themes and issues include the meaning of equality, liberty, and freedom, the diversity of the American experience, the meaning of American citizenship, economic, social, and political power, how major conflicts arise, and the roles of race, class, gender, and ethnicity throughout the period. To answer these questions, students will analyze primary source evidence, engage critically with secondary sources written by historians, and work on developing their communication skills via class discussions and written assignments. The goal is to provide students with both a better understanding of America's past and present in a lively, interactive, and thought-provoking way.

Questions we will explore include: What is the proper role of government in economic and social life? To what extent should the government legislate morality regarding religion, sexual practices, drinking, and mass culture? What are the governments duties and responsibilities to citizens? What are citizens duties and responsibilities to one another? Who is a citizen? What does American citizenship mean? How did various generations respond to cultural and political conflicts that arose from the conditions of diversity? How does one's gender, race, ethnicity, religious background, and/or economic status affect their access to liberty, equality, power, and opportunity? What role does violence play in American society? What is the meaning of American freedom, equality, and patriotism?

Required Readings: The following textbooks are required for this course. I encourage you to buy used when possible. Amazon is a great resource for ordering much more affordable copies.

- *American Yawp*, A free online textbook found at: <http://www.americanyawp.com/>
- Lisa McGirr, *The War on Alcohol: Prohibition and the Rise of the American State* (2016)
- Timothy B. Tyson, *The Blood of Emmett Till* (2017)

Course Assignments:

- **Participation** (200 points total)
 - Students are expected to arrive to class on time, silence cell phones, and engage proactively with the course lectures and discussions. To get a high participation grade, students should comment, ask questions, or respond to fellow classmates during Wednesday & Friday's discussion sessions. While we will not have weekly quizzes, it is expected that students demonstrate they've done the required weekly readings through their engagement in discussion. Discussion-based classes will be held for all students over Zoom on Wednesdays and Fridays.
- **Perusall Primary Source Readings & Responses** (200 points total)

Each week, students will read a series of primary sources in addition to the assigned course materials. Using the Perusall function found in the left-side column on Canvas, students will access the weekly sources, read them, and post comments about the material. **Comments should be analytical and critical in nature.** Students should not summarize or respond with simplistic reactions. Students are encouraged to evaluate each source, question and recognize the author's assumptions, biases, and credibility, and discuss what each source can and cannot tell us about the topic at hand. It is also encouraged for students to engage with one another; students should respond to the comments of other classmates or ask questions the instructor will pose during Friday's discussion. Polite debate and disagreement is encouraged. For more of an explanation of what is expected, see the course E-Learning page. All Perusall primary source readings will be due each Tuesday by midnight.
- **4 Written Responses** (200 points total/50 points each)
 - Students will complete weekly written exercises due every Thursday by midnight (with the exception of the weeks book reviews are due.) The activities will be provided at the beginning of each week and range from primary source analyses, information literacy reviews, creative historical writing exercises, to the preparation of class discussion questions. All written responses are due Thursday by midnight.
- **2 Book Reviews** (200 points total/100 points each)
 - Students will complete book reviews on both monographs assigned in this course: Timothy Tyson's *The Blood of Emmett Till* and Lisa McGirr's *The War on Alcohol*. Each book review should explain the author's main arguments and evaluate how effective and compelling their conclusions and claims are. Each review should be between 4 to 5 pages in length, double-spaced, in Times New Roman, 12 point font, with 1 inch margins. Book review one is due Thursday, May 27th by midnight and book review two is due Thursday June 10th by midnight.

- **Final Exam** (200 points)
 - During the last week of the semester, students will complete a take home final exam. The format will be discussed more over the course of the semester.

Attendance Policy: Attendance is essential to your learning experience. Attendance will be taken every class meeting day. You are permitted **three** unexcused absences without penalty. The fourth unexcused absence will result in a drop of your overall grade by half a letter grade (for example, instead of receiving a B+ you would receive a B). Each additional absence will result in an additional half letter decrease in your grade. Please note that if you plan on using an unexcused absence, you do not need to email me to let me know. However, if your absence fits with in the university’s established acceptable excuses, please communicate with me via email to let me know you will miss class.

Late Assignments: Late assignments will receive a reduced grade. An assignment is considered late as soon as the designated time has passed. For example, if the paper is due at 12pm, the paper is considered late at 12:01 pm. The University policy on make up assignments, lateness, and attendance issues can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

Communication Policy: Students should communicate with the instructor primarily through email, office hour visits, or appointments made by student requests. Please use kaitlynmuchnok@ufl.edu to contact me during regular business hours. I generally stop checking emails after 7:00pm so please reach out to me earlier in the day with urgent questions and issues. Additionally, students must regularly check the course’s E-Learning page for assignment updates, links to required readings, and course announcements.

Additionally, throughout the course, discussion sections and lectures can include sensitive and controversial topics. It is expected that students come to class with an open mind, prepared to engage with complicated issues and questions and listen to classmates’ perspectives that may differ from their own. Thoughtful, honest, and evidence-based points of view are crucial for productive conversations and learning. To ensure that everyone feels respected, please refrain from personal attacks and offensive remarks. A goal of this class is to emphasize empathy in historical studies, or the ability to understand the feelings or perspective of others, without necessarily sharing their point of view.

UF Grading Scale: Grades will be assigned according to the follow university grading scale.

A	93-100		A-	90-92	
B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
D+	68-69	D	66-67	D-	64-65
F	<64				

Academic Honesty: UF policy requires you to access and use your gatorlink account. Excuses regarding not reading emails will not be accepted. Additionally, academic dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism, or submitting someone else's work without citing them will not be tolerated. UF's honor code can be found here: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>.

Disability Information: Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting the accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Student Evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Lecture, Discussion, & Assignment Schedule:

Each week will be divided into lecture and discussion classes. To facilitate participation between virtual and in-person sections, Wednesday & Friday classes will be held over zoom for all students. Moreover, each week, all Perusall activities should be completed by Tuesday at midnight, while all writing exercises should be completed by Thursday at midnight.

Week One

- May 10: Course Introduction & Syllabus Overview
- May 11: READ: American Yawp CH. 16 & 17, "Capital & Labor" & "Conquering the West"
- May 12-14: READ: American Yawp, Ch. 18, "Life in Industrial America"

Week Two

- May 17-18: READ: American Yawp, Ch. 19, "American Empire" & McGirr *The War on Alcohol* pg. xii-66.
- May 19-21: READ: American Yawp, Ch. 20, "The Progressive Era" & McGirr *The War on Alcohol* pg. 67-120.

Week Three

May 24-25: READ: American Yawp, Ch. 21 & Ch. 22, “World War I & Its Aftermath” & “The New Era” & McGirr *The War on Alcohol*, pg. 121-188.

May 26-28: READ: American Yawp, Ch. 23, “The Great Depression” & McGirr *The War on Alcohol*, pg. 189-255.

Week Four

May 31: **NO CLASS!! Memorial Day!!**

June 1-2: READ: American Yawp Ch. 24, “World War II”

June 3-4: READ: American Yawp Ch. 25, “The Cold War” & Tyson *The Blood of Emmett Till* pg. 1-55.

Week Five

June 7-8: READ: American Yawp Ch. 26, “The Affluent Society” & Tyson *The Blood of Emmett Till*, pg. 56 -135

June 9-11: READ: American Yawp, Ch. 27, “The Sixties” & Tyson *The Blood of Emmett Till* pg. 136 -218.

Week Six:

June 14-15: READ: American Yawp, Ch. 28, “The Unraveling,” & Ch. 29, “The Triumph of the Right”

June 16-18: READ: American Yawp, Ch. 30, “The Recent Past”