

Joanna L. Dyl  
Sample Syllabus

## **The Making of Modern America: United States History, 1877-1914**

### **Course Overview:**

This course explores defining themes and trends in the history of the United States from 1877 to 1914. What impact did racial divisions and ideologies have in the aftermath of the Civil War and with the increasing incorporation of the West into the nation? How did immigration, urbanization, and other developments in turn destabilize those racial ideologies? Why was this period characterized by sharp antagonisms and recurrent violence along racial and class lines? How did gender affect the experiences of Americans during this period, and how and why did women increasingly exert themselves in public sphere arenas such as work and reform? How did cities change, and how did those changes create both opportunities and anxieties for urban residents? How did increasing exploitation of natural resources fuel both economic growth and social conflict? How did the exploitation of natural resources – and the countervailing movement to preserve some of them – affect both the land and the men and women who lived and worked there?

This course is an upper-division course, and it assumes a basic knowledge of the history of the period. We will spend very little time on the political narrative of events; instead we will focus on provocative questions from recent scholarship in social history, environmental history, labor history, gender history, urban history, and cultural history. We will also spend a significant amount of time reading and analyzing primary sources from the period. Students should be prepared for a fairly heavy reading load and an emphasis on in-class discussion of the readings. Because of the limited length of the semester, this course focuses on domestic policy only.

Students in this class will:

1. Develop their understanding of U.S. history from 1877 to 1914;
2. Improve their ability to critically analyze both primary and secondary sources;
3. Develop an understanding of historical interpretation and methods;
4. Improve their writing and discussion skills.

### **Books Assigned:**

The following books are required for the course and will be available for purchase from the bookstore:

- Thomas Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (Harvard University Press, 2010)
- Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Harvard University Press, 2001)

- Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War* (Harvard University Press, 1997)
- Carl Smith, *Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief: The Great Chicago Fire, the Haymarket Bomb, and the Model Town of Pullman*, second edition (University of Chicago Press, 2007)
- Mark David Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness: Indian Removal and the Making of the National Parks* (Oxford University Press, 2000)

Other assigned readings will be available on Blackboard or, in the case of journal articles, through the library website.

### **Course format:**

This course will combine lectures and discussions of the readings, with the greater emphasis placed on discussion. Because discussions are such an important part of the course (and of the learning process), class participation represents 35 percent of your grade in the class.

My expectation is not only that you will come to class but that you will come prepared to raise questions and participate in discussion about the readings and the course as a whole. The process of developing your own interpretations of the material – thinking critically about the readings and even the lectures – is a central part of studying history. What did you find most interesting in the readings? What did you find confusing or surprising? How do you see this material relating to readings and discussions from previous weeks? We will often open class with an exercise called the “minute around” in which each student will have one minute to present her or his ideas for that day’s discussion, so you should come to class having thought about what you will say during the “minute around.” It is also essential that you bring the day’s readings (including books, articles, and documents) to each class session so that we can make specific references during our discussions.

Participation encompasses not just the quantity but also the quality of your comments, and it incorporates listening as well as talking. Your grade will be based less on the frequency of your comments than on how well they advance the class discussion – by raising relevant questions, advancing or challenging the group’s line of thought on a particular issue, or providing original insights into the material. Your comments should demonstrate that you are listening to and engaging with your classmates’ comments rather than trying to “score points” by throwing out several ideas per class session.

Obviously, a prerequisite to good discussions is a basic respect for others and their opinions. Disagreement is fine (even good), but please remember to be courteous and respectful toward your classmates at all times. Respect for the instructor and your classmates also demands that you: 1) be on time to class; 2) remain silent when others (including the professor) are speaking; 3) refrain from eating during class; 4) minimize disruptions by turning off your cell phone and using your laptop only to take notes or

refer to articles. As college students, I expect you to behave like courteous adults and will treat you like adults in turn.

For any of you who are uncomfortable with participating in class because of shyness or other concerns, please come and speak to me. Because class participation is a major part of the course – and because the ability to articulate your ideas verbally is an important skill to develop in college – you will need to work to overcome your discomfort. However, I am happy to make accommodations to help you feel more comfortable with speaking up in class or to make arrangements for you to demonstrate that you are participating as a listener even if you are quiet in class.

I encourage all students to take advantage of my office hours. If you are not available during office hours, I am happy to schedule another time to meet with you. Please do not hesitate to ask if you have questions about course material, assignments, your progress, or other topics related to the course or the history profession.

### **Assignments:**

Your grade in this class will be based on the following:

1. Class participation (35 percent);
2. Three in-class exams (50 percent);
3. Two short papers analyzing a primary source of your choice (15 percent).

Your in-class participation will be evaluated each week based on your participation in class discussion and activities such as the “minute around.” I reserve the right to incorporate in-class quizzes on the readings (either announced or unannounced) and/or in-class writing assignments as part of your participation grade.

The first two exams will take place during class periods and will each be worth fifteen percent of your grade. The final exam will take place during the designated final exam period for this class time, and it will be worth twenty percent of your grade. The exams will consist of a mixture of identifications, short answer questions, analyses of quotations from primary sources, and essay questions. You will be given a list of possible essay questions in advance, although you will not know which will appear on the exam. You will be allowed to bring one page of notes (8 ½ by 11 in. paper, one side of the page) to class, and you must turn in those notes with your exam.

You will also submit two short papers (2-3 pages, no more than four) analyzing a primary source of your choice from the course readings. The first paper will be worth seven percent of the grade, while the second will be worth eight percent.

The assignments for this class emphasize writing because writing assignments represent the best way for you to develop your skills in analysis, critical thinking and written expression. I am less interested in whether you can memorize material than in whether

you can analyze and apply that material. Strong writing skills will also serve you well in your other classes and in whatever career you eventually pursue.

### **Course Schedule and Assigned Readings:**

8/22 Introductions

#### **Race, Gender, and Violence in the South**

8/24 **Race and Reconstruction**

Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*, pp. 1-43.

How to Read a Primary Source (Blackboard)

Documents: • “African Americans during Reconstruction,” “White Southerners’ Reactions to Reconstruction,” and “Work under Sharecropper and Labor Contracts,” *America Firsthand*, eds. Robert D. Marcus et al, pp. 14-25, 35-38.

8/29 **The Lives of Black Women**

Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*, pp. 44-97.

How to Read a Secondary Source (Blackboard)

Documents: • Washerwomen of the South, “We Desire to Live Comfortably,” *Engendering America: A Documentary History, 1865 to the Present*, eds. Sonya Michel and Robyn Muncy, pp. 27-32.  
• “More Slavery at the South (1912),” *Documents to Accompany America’s History*, ed. Kevin J. Fernlund, vol. 2, fifth edition: pp. 57-59.

8/31 **Jim Crow**

Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*, pp. 98-144.

Barbara Y. Welke, “When All the Women Were White, and All the Blacks Were Men: Gender, Class, Race, and the Road to *Plessy*, 1855-1914,” *Law and History Review*, Fall 1995, vol. 13, no. 2. (E-journal)

Documents: • *Plessy v. Ferguson*, and Charles W. Chesnutt, “The Courts and the Negro,” in *Plessy v. Ferguson: A Brief History With Documents*, ed. Brook Thomas, pp. 41-60, 149-160.

**9/5 No class – Labor Day**

**9/7 The Rural South**

James C. Giesen, “‘The Truth About the Boll Weevil’: The Nature of Planter Power in the Mississippi Delta,” *Environmental History* 14, no. 4 (October 2009): pp. 683-704. (E-journal)

Documents: • Documents on the Cotton South After the Civil War, *Major Problems in American Environmental History*, ed. Carolyn Merchant, pp. 213-223.  
• “More Than I Can Stand,” *Second to None: A Documentary History of American Women*, vol. II: pp. 121-124.

**9/12 Riots, Lynching, and Racial Violence**

Michael Honey, “Class Race, and Power in the New South: Racial Violence and the Delusions of White Supremacy,” in *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy*, eds. David S. Cecelski and Timothy B. Tyson (University of North Carolina Press, 1998): pp. 163-184. (Blackboard)

Glenda Gilmore, “Murder, Memory, and the Flight of the Incubus,” in *Democracy Betrayed*, pp. 73-93. (Blackboard)

Documents: • Gunner Jesse Blake, “Narrative of the Wilmington ‘Rebellion’ of 1898,” *Reading the American Past*, ed. Michael P. Johnson, fourth edition, pp. 84-88.  
• Ida B. Wells, “True Chivalry Respects All Womanhood,” *Engendering America: A Documentary History*, pp. 112-115.

**9/14 Urban Black Culture**

Writing Workshop to Prepare for Exam

Hunter, *To ‘Joy My Freedom*, pp. 145-238.

Documents: • “Letters from the Great Migration,” *America Firsthand*, pp. 123-125.

**9/19 No class – study for exam**

**9/21 Exam**

*Cities in the Industrial Age*

**9/26 The Great Chicago Fire and the Processes of Urban Development**

Carl Smith, *Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief*, pp. 1-98.

Documents: • Letters by Jonas Hutchinson, Mary Fales, and Mrs. Aurelia R. King, from *The Great Chicago Fire: Described in Seven Letters by Men and Women Who Experienced Its Horrors*, pp. 17-31, 37-45.

### **9/28 Urban Ecology**

Joel Tarr, "The Horse – Polluter of the City," *The Search for the Ultimate Sink: Urban Pollution in Historical Perspective* (Akron, Ohio: University of Akron Press, 1996): pp. 323-333. (Blackboard)

Martin V. Melosi, "Environmental Crisis in the City: The Relationship between Industrialization and Urban Pollution," *Effluent America: Cities, Industry, Energy, and the Environment* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001): pp. 23-48. (Blackboard)

Documents: • Giuseppe Giacosa, "A Visitor in Chicago (1892)," *Documents to Accompany America's History*, pp. 121-123.  
• Photos of Urban Industrial America, *America Firsthand*, pp. 139-146.

### **10/3 Industry, Technology and Urban Growth**

Harold L. Platt, "City Lights: Electrification of the Chicago Region, 1880-1930," in *Technology and the Rise of the Networked City in Europe and America*, eds. Joel A. Tarr and Gabriel Dupuy (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988): pp. 246-281. (Blackboard)

Documents: • "Henry George Dissects the Paradox of Capitalist Growth, 1879," *Major Problems in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era*, pp. 20-22.  
• Louis H. Sullivan, "The Skyscraper (1896)," *Documents to Accompany America's History*, pp. 109-111.  
• "Frederick Winslow Taylor Explains the Principles of Scientific Management, 1916," *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, eds. Eileen Boris and Nelson Lichtenstein, pp. 205-209.

### **10/5 Labor, Capital, and Conflict**

Smith, *Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief*, pp. 101-174.

Documents: • "Haymarket Anarchist Michael Schwab Fights for Freedom, 1886," *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, p. 126-128.  
• "Autobiography of Adolph Fischer," *The Autobiographies of the Haymarket Martyrs*, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: Humanities Press, 1969): pp. 73-92.

## 10/10 Immigration and Race

James Barrett and David Roediger, "Inbetween Peoples: Race, Nationality, and the 'New Immigrant' Working Class," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 16, no. 3 (Spring 1997): pp. 3-44. (E-journal)

- Documents:
- "Struggles of an Irish Immigrant, c. 1913" and "An Italian Bootblack's Story, 1902," *The Way We Lived: Essays and Documents in American Social History*, eds. Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, pp. 85-88.
  - Jane Addams, "The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements" and "Immigrants and Their Children," *Twenty Years at Hull House*, pp. 74-85, 153-170.

## 10/12 The Pullman Strike

Smith, *Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief*, pp. 177-279.

- Documents:
- "Testimony Before the U.S. Strike Commission on the Pullman Strike (1894)," *Documents to Accompany America's History*, pp. 67-68.
  - "George Pullman Defends Managerial Paternalism, 1894," in *Major Problems in the History of American Workers*, pp. 135-137.

## 10/17 Work and Leisure

Kathy Peiss, "Leisure and Labor," *The Making of Urban America*, ed. Raymond A. Mohl (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 1997): pp. 167-186. (Blackboard)

- Documents:
- "The Triangle Shirtwaist Fire (1911)," *America Firsthand*, pp. 104-115.

First paper analyzing a primary source due

## 10/19 Progressives and Urban Reform

Maureen Flanagan, "'The Corrupt Bargain,'" *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms, 1890s-1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007): pp. 77-97. (Blackboard)

Kathryn Kish Sklar, "Two Political Cultures in the Progressive Era: The National Consumers' League and the American Association for Labor Legislation," *U.S. History as Women's History: New Feminist Essays* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995): pp. 36-62. (Blackboard)

- Documents:
- "Lincoln Steffens on Municipal Government, 1904," and "Boss George Washington Plunkitt on City Politics," *The American City: A Documentary History*, ed. Charles N. Glaah: pp. 373-389.

- “We Have Largely Succeeded in Shutting Up Chickens,” *Second to None: A Documentary History of American Women*, vol. 2, pp. 112-115.

**10/24 No class – study for exam**

**10/26 Exam**

**Western Expansion, Exploitation, and Conflict**

**10/31 Frontier and Settlement in the West**

Richard White, “Frederick Jackson Turner and Buffalo Bill,” *The Frontier in American Culture*, ed. James R. Grossman (Berkeley: University of California, 1994): pp. 6-65.  
(Blackboard)

- Documents:
- Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” and “The Problem of the West,” *Major Problems in the History of the American West*, eds. Clyde A. Milner II et al, pp. 2-5.
  - Excerpts from “Settlement of the Great Plains,” *A Nation Moving West: Readings on the History of the American Frontier*, eds. Robert W. Richmond and Robert W. Mardock: pp. 306-317.

**11/2 Indian Policies and the Creation of Wilderness**

Mark Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness*, pp. 3-70.

- Documents:
- “A Man Plants the Fields of His Wife,” *Second to None*, pp. 82-83.
  - Red Cloud, “Speech to the Secretary of the Interior,” Buffalo Bird Woman, “Recalling the Old Days,” and Black Elk, “Massacre at Wounded Knee,” *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground: Plains Indian Views of How the West Was Lost*, ed. Colin G. Calloway, pp. 153-156, 199-203.

**11/7 Preserving Wilderness**

Spence, *Dispossessing the Wilderness*, pp. 71-139.

- Documents:
- John Muir, Selections from *Our National Parks*, and Theodore Roosevelt, “The American Wilderness,” *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, eds. J. Baird Callicott and Michael P. Nelson, pp. 48-74.
  - “Photographs of the Blackfeet at Glacier National Park and on the Reservation, 1890-1930,” *Going to the Source*, eds. Victoria Bissell Brown and Timothy J. Shannon, pp. 34-37, 40-51.

**11/9 Exploiting and Conserving Natural Resources**



Thomas Andrews, *Killing for Coal*, pp. 1-86.

Documents • Gifford Pinchot, “The Meaning of Conservation,” “Mr. A.A. Anderson, Special Supervisor of the Yellowstone and Teton Timber Reserves, Talks Interestingly of the Summer’s Work,” *American Environmental History*, ed. Louis S. Warren, pp. 199-206.

### **11/14 Migrants and Workers in the West**

Andrews, *Killing for Coal*, pp. 87-156.

Documents: • “On Chinese Immigration, 1876, 1882,” *Documents to Accompany America’s History*, pp. 41-43.  
 • Lee Chew, “There Are No Laundries in China,” *Engendering America*, pp. 97-100.  
 • “Wyoming Gunfight: An Attack on Chinatown, 1885,” *Major Problems in American History*, eds. Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman and Jon Gjerde, pp. 41-43.

### **11/16 Labor Conflict in the West**

Andrews, *Killing for Coal*, pp. 157-291.

Documents: • “Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World, 1905,” *Major Problems in the History of American Workers* pp. 131-132.  
 • Excerpts from “The Colorado Coal Strike,” *Violence in the West: The Johnson County Range War and the Ludlow Massacre*, ed. Marilyn S. Johnson (Bedford /St. Martin’s, 2009): pp. 82-104.

### **11/21 The Wageworkers’ Frontier**

Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction*, pp. 1-108.

Second paper analyzing a primary source due

### **11/23 No class – Thanksgiving**

### **11/28 Families and Gender Politics**

Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction*, pp. 109-200.

Documents: • “Cultural Exchange on the Arizona Frontier (1874),” *Voices of the American Past: Documents in U.S. History*, vol. 2, fourth ed., pp. 300-302.  
 • “Flores de Andrade Recalls Her Revolutionary Activity as an Immigrant in El Paso, Texas, 1911,” *Major Problems in Mexican American History*, pp. 209-211.

**11/30 Violence and Vigilantes**

Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction*, pp. 201-318.

Documents: • N.A. Jennings, "A Texas Ranger, 1875," *Reading the American Past*, ed. Michael P. Johnson, pp. 30-33.  
• "Las Gorras Blancas Announce Their Platform, 1900," *Major Problems in Mexican American History*, p. 182.

(Any remaining written work, such as make-up assignments, is due at the last class unless the professor has specifically granted an extension.)

**Final Exam – Wednesday, December 7 10:00am-12:00pm**