DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to major ideas, events, and personalities in the history of the United States from the end of Reconstruction (1877) to the present. Throughout the semester, students will be challenged to ask and answer questions based upon the themes of identity, liberty, equality, change, progress, and power in recent American history. Some examples include: What does it mean to be an American (Identity)? What does it mean to be free (Liberty)? What accounts for the differences in the quality of life among various groups in our country (Equality)? Is America getting closer to or farther from the ideals it expresses (Change/Progress)? What constitute moral and immoral uses of America’s strength and influence (Power)?

GOALS

In this class, the instructor will work to help students develop and/or refine a number of skills. The first is the ability to craft and articulate well-reasoned arguments. The second is the ability to follow major current events and trace their origins back to relevant historical antecedents in the nation’s recent past. The third is the ability to produce effective study/review materials. The fourth is the ability to write concise short answer responses under time constraints. The fifth is the ability to recognize basic grammatical concepts that are essential to historical writing.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXT


Note: Older and/or unabridged editions of Alan Brinkley’s textbook (ex: American History: A Survey. Volume 2) will generally contain the same essential information. However, it is the student’s responsibility to make sure that he or she follows the correct order of reading whenever there are inconsistencies between the chapter titles of different editions.
GRADING

Classroom Participation (10%)  
Attendance is mandatory. Students should come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings and answer questions pertaining to the material. Students will also be evaluated through unannounced pop quizzes and in-class writing assignments.

Historical Writing Grammar Skills Tests (10%)  
In lieu of a term paper, students will take two tests that examine their mastery of grammar skills that are essential to historical writing. Each test will be worth 5% of the total grade.

Study Guide Assignments (20%)  
Students will develop study guides to help them prepare for the midterm and final examinations. Each study guide will be worth 10% of the total grade. The instructor will provide further instructions.

Midterm Examination (30%)  
This test will consist of short answers/IDs.

Final Examination (30%)  
Like the midterm, this test will consist of short answers/IDs.

MAKE-UP TESTS

Make-up tests will only be granted if the student provides an excuse approved by the instructor. Examples of acceptable excuses include a coach’s letter or a doctor’s note.

FORMAT FOR WRITTEN WORK

Write your full name, course number, section number, and the date on ALL written work you submit to the instructor.

All homework assignments must be typed. Use 12-point font and double-spacing.

FORMAT FOR QUIZZES/TESTS

Use a black or blue pen for in-class tests and quizzes. Write in print/manuscript format; DO NOT write in cursive. Short answers/IDs must be completed on blank, college ruled paper.

HONOR CODE EXPECTATIONS

Students should make sure to understand and strictly follow the standards of the university’s Honor Code as outlined in the Student Handbook. Cheating and plagiarism constitute violations of the Honor Code.
The Student Handbook defines cheating as: “using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids.” It defines plagiarism as “representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own. Direct quotations must be indicated and ideas of another must be appropriately acknowledged.”

SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Please submit an official Student Accommodations Report (SAR) to the instructor if the Office of Accessibility Services has authorized you to receive special assistance during regular class meetings and/or test dates. For testing purposes, appropriate arrangements will be made in accordance with the following procedures outlined by the Office of Accessibility Services:

Most special needs students “are entitled to 1.5 time on all tests in classes in which they have presented their Student Accommodations Report (SAR) to their professor and made advance arrangements with their professor for this extra time per test…Students have two options for receiving testing accommodations. They can make arrangements directly with their professor or test at the Learning Support and Testing Center.”

LECTURE RECORDING POLICY

Students are NOT permitted to record the instructor’s lectures. Exceptions will be made for students who submit a Student Accommodations Report (SAR) that explicitly requests permission to create recordings.

EXTRA CREDIT

Periodic extra credit opportunities will be available. They may include current events quizzes and written reports on academic events/activities approved by the instructor.

CURRENT EVENTS DISCUSSIONS

At the beginning of each class meeting, there will be a discussion period during which the class will work to compare and contrast historical events with current events.

Please come prepared to share at least one current event every class meeting. Your current event must come from a news report aired or published by a credible, professional news organization (e.g.: PBS NewsHour, New York Times, Atlanta Journal-Constitution, or Times-Georgian). Acceptable current events topics include: politics, sports, entertainment, business, technology/science, and international affairs.

Each current events discussion will begin with the stories shared by volunteers. After that, the instructor might begin “cold-calling” students from the roll. Be prepared for the instructor to ask you follow-up questions about the current events you share. Your fellow classmates might have some follow-up questions for you, as well.

Make sure you watch the news, read newspapers, read online news articles, and come to class ready to talk. Your performance during the current events discussion will be part of your participation grade.
IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common.Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES*

*Note: Students are expected to complete the assigned readings **BEFORE** the dates they appear on the class schedule. Please come to class ready to discuss the contents of the chapters. The instructor might ask you oral questions or administer pop quizzes.

COURSE INTRODUCTION
August 24

WRITING AND STUDY TIPS
August 26

THE POSTBELLUM SOUTH, NADIR, AND CLOSING OF THE FRONTIER
Ch 15 “Reconstruction and the New South”
Ch 16 “The Conquest of the Far West”
September 2
**Quiz #1: Homestead Act of 1862, Fourteenth Amendment, Fifteenth Amendment, and the Battle of Little Bighorn**

LABOR DAY HOLIDAY/NO CLASS MEETING
September 7

INDUSTRIALIZATION, URBANIZATION, AND IMMIGRATION
Ch 17 “Industrial Supremacy”
Ch 18 “The Age of the City”
September 9, September 14

DISCUSSION OF “THE DISADVANTAGES OF AN ELITE EDUCATION” ESSAY
September 16

IMPERIALISM AND PROGRESSIVISM
Ch 19 “From Crisis to Empire”
Ch 20 “The Progressives”
September 21, September 23, September 28

WWI AND THE ROARING TWENTIES
Ch 21 “America and the Great War”
Ch 22 “The New Era”
September 30

AN ECONOMY IN TURMOIL AND RISE OF FDR
Ch 23 “The Great Depression”
Ch 24 “The New Deal”
October 5
MID-SEMESTER SUMMARY/REVIEW  
October 7 (First Study Guide Due), October 12

MIDTERM EXAM/HISTORICAL WRITING GRAMMAR SKILLS TEST #1  
October 14

NOTE: Wednesday, October 14 is the last day to withdraw with a grade of “W.”

WWII AND THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA  
Ch 25 “The Global Crisis, 1921-1941”  
Ch 26 “America in a World at War”  
October 19, October 21, October 26

THE LIBERAL CONSENSUS, MILITARY INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, COLD WAR, AND GROWING MIDDLE CLASS  
Ch 27 “The Cold War”  
Ch 28 “The Affluent Society”  
October 28, November 2

THE “SECOND RECONSTRUCTION,” ‘NAM, AND GREAT SOCIETY  
Ch 29 “Civil Rights, Vietnam, and the Ordeal of Liberalism”  
Ch 30 “The Crisis of Authority”  
Ch 31 “From ‘The Age of Limits’ to the Age of Reagan”  
November 4, November 9, November 11, November 16, November 18

THANKSGIVING RECESS  
November 23-29

END-OF-THE SEMESTER SUMMARY/REVIEW  
November 30 (Second Study Guide Due), December 2

FINAL EXAM/HISTORICAL WRITING GRAMMAR SKILLS TEST #2  
Wednesday, December 9, 2:00-4:30 p.m.