



*An unknown man in Dubuque, Iowa during the Great Depression (1940)*

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Office Hours: Wednesdays from 1-3 pm via Google Meet or by appointment

## Course Description

The goal of history is to tell true stories about the past. Truth depends on evidence but stories rely on interpretation.

What is the “true story” of modern America? In this class, we will study the history of the United States since Reconstruction to formulate an answer.

We will focus on three key questions to guide us. How and why did American ideas and institutions about democracy and capitalism change since Reconstruction? How did war—from the aftermath of the Civil War to Vietnam—propel social, cultural, and economic change in American society and foreign policy? When and how did the United States become something “modern”?

Although the purpose of history is to tell true stories, it is also about developing skills in critical thinking, effective communication, and time management. Additionally, since this course satisfies the Social and Behavioral Sciences, Civic Literacy, and Diversity requirements, students

will be held to a standard that places a premium on well-developed arguments, nuanced use of qualitative and quantitative evidence, as well as clear and forceful writing.

Note: I reserve the right to alter the syllabus if necessary.

## **Course Format**

This course will be face-to-face but utilize online tools such as Canvas and Perusall in an attempt to make the class accessible, engaging, and, hopefully, fun.

Monday through Thursday we will meet at the scheduled class time for lecture. On Fridays, we will meet for a discussion period, highlighting a key theme from the week using assigned primary sources and other material.

We will use Canvas for class communication as well as to submit most assignments. However, I will host office hours on Google Meet.

## **Required Reading**

Selected primary sources and other material via Canvas

Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States*

Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*

## **Optional Reading**

I recommend reading the textbook chapters to reinforce the lectures as well as aid in studying for the midterm and completing other assignments. *The American Yawp* is a free, open-source textbook:

[\*The American Yawp: A Massively Collaborative Open U.S. History Textbook, Vol. II: Since 1877\*](#)

## **Assignments and Grading**

Check-In Videos (10%)

Attendance & Participation (10%)

Canvas Posts (15%)

Book Review, *How to Hide an Empire* (15%)

Midterm (25%)

Final Project (25%)

Check-In Videos: In relatively short videos, students will reflect on course themes as well as update me on final project progress. [Click here for details on how to record video assignments in Canvas.](#)

**Attendance & Participation:** The participation grade will be calculated based on attendance and engagement. For each lecture and discussion section, attendance will be mandatory. If students are not in class, their absence will be considered unexcused unless they have communicated with me about their absence. In this class, students are allowed one unexcused absence. Additional unexcused absences will result in a 2% deduction from the participation grade, which is worth 10% of the final grade. Please see the attendance policy below for additional detail. Meaningful and thoughtful engagement in class discussion and through Perusall is also expected.

**Canvas Posts (CPs):** Due on Sundays, students will write three CPs, responding to a prompt on Canvas related to assigned primary sources, required readings, and lectures. Students will not be expected to reply to each other like a discussion thread.

**Book Review:** The book review will offer students the opportunity to assess and analyze a self-contained piece of historical work—in this case, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States*—that meaningfully engages with course themes. Guidelines for the book review will be provided during the course.

**Midterm:** The midterm will be take-home, essay-based, and open-note. Consequently, students can use lecture notes, *The American Yawp*, and primary source material as long as appropriate citations are provided. I will provide additional guidance on citations during the course.

**Final Project Assignment:** Each student will select their own topic for historical research within the parameters of the course content and formulate their own historical question. In a ten to fifteen minute pre-recorded video presentation, each student will articulate a clear thesis that answers their historical question and substantiates their argument with evidence presented in a clear and concise way. In other words, everyone will compose their own mini-lecture!

## **Grading Scale**

A: 90-100    B+: 87-89.9    B: 80-86.9    C+: 77-79.9    C: 70-76.9  
D+: 67-69.9    D: 60-66.9    E: Below 60

## **Attendance Policy**

Given the pace of the class, attendance is mandatory to ensure high participation and that no one falls behind. However, I understand that students might face unique problems as we transition back to in person classes and I am willing to be flexible. **But I absolutely expect communication. Students must communicate with me if they will be unable to attend any course sessions and I will seek reasonable accommodation. If a student did not attend and I**

**have no record of communication either before or during a course session, that student's absence will be considered unexcused. In short, communicate. Otherwise, participate.**

Attendance in each section will be recorded randomly either at the beginning or end of class. Students are allowed one unexcused absence. Each additional unexcused absence will result in a 2% reduction in their attendance grade. Students with more than five unexcused absences will fail the course.

UF's official attendance and make-up policies can be found here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

### **Late Work**

All late work will be penalized 1/2 a letter grade for each day it is late unless otherwise excused by me. Missed exams cannot be made up unless students have a university excused absence and I am notified beforehand. If you have an unforeseen emergency, please contact me as soon as possible so adjustments can be made as needed.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students requesting classroom accommodations must first register with the Dean of Students Office (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting an accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

### **Academic Honesty**

The university and your instructor values and expects academic integrity. Ethical violations including cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and academic misconduct such as turning in the work of others as your own or reusing old assignments will not be tolerated. Such violations will result in a failure of the assignment, the risk of an automatic failing grade in the course, and possible expulsion from UF. To avoid plagiarism, you must not copy the words, phrases, arguments, ideas, or conclusions of another person or source including internet sources without properly crediting the person or source with both quotation marks and a footnote or parenthetical citation. Make sure that you properly cite direct quotations, paraphrased information, and facts that are not widely known. I will provide you with guidelines for proper citations and formatting prior to your submission of all written work, but you may contact me at any time for clarification. For more information on UF's academic honesty policy, see:

<http://regulations.ufl.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2018/06/4.040-1.pdf>

For more information on how UF's Judicial Affairs processes cases of plagiarism, see:  
<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/appeal-process/>

## Course Schedule

### Week One, June 28-July 2

*Reconstruction and the Gilded Age, 1870s-1890s*

Lectures & Discussion Section

Monday—Reforging a Nation: The Civil War and Its Aftermath

Tuesday—American Westworld

Wednesday—On the Move: Immigration in the Gilded Age

Thursday—Beauty and Brutality in a Pound of Steel

Friday Discussion—For and Against in the Gilded Age

READ: Primary sources for Friday discussion section & *How to Hide an Empire*, ch. 1-7

OPTIONAL: *American Yawp*, chapters 16-18

DUE: Video Check-In #1 & Canvas Post #1

### Week Two, July 5-9

*The Progressive Era and World War I, 1900-1920*

Lectures & Discussion Section

Monday—Making Liberalism Modern in a Progressive Era

Tuesday—Progressive Politics: Women's Suffrage and Temperance

Wednesday—American Empire

Thursday—A Peace to End All Peace: The Aftermath of World War I

Friday Discussion—Patriotism and World War I

READ: Primary sources for Friday discussion section & *How to Hide an Empire*, ch. 8-15

OPTIONAL: *American Yawp*, chapters 19-21

DUE: Video Check-In # 2 & Canvas Post #2

### Week Three, July 12-16

*The 1920s and the Origins of the Great Depression, 1920-1931*

Lectures

Monday—The Not-So-Great Gatsby 1920s

Tuesday—A Consumer Revolution, A Sort-of-Sexual Revolution

Wednesday—The Acids of Modernity

Thursday—The 1929 Crash and the Origins of the Great Depression

Friday—No Discussion Section. Study for Midterm.

READ: Finish *How to Hide an Empire*, ch. 16-conclusion. Study for Midterm.

OPTIONAL: *American Yawp*, ch. 22

DUE: Midterm

### **Week Four, July 19-23**

*The New Deal and World War II, 1931-1945*

Lectures & Discussion Section

Monday—The American People in the Great Depression

Tuesday—What Did the New Deal Do?

Wednesday—The Clouds Gather: The United States on the Eve of World War II

Thursday—A War of Many Fronts

Friday Discussion—The Good War?

READ: Primary sources for Friday discussion section & *The Things They Carried*, pgs. 1-81

OPTIONAL: *American Yawp*, chapters 23-24

DUE: Video Check-In #3 & *How to Hide an Empire* Book Review

### **Week Five, July 26-30**

*The 1950s and the Cold War*

Lectures & Discussion Section

Monday—Cold Warriors in a Suburban Nation

Tuesday—Civil Rights Movement and the Black Freedom Struggle

Wednesday—Vietnam War

Thursday—Countercultures: the New Left and the New Right

Friday Discussion—The Vietnam Syndrome

READ: Primary sources for Friday discussion section & finish *The Things They Carried*

OPTIONAL: *American Yawp*, chapters 25-27

DUE: Canvas Post #3

### **Week Six, August 2-6**

*From Nixon to 9/11*

Lectures & Discussion Section

Monday—Pivotal Decade: the 1970s

Tuesday—The Reagan Revolution

Wednesday—The 1990s and Beyond

Thursday—Final Reflections

Friday—Final Project Due

OPTIONAL: *American Yawp*, chapters 25-27

DUE: Video Check-In #4 & Final Project Assignment

## **Social and Behavioral Sciences, Civic Literacy, and Diversity Credit**

AMH 2020 satisfies the Social and Behavioral Science Gen-Ed Credit at the University of Florida. The social and behavioral sciences provide instruction in the key themes, principles and terminology, underlying theory, and/or methodologies used in the social and behavioral sciences. You will learn to identify, describe and explain social institutions, structures and processes. This course emphasizes the effective application of accepted problem-solving techniques as well as the evaluation of opinions and outcomes.

Additionally, this course fulfills the Civic Literacy requirement. This class will engage in political discussions and civil debates with multiple points of view to master the ability to synthesize information that informs civic decision making. In particular, Friday discussion sections will hone in on these issues with historical context in mind.

This course also satisfies the Diversity Gen-Ed Credit at the University of Florida. Diversity courses provide instruction in the values, attitudes and norms that create cultural differences within the United States. This course will encourage you to recognize how social roles and status affect different groups and impact U.S. society. This course will guide you to analyze and to evaluate your own cultural norms and values in relation to those of other cultures, and to distinguish opportunities and constraints faced by other persons and groups.

### **Student Learning Outcomes For Social and Behavioral Sciences and Diversity: Content and Skills**

Category	Content	Critical Thinking	Communication
<b>Social and Behavioral Sciences</b>	<p>Know key themes, principles and terminology within that discipline.</p> <p>Know the history, theory and/or methodologies used within that discipline.</p> <p>Identify, describe and explain social institutions, structures and processes within that discipline.</p>	<p>Apply formal and informal qualitative and/or quantitative analysis effectively to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions.</p> <p>Assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.</p>	<p>Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively in forms appropriate to the discipline, individually and in groups.</p>
<b>Diversity</b>	<p>Know the roles of social structure and status of different groups within the United States.</p>	<p>Analyze and evaluate your own cultural norms and values in relation to those of other cultures.</p> <p>Identify, evaluate and compare your own social status, opportunities and constraints with those of other persons and groups.</p>	<p>The diversity designation is always in conjunction with another category; Communication outcomes are listed in those categories.</p>