



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

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Office Hours: Tuesdays from 12:30-2:30 pm in Keene-Flint 222 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 from the Civil War to the present to formulate an answer.

We will focus on three key questions to guide us. How and why have American ideas about democracy, freedom, and capitalism undergone change since the Civil War, and how has this affected American institutions? 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.

On Tuesdays, we will meet for class lectures. On Thursdays, we will meet to discuss assigned primary sources and other material.

We will use Canvas for class communication as well as to submit most assignments. I will host office hours—an opportunity for students to meet with me to brainstorm, discuss issues related to the course, or simply to chat—in Keene-Flint 222.

Required Reading

Selected primary sources and other material via Canvas

John Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century*

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 (5%)

Participation: Perusall & Pop Quizzes (10%)

Canvas Posts (15%)

Book Review, *How to Hide an Empire* (20%)

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.](#)

Participation: The participation grade will be calculated based on two things: quality of engagement with primary sources via Perusall as well as unannounced pop quizzes.

Perusall is a platform that allows students to analyze assigned primary sources individually and collectively, which hopefully will encourage discussion outside of class. Students will be assessed primarily on the quality of their engagement with assigned sources and with each other. For guidance on analyzing primary sources, refer to the [6 C's of primary source analysis](#). Additionally, unannounced pop quizzes will also be used to assess participation. Any class meeting is fair game for a pop quiz. There will be a total of six pop quizzes, and I will drop the lowest quiz grade.

Canvas Posts (CPs): 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: 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

Additional detail on UF's general grading policies can be found [here](#).

Attendance Policy

This course does not have a mandatory attendance policy. This is intended to give students flexibility, especially given recent uncertainty. With that being said, there is a meaningful correlation between

attendance and overall success in a course, and this course is no different. Much of the material to complete required assignments will come directly from lectures and discussion sections.

In general, I am happy to be flexible but expect communication. In other words, I will not provide students make-up material unless they have communicated with me about their absence or provide a documented excuse. In short, communicate. Otherwise, attend and participate.

UF's general attendance and make-up policies can be found [here](#).

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 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 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. More information about UF's academic honesty policy can be found [here](#).

In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student

Course Schedule

Week One, August 23-27

Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861-1877

Lecture & Discussion Section

Tuesday Lecture—Reforging a Nation: The Civil War and Reconstruction

Thursday Discussion—The Meanings of War and Reconstruction

READ: Assigned Primary Sources

OPTIONAL: *The American Yawp*, ch. 14-15

DUE: Video Check-In #1—What is *American* history to you?

Week Two, August 30-September 3

The Gilded Age, 1870s-1890s

Lecture & Discussion Section

Tuesday Lecture—Beauty and Brutality in a Pound of Steel: A Gilded Age Overview

Thursday Discussion—For and Against in the Gilded Age
READ: *Amusing the Million*, pgs. 1-57 & Assigned Primary Sources
OPTIONAL: *The American Yawp*, ch. 16-18

Week Three, September 6-10

The Progressive Era, 1890-1920

Lecture & Discussion Section

Tuesday Lecture—The Progressive Era: Making Liberalism Modern

Thursday Discussion—*Amusing the Million*

READ: Finish *Amusing the Million*

OPTIONAL: *The American Yawp*, ch. 19-20

DUE: Canvas Post # 1—What *caused* the (Second) American Industrial Revolution?

Week Four, September 13-17

The Progressive Era & World War I, 1914-1920

Lecture & Discussion Section

Tuesday Lecture—A Peace to End All Peace: World War I and Its Aftermath

Thursday Discussion—Patriotism and World War I

READ: *How to Hide an Empire*, ch. 1-3; Christopher Cappozola, “Responsible Speech: Rights in a Culture of Obligation” from *Uncle Sam Wants You* & Assigned Primary Sources

OPTIONAL: *The American Yawp*, ch. 21.

Week Five, September 20-24

The 1920s

Lecture & Discussion Section

Tuesday Lecture—The Not-So-Great Gatsby 1920s

Thursday Discussion—The Legacies of Prohibition

READ: *How to Hide an Empire*, ch. 4-6; Lisa McGirr, “Building the Penal State” from *The War on Alcohol*

OPTIONAL: *The American Yawp*, ch. 22

DUE: Video Check-In # 2: What is your final project topic?

Week Six, September 27-October 1

The 1920s Contd.

Lecture & Discussion Section

Tuesday Lecture—The Consumer Continuation, A Sort-of-Sexual Revolution

Thursday Discussion—Modernism and Traditionalism Clash: The Scopes-Monkey Trial

READ: *How to Hide an Empire*, ch.7-9 & Assigned Primary Sources

DUE: Canvas Post # 2—Did the United States become “modern” in the 1920s?

Week Seven, October 4-8

The Origins of the Great Depression

Lecture & Discussion Section

Tuesday Lecture—The 1929 Crash and the Origins of the Great Depression

Thursday Discussion—American Life During the Great Depression

READ: *How to Hide an Empire*, ch. 10-12 & Assigned Primary Sources

OPTIONAL: *The American Yawp*, ch. 23

Week Eight, October 11-15

The New Deal, 1930s

Lecture

Tuesday Lecture—What Did the New Deal Do?

No Discussion—Study for Midterm

READ: *How to Hide an Empire*, ch. 13-16

DUE: Take Home Midterm

Week Nine, October 18-22

World War II

Lecture & Discussion Section

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

Thursday Discussion— Why Fascism?

READ: *How to Hide an Empire*, ch. 17-19; Stanley G. Payne, “Elements of a Retrodictive Theory of Fascism” in *A History of Fascism, 1914-1945* & Assigned Primary Sources

OPTIONAL: *The American Yawp*, ch. 24

Week Ten, October 25-29

World War II Contd.

Lecture & Discussion Section

Tuesday Lecture—A War of Many Fronts

Thursday Discussion—The Good War?

READ/LISTEN: *How to Hide an Empire*, ch. 20-Conclusion; *Revisionist History*, “Bombs-Away Lemay” & Assigned Primary Sources

DUE: Video Check-In # 3: What is your historical question? How are you approaching the topic and what is your evidence? Why does it matter?

Week Eleven November 1-5

The 1950s and the Cold War

Lecture & Discussion Section

Tuesday Lecture—Cold Warriors in a Suburban Nation
Thursday Discussion—*How to Hide an Empire*: Republic or Empire or Both?
READ: *The Things They Carried*, pgs. 1-58
OPTIONAL: *The American Yawp*, ch. 25-26
DUE: Book Review, *How to Hide an Empire*

Week Twelve, November 8-12

The Civil Rights Movement

Lecture & Discussion Section

Tuesday Lecture—The Civil Rights Movement and the Black Freedom Struggle
No Discussion—Veterans Day Holiday
READ: *The Things They Carried*, pgs. 59-130
OPTIONAL: *The American Yawp*, ch. 27

Week Thirteen, November 15-19

The Vietnam War

Lecture & Discussion Section

Tuesday Lecture—The Vietnam War
Thursday Discussion—*The Things They Carried*
READ: Finish *The Things They Carried* & Assigned Primary Sources
DUE: Canvas Post # 3: History and Fiction

Week Fourteen, November 22-26

The 1970s

Lecture

Tuesday Lecture—The Pivotal Decade: The 1970s
No Discussion—Thanksgiving Break
OPTIONAL: *The American Yawp*, ch. 28

Week Fifteen, November 29-December 3

The Reagan Era

Lecture & Discussion Section

Tuesday Lecture—The Reagan (R)evolution
Thursday Discussion—A Neoliberal Era?
READ/LISTEN: *Throughline*, “Capitalism: What Makes Us Free?”;
Daniel Altman, “Neoliberalism? It Doesn’t Exist,” *The New York Times*
OPTIONAL: *The American Yawp*, ch. 29
DUE: Video Check-In #4: Three Takeaways

Week Sixteen, December 6-10

The 1990s and Beyond

Tuesday Lecture—The 1990s, 9/11, and Final Thoughts

No Discussion—Reading Days

Final Project Due (December 13-16)

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, Thursday 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
Social and Behavioral Sciences	<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>
Diversity	<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>

Course 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>.