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HIST 104: America since 1865

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History 104: American History Since 1877

Queens College

Spring Semester 2023 Section 104-009 (Class Number 33124)

Tuesday/Thursdays from 9:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Room: Powdermaker 156

Instructor: Douglas Manson

Instructor's Office: Powdermaker 352-T

Office Hours: Drop in, no appointment needed on Tuesdays 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Contact information: dmanson@qc.cuny.edu

Textbook:

Locke, Joseph L. and Ben Wright, eds. *The American Yawp: A Massively Collaborative Open U.S. History Textbook. Volume 2, Since 1877*. Stanford UP, 2019.

This textbook is available for free at: www.americanyawp.com

Print copies can be purchased at this site. A print copy is optional, though often useful.

Course Description: This course surveys the social, political, economic, cultural, and intellectual history of the United States from the Reconstruction era to the present. HIST104 examines industrialization, immigration, world wars, the Great Depression, Cold War and post-Cold War eras. Themes addressed in this course include: American culture, religion, civil and human rights, technological change, economic change, immigration and migration, urbanization and suburbanization, the expansion of the federal government, and the study of U.S. foreign policy.

Learning Objectives: The Queens College General Education Statement notes that this course satisfies the U.S. Experience in its Diversity (USED) requirements of the CUNY-wide Pathways General Education Flexible Core. The Flexible Core requires that

1. Student will gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view on U.S. History
2. Students evaluate evidence and arguments about historical events critically or analytically.
3. Students will produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

USED objectives added to the Core are that

4. Students will be able to identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods needed to explore the U.S. experience in its diversity in the disciplinary field of history.
5. Students will analyze and explain one or more major themes of U.S. history from more than one informed perspective.
6. Students will evaluate how indigenous populations, slavery, or immigration have shaped the development of the United States.
7. Students will explain and evaluate the role of the United States in international relations.

8. Students will identify and differentiate among the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government and analyze their influence on the development of U.S. democracy.
9. Students will analyze and discuss common institutions or patterns of life in contemporary U.S. society and how they influence, or are influenced by, race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, belief, or other forms of social differentiation.

Course Requirements:

There is a **reading assignment** for each class meeting, be sure to have completed the reading listed for that day before our session starts, and review the discussion questions listed for that reading. There is a **midterm and a final exam**. You will also complete **2 (two) formal essays**. There will be occasional **written discussion reflections, and quizzes, which require attendance to complete**. If you miss a quiz or discussion reflection, it cannot be made up. They are part of your attendance and participation grade. Finally, once this semester you will **lead a discussion** on one of the questions listed in the calendar. You are not providing an answer to this question, you are guiding the class to answer the question together. Find **THREE** things that are needed to answer this question. These can be described from the following topics: the political context, the social and cultural context, the economic context, or the particular positions involved in the events or trends that are in question. Your job is to inform the class on what is needed to answer the question, and then to invite your classmates to begin answering the question. You also need to develop an additional question on your own—this should be a historical question (about context, causes, or competing ideas). It should **NOT** be a question with a yes or no answer, or a “now & then” comparison between the present and the past, though you may ask how effectively an issue or crisis was resolved, or why the problem wasn’t addressed fully.

COURSE CALENDAR: (NOTE: Calendar is subject to revision and change at any time)
Be sure to complete the reading from *The American Yawp* listed for each class meeting, and attend sessions ready to discuss the questions posted for each day. Quizzes are not announced, and will be based on the reading assigned for that day.

Thurs. Jan. 26: Course Introduction. Key Persons and Events in American History before 1877

Tues. Jan. 31: “Capital and Labor” (Vol. 2, Chapter 16, Sections I-IV)

- How did industrialization remake the American economy?
- How did industrialization affect American workers?
- How did Social Darwinism shape many Americans’ attitudes toward inequality?
- How did American workers attempt to improve their conditions?

Thurs. Feb. 2: “Capitol and Labor” (Chapter 16, Sections V-VIII), “The West” (Chapter 17, Sections I-IV)

- How did workers’ and farmers’ movements shape American politics?
- What role did immigration play in industrialization?

- What caused settlers to migrate to the West after the Civil War?
- What caused the so-called “Indian Wars”?

Tues. Feb. 7: “The West” (Vol. 2, Chapter 17, Sections V-VIII)

- How would you describe the changes in the American West after Reconstruction?
- What obstacles confronted independent Native Americans after Reconstruction?
- How did technology shape the West?
- What can the Turner thesis teach us about the late nineteenth century United States?

Thurs. Feb. 9: “Life in Industrial America” (Vol. 2, Chapter 18, Sections I-III)

- How did the United States become a mature industrial society from 1870-1900?
- How did the era of industrialization transform the American way of life?
- How did immigrant communities form and support themselves?
- How did Chicago represent industrial America?

Tues. Feb. 14: “Life in Industrial America”, Sections IV-VI today

- What was the “New South”?
- In what ways were African Americans in the South disenfranchised and segregated?
- How did the era of industrialization affect ideas about gender and sexuality?
- How did the new technologies of the Gilded Age change cultural patterns?

Thurs. Feb. 16: “American Empire” (Vol. 2, Chapter 19)

- How did American foreign policy change in the late nineteenth century?
- What arguments did Americans make to support interventions abroad?
- How was the question of immigration tied up with American imperialism?
- How did nativism shape American immigration?
- What role did American women play in imperialism?

No Class Tues. Feb. 21: Follow Monday Schedule

Thurs. Feb. 23: “The Progressive Era” (Vol. 2, Chapter 20) Sections I-IV today

- What ideas animated American progressives?
- What major reforms did American progressives pursue?
- In what ways did Progressivism include both democratic and anti-democratic impulses?
- How did American women shape the progressive movement?

Tues Feb. 28: The Progressive Era II” (Vol. 2, Chapter 20) Sections V-VII today

- What key ideas influenced conservation legislation during the progressive era?
- How did “Trust Busting” respond to corporate power in the U.S.?
- How did Jim Crow influence life for both white and black Americans?
- How do the similarities and differences between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois capture major currents in African American thought?

Thurs. March 2: “World War I and Its Aftermath” (Vol. 2, Chapter 21) Sections I-V today

- In what ways was the United States an isolationist nation in the 1910s?
- Why did the United States enter World War I?
- How did World War I transform American culture?
- How did World War I change American race relations?

Tues. March 7: “After World War I” (Vol. 2, Chapter 21) Sections VI-X today

- What were the lasting effects of United States war mobilization of resources and opinion?
- How did Americans’ ideas about postwar international relations differ from one another?
- Why was the year 1919 so important in U.S. and world history?
- How did the influenza pandemic affect American life?

Thurs. March 9: “The New Era” (Vol. 2, Chapter 22)

Essay One Due

- Were the 1920s a “return to normalcy,” as Warren G. Harding had advocated?
- Is it reasonable to describe the 1920s as a time of “culture war”?
- How did changes in consumption shape American culture?
- Why was the second Ku Klux Klan to prove so popular in the United States?
- What was the significance of the Harlem Renaissance?

Tues. March 14: “The Great Depression” (Vol. 2, Chapter 23) Sections I-XVI

- What economic factors contributed to the Great Depression?
- How did the Hoover administration respond to the Depression?
- How did the Depression shape migration and immigration?
- How did the New Deal reorient Americans’ relationship to government?
- Why did some Americans criticize the New Deal?
- What relationship did organized labor, and the Supreme Court have with the New Deal?

Thurs. March 16:

Midterm Exam

Tues. March 21: “World War II” (Vol. 2, Chapter 24) Sections I-V

- How were the main regions of conflict in World War II distinct from each other?
- Why was the United States reluctant to enter into the War?
- How did World War Two bring an end to the Great Depression?
- World War II is often called “the Good War.” Was it?

Thurs. March 23: “World War II,” Sections VI-XI

- How did World War II affect the economy?
- How did World War II transform America’s standing in the world?
- How did World War II change gender attitudes in the U.S.?
- How did World War II reshape American race relations?

Tues. March 28: “The Cold War” (Chapter 25, Sections I-III)

- What were the origins of the Cold War?
- What foreign policy developments shaped American approaches to the Cold War?
- How did the Cold War change basic American definitions of freedom and liberty?

Thurs. March 30: “The Cold War,” Sections IV-VI

- How did the Cold War reshape American politics?
- How did the red scare influence American life and society?
- How did the decolonization movements shape the Cold War?

Tues. April 4: “The Affluent Society” (Chapter 26, Sections I-IV)

- What factors contributed to America’s postwar economic boom?
- What role did race play in postwar housing and employment?
- What were the main dynamic actors in American segregation and unequal education?
- What factors contributed to the rise of the civil rights movement?

Spring Break

Tues. April 18: “The Affluent Society,” Sections V-VII

- How did the baby boom shape postwar America’s understandings of gender?
- How did the postwar economic boom reshape American politics?
- What were the cultural dimensions of consensus and conformity in the 1950s?
- Why did the 1954 Eisenhower health care plan fail?

Thurs. April 20: “The Sixties” (Chapter 27, Sections I-IV)

- How did Cold War tensions lead to the Cuban missile crisis and the Vietnam War?
- How did the African American civil rights movement evolve in the early 1960s?
- What legislative achievements did the civil rights movement bring to the Great Society?
- What were the primary goals and procedures of Johnson’s Great Society?

Tues. April 25: “The Sixties,” Sections V-VIII

- What were the effects of the Vietnam War on American society?
- How was political activism transformed in the late 1960s?
- How did youth culture change in the 1960s?
- What were the links between the Vietnam War and the Cold War between the superpowers?
- What were the lasting effects of the counterculture movement?

Thurs. April 27: “The Unraveling” (Chapter 28, Sections I-V)

- Why did the United States lose the Vietnam War?
- How useful is the term “unraveling” to describe America from 1968-1975?
- How did Richard Nixon appeal to American voters?

Tues. May 2: “The Unraveling,” Sections VI-IX

- How did deindustrialization shape American life?
- How did sexual politics evolve during the 1970s?
- Why did the postwar economic boom come to an end in the 1970s?

Thurs. May 4: “The Triumph of the Right” (Chapter 29, Sections I-V)

- What factors contributed to the rise of the New Right?
- How did Ronald Reagan and the New Right shift political discourse in America?
- Which cultural groups did the New Right seek to denigrate, and why?

Tues. May 9: “The Triumph of the Right,” Sections VI-XI

- How did American race relations evolve in the 1980s?
- What cultural developments shaped the 1980s?
- Did the New Right achieve its policy goals?

Thurs. May 11: “The Recent Past,” Chapter 30, Sections I-VI

- How did the Bush Doctrine change American foreign policy?
- How has American immigration changed in recent decades?
- What are some of the major shifts in recent American political history?
- How have social media and universal technology reshaped American life?

Tues. May 16: Pandemic Crisis, Divided Politics, Sections VII-IX **Essay Two Due**

- What key events and trends will define the 2010s historically?
- What factors in American society led to the rise of Black Lives Matter?
- Did Trumpism reflect the end of one era or is it a sign of things to come?
- What has Joe Biden accomplished thus far that will prove historically important?

Final Exam: 5/18/2023, Thursday 8:30AM - 10:30AM

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Candidates with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: 1) register with and provide documentation to the Special Services Office, Frese Hall, Room 111; 2) bring a letter indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. For more information about services available to Queens College candidates, visit the website, or contact: Special Service Office; Director, Miriam Detres-Hickey, Frese Hall, Room 111; 718-997-5870.

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<https://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/legal-affairs/policies-procedures/academic-integrity-policy/>.

Technical Support:

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Values considered in your grade for the course:

There are 5 major assignments, and a participation grade. You cannot pass this class without completing all major assignments and maintaining regular attendance and participation. The grade for the course will be affected by absences beginning with a fifth absence. You will fail the course if you miss four weeks of class (8 classes) total. With a fifth unexcused absence the highest course grade you can receive is B, 6 = C, 7 = D. **Please do not inform me about reasons for absences until you have missed five classes.** Save documentation of absences in case you exceed the absence limit and will require excuse. Absences can only be excused for health and family emergencies and must be documented with the date of the absence clearly indicated on the document. Schedule conflicts that might affect attendance are not excused. Entering class 10 minutes late or leaving 10 minutes early is considered tardiness, and two such events constitute an absence.