Modern America -- History 12605/22605

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University of Notre Dame, Spring 2010
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Teaching Assistants: Ms. Lauren Nickas Beaupre, Ms. Dixie Dillon, Ms. Nichole George, Mr. Bryce Horswell.

History 10605/20605 offers an introduction to American history from the end of the Civil War to the present.

The course has three goals:

1. Upon completing this semester you will have a reasonably coherent (if partial) interpretation of the recent past of the United States. The lectures will provide the spine of that interpretation and readings and your questions will supplement or challenge it.

2. Through analysis of primary documents and secondary texts, your questions at the end of each class session, the occasional classroom debate, and examinations and papers, you will better understand history as an act of imagination and interpretation, not simply an assemblage of facts.

3. Finally you will see the United States as part of world history. This sounds obvious but hasn’t always been so to those (including myself) who teach the subject or those (you) who study it. Questions that animate this course from this vantage point include the following: how do we compare or contrast the history of the United States with the history of other nations during this same period? What transnational processes better help us understand the history of the United States?

Meetings: M-W, 12:50-1:40pm in DeBartolo 141. Each student also participates in a weekly discussion section. The eight discussion sections meet according to the following schedule:

12605/01 Friday, 12:50-1:40, 113 DeBartolo (Beaupre)
12605/02 Friday, 12:50-1:40, 149 DeBartolo (Dillon)
12605/03 Friday, 12:50-1:40, 143 DeBartolo (George)
12605/04 Friday, 10:40-11:30, 113 DeBartolo (Horswell)
12605/05 Friday, 11:45-12:35, 113 DeBartolo (Beaupre)
12605/06 Friday, 1:55-2:45, 113 DeBartolo (George)
22605/01 Friday, 12:50-1:40, 302 DeBartolo (Horswell)
22605/02 Friday, 11:45-12:35, 149 DeBartolo (Dillon)
Requirements: Discussion Sections are an integral part of the course. Preparation for, and participation in, the weekly section meetings is mandatory. (This will frequently include short responses to the readings). Teaching assistants will give each student a separate grade (20% of the final grade) for class participation. The Midterm will be in-class on March 3, 2010. (20%). Three graded essays are due over the course of the term. (The first two essays are worth 10% of the final grade; the final essay is worth 20%) One additional short essay will discuss James Carroll’s memoir and the Trial of the Catonsville 9 theater performance. The Final Examination (20%) will be cumulative.

Policies: I do not take attendance at lectures but it is to your advantage to attend. All material in the lectures and the readings is fair game for exams and papers. I do expect punctuality. Be on time for class. Attendance is required at discussion sections and the teaching assistants will note your presence (or absence). Unexcused absences will lower your discussion grade. The teaching assistants will accept late papers only in unusual circumstances – death in the family, serious health problems etc. Absent these circumstances, late papers will be docked a letter grade per day.

I take the honor code seriously and will turn over violators to the appropriate departmental and university committees. I am happy to use turnitin.com It is foolish as well as unethical to violate the honor code for an assignment or examination. If you have questions about how to cite a source in a paper, or any honor-code related question, contact me or the teaching assistants.

Grading Standards for essays:

The D or F paper

The D or F paper either has no thesis or else it has one that is strikingly vague, broad, or uninteresting. There is little indication that the writer understands the material being presented. The paragraphs do not hold together; ideas do not develop from sentence to sentence. This paper usually repeats the same thoughts again and again, perhaps in slightly different language but often in the same words. The D or F paper is filled with mechanical faults, errors in grammar, and errors in spelling.

The C Paper.

The C paper has a thesis, but it is vague and broad, or else it is uninteresting or obvious. It does not advance an argument that anyone might care to debate. "Henry James wrote some interesting novels." "Modern cities are interesting places."

The thesis in the C paper often hangs on some personal opinion. If the writer is a recognized authority, such an expression of personal taste may be noteworthy, but writers gain authority not merely by expressing their tastes but by justifying them. Personal opinion is often the engine that drives an argument, but opinion by itself is never
sufficient. It must be defended.

The C paper rarely uses evidence well; sometimes it does not use evidence at all. Even if it has a clear and interesting thesis, a paper with insufficient supporting evidence is a C paper.

The C paper often has mechanical faults, errors in grammar and spelling, but please note: a paper without such flaws may still be a C paper.

The B Paper.

The reader of a B paper knows exactly what the author wants to say. It is well organized, it presents a worthwhile and interesting idea, and the idea is supported by sound evidence presented in a neat and orderly way. Some of the sentences may not be elegant, but they are clear, and in them thought follows naturally on thought. The paragraphs may be unwieldy now and then, but they are organized around one main idea. The reader does not have to read a paragraph two or three times to get the thought that the writer is trying to convey.

The B paper is always mechanically correct. The spelling is good, and the punctuation is accurate. Above all, the paper makes sense throughout. It has a thesis that is limited and worth arguing. It does not contain unexpected digressions, and it ends by keeping the promise to argue and inform that the writer makes in the beginning.

The A Paper.

The A paper has all the good qualities of the B paper, but in addition it is lively, well paced, interesting, even exciting. The paper has style. Everything in it seems to fit the thesis exactly. It may have a proofreading error or two, or even a misspelled word, but the reader feels that these errors are the consequence of the normal accidents all good writers encounter. Reading the paper, we can feel a mind at work. We are convinced that the writer cares for his or her ideas, and about the language that carries them.

The sure mark of an A paper is that you will find yourself telling someone else about it.

**These grading standards are adapted from the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning at Harvard University.**

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**Books** -- required and available at the Notre Dame bookstore. All books are on reserve at Hesburgh Library. 2nd Floor.

James Carroll, *An American Requiem: God, My Father and the War that Came Between Us*, (Boston, 1995).


Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project at [http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/](http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/)


The following articles are available as either handouts or online


Class Sessions:

1. Wednesday, January 13: Introduction, 1848-1861

2. Monday, January 18: The War

3. Wednesday, January 20: The War and Reconstruction [Classroom Debate]

**Section (Friday January 22):** Bender, 116-181; Lincoln, 30-35, 50-54, 72-80, 200-217, 320-333.

4. Monday, January 25: Nation, Labor and Populism

5. Wednesday, January 27: Cities and Professions

**Section (Friday January 29):** Rauchway, 1-150.

6. Monday, February 1: Progressivism I

7. Wednesday, February 3: Progressivism II (Muller v. Oregon debate)

**Section (Friday February 5):** Bender, 246-296 Essay #1 due

8. Monday, February 8: Empire

9. Wednesday, February 10: Progressive Arts?

**The Trial of the Catonsville 9, DeBartolo Performing Arts Center. Attendance is mandatory. Performances Thursday, 7pm February 11; Friday 7pm February 12; Saturday, 7:30pm February 13.**

**Section (Friday February 12):** Carroll

10. Monday, February 15: Three page response due on Catonsville 9/Carroll (pass/fail) Belief

11. Wednesday, February 17: 1920s and consumption

**Section (Friday February 19):** Orsi

12. Monday, February 22: Depression and First New Deal
13. Wednesday, February 24: Second New Deal and modern liberalism [classroom debate]

**Section (Friday February 26):** Goodman, 3-229.

14. Monday, March 1: World War II abroad

15. Wednesday, March 3: **Midterm**

**Section (Friday March 5):** Dower, *War Without Mercy*; Disney cartoon

**Spring Break**

16. Monday, March 15: World War II at Home

17. Wednesday, March 17: Postwar

**Section (Friday March 19):** Westbrook, 3-91. Also see http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adaccess/browse/war/


19. Wednesday, March 24: 1950s culture

**Section (Friday March 26):** Gaddis, 1-194, Judt

20. Monday, March 29: Migration and Suburbanization

21. Wednesday, March 31: Social Movements and the 1960s **Essay #2 due**

**Easter**

22. Wednesday, April 7: Vietnam

**Section (Friday April 9):** Martin Luther King Jr. Papers Project. Selections from documents and videos available at http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/

24. Monday, April 12: Modern Conservativism

25. Wednesday, April 14: The 1970s

**Section:** Tannenhaus; Goldwater


27. Wednesday, April 21: September 11, 2001 and beyond
Section (Friday April 23): Bush; Obama

28. Monday, April 26: Age of Obama or Age of WalMart?

Essay #3 Due.

Final Examination Wednesday, May 5, 2010, 8-10am.