

# HIST 152

## Fall Semester 2019

**Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 9:30-10:20 a.m.**

## Math 175

<b>Professor Susan Curtis</b> <b>Office: University Hall 329</b> <b>Office Hours: Tues., 1:00-3:00 p.m.</b> <b>Email: curtis@purdue.edu</b>	<b>Ella Amoh, T.A.</b> <b>Office: Recitation 403</b> <b>Office Hours: Tues./Thurs. 11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.</b> <b>Contact: eamoh@purdue.edu</b>	<b>Erin Barr, T.A.</b> <b>Office: Recitation 403</b> <b>Office Hours: Mon./Wed. 10:30 a.m.-12:00</b> <b>Contact: barr37@purdue.edu</b>
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### Required Books

John F. Kasson, *Amusing the Million*

Ronald Takaki, *Hiroshima: Why America Dropped the Atomic Bomb*

Kathryn Brownell, *Showbiz Politics*

Additional Readings can be found on Blackboard

### U.S. History since 1877

This course introduces students to major issues in U.S. History from 1877 to the present. It is organized around three major themes—the “reconstruction” of America, the adjustment to “modernity,” and the implications of “globalism.” As an introductory course, it is designed to develop students’ skills in historical analysis—reading and interpreting “primary sources,” evaluating interpretations by historians, communicating ideas and analysis in clear, coherent prose, and applying insights from history to the contemporary situation.

Students are not asked to memorize facts and dates. Rather, the grade in this course depends upon students’ ability to master some of the basic critical, analytical, and interpretive skills used by historians. Lectures and readings provide background and context, so regular attendance is crucial. In-class discussions offer examples of how to make sense of images and texts from past times. Course assignments offer students the chance to do the work of a historian. Each week, students are prompted to read a document. It is the responsibility of the student to go to Blackboard and read the assignment.

### Learning Objectives

1. Develop skills used by historians to make sense of U.S. History since 1877
2. Gain experience using original materials to understand the past
3. Practice reading and writing with the goal of understanding why things happened

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### Part I: 1877-1918—Reconstructing America

The first part of this course takes a broader view of “reconstruction” than the twelve-year period following the U.S. Civil War in which the nation was put back together. During the four decades between Reconstruction and the U.S. entry into World War I, the United States underwent a dramatic social and cultural transformation. Everything from work to worship, leisure to politics, and family to community experienced jarring shocks that led to new ways of being in the world. While the Civil War must be considered a huge break in the continuity of the nation, the first part of this course covers an

equally revolutionary era. When the peace came at the end of the Great War in Europe, the U.S. had emerged as a world power, an urban industrial giant, a multicultural and multiracial society, and a society divided along race, class, ethnic, and gender lines—a nation beginning the adjustment to modernity.

**Week 1 (August 19-23)**

**M:** Introduction to the course, syllabus, assignments and Abraham Lincoln’s Legacy

**W:** 1877: A Year of Decision

**F:** Core Beliefs in Post-Civil War America

Read: “The Gettysburg Address” and Frank Norris, “A Deal in Wheat”

**Week 2 (August 26-30)**

**M:** Work in Industrial America

**W:** East is East and West is . . .

**F:** Challenging America’s Core Beliefs

Read: John Kasson, *Amusing the Million*, 3-54

**Week 3 (September 2-6)**

**M: NO CLASS TODAY – LABOR DAY**

**W:** Redefining American Democracy I

**F:** Redefining American Democracy II

Read: Kasson, *Amusing the Million*, 55-112, and The People’s Party Platform

**Week 4 (September 9-13)**

**M:** Redefining American Culture I

**W:** Redefining American Culture II

**F:** Progressive Reform

Read: Ida B. Wells, “Lynch Law in America,” *The Arena* 32.1 (January 1900): 15-24.

**Week 5 (September 16-20)**

**M:** Progressives and Overseas Expansion

**W:** World War I and Modernity

**F: Exam I – Your essay on *Amusing the Million* is due at the beginning of class. During the 50-minute class period, you will take an in-class exam covering material presented in lectures and weekly readings. Both the paper and the in-class exam constitute “Exam I.”**

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**PART II: 1919-1945—Adjusting to Modernity: Citizenship in an Age of Consumerism and War**

Part II of the course looks at the ways the United States adjusted to the ups and downs of being an international power in an age of modernity. One way of talking about the period between 1914 and 1945, which featured world wars on either end of the era, is that it was a “consumer culture and society.” By that, I mean that the economy, public policy, international affairs, and cultural apparatus all revolved around the production of goods aimed at ordinary buyers and that the acquisition of these goods came to be important markers of identity—both individual and national. We will begin by examining the ways that U.S. involvement in the Great War consolidated the structures, institutions, policies, and ideas that fostered consumerism. A good deal of this part of the course will be devoted to the adjustments that were necessary in the face of a devastating economic depression, an

environmental crisis, and the coming of another world war. Technology, as a symbol of modernity, changed the quality of life, sometimes for good and sometimes for ill.

**Week 6 (September 23-27)**

**M:** Adjusting to Modernity

**W:** “100% Americanism”

**F:** Modernity and Diversity

Read: Hiram W. Evans, “The Klan’s Fight for Americanism,” *The North American Review* 123 (March-May 1926): 33-63.

**Week 7 (September 30-October 4)**

**M:** 1920s Culture Heroes

**W:** The Rise of Mass Media and Culture

**F:** The Modern City

Read: Margaret Sanger, “The Civilizing Force of Birth Control”; Takaki, *Hiroshima*, Chapters 1-3.

**Week 8 (October 7-11)**

**M:** NO CLASS – O C T O B E R B R E A K

**W:** Media and Politics

**F:** Roaring into the Great Depression

Read: Takaki, *Hiroshima*, Chapters 4-5; Langston Hughes, “Let America Be America Again” (1935)

**Week 9 (October 14-18)**

**M:** Franklin D. Roosevelt and Capitalism

**W:** Depression Culture

**F:** 1930s International Violence and the United States

Read: Takaki, *Hiroshima*, Chapters 6-7; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Declaration of War, 1941

**Week 10 (October 21-25)**

**M:** From Isolation to War

**W:** World War II and the “American Way of Life”

**F:** Exam II—Your essay on Takaki’s *Hiroshima* is due at the beginning of class. During the 50-minute class period, you will take an in-class exam covering material presented in lecture and weekly readings. Both the paper and the in-class exam constitute “EXAM II.”

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**PART III: 1945-Present: America in an Age of Globalism**

The final part of the course explores U.S. history in an age of globalism. While at the beginning of the period Americans saw themselves as an “exceptional” nation, the reality was that the U.S. was becoming deeply immersed in a global system. Moreover, the determination to support “freedom fighters” around the world made many Americans take stock of the limits of “freedom” at home—especially for minority groups. So the period was marked by international involvement abroad and social turmoil at home as various groups pushed the nation to live up to the ideals expressed in Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. In order to appreciate this context, we examine the ways that American interests became increasingly defined outside the boundaries of the nation. Anticommunism and the “American Way of Life” became powerful ideological engines that drove both domestic and foreign policy for the

five decades following the end of the war. At the same time these global forces were at work, Americans experienced an explosion of electronic modes of communication, which has had a profound impact on society, culture, and politics at home as well as on perceptions of Americans abroad.

**Week 11 (October 28-November 1)**

**M:** America and Globalism

**W:** The Postwar World: Interdependence and Conflict

**F:** American Interests

Read: Brownell, *Showbiz Politics*, Chapters 1-2; NSC-68

**Week 12 (November 4-8)**

**M:** Iran, Korea, and the U.S.

**W:** Conformity and Rebellion in the 1950s

**F:** Culture and Counterculture

Read: Brownell, *Showbiz Politics*, Chapters 3-4; Rachel Carson, *A Silent Spring* (excerpt)

**Week 13 (November 11-15)**

**M:** Freedom Movements around the Globe

**W:** African Americans and Global Independence

**F:** Dilemmas of Growth

Read: Brownell, *Showbiz Politics*, Chapter 5; Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Farewell Address" (1961)

**Week 14 (November 18-22)**

**M:** 1970s: A Decade of Transition

**W:** "Amusing Ourselves to Death": Politics in the TV Age

**F:** American Architects of Globalism

Read: Brownell, *Showbiz Politics*, Chapters 6-7; "No More Miss America"

**Week 15 (November 25-29)**

**Thanksgiving Break**

**Week 16 (December 2-6)**

**M:** America in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

**W:** Dis-United States

**F:** Whither Millennials?

Read: Paul Krugman, "Inequality Is a Drag"

**Exam III: During Finals Week. Your essay on *Showbiz Politics* is due at the beginning of the exam period. In addition, you will take an in-class exam covering material presented in lectures and weekly readings. Both the paper and the in-class exam constitute "EXAM III."**

## Assignments and Grading

### 1. Exam I = 1/3 of the final grade

**Friday, September 20, in class.**

The exam consists of three parts:

- fifteen multiple-choice questions about readings and lectures
- short answer identifications
- Essay on *Amusing the Million* due in class on the day of the exam

### 2. Exam II = 1/3 of the final grade

**Friday, October 25, in class.**

The exam consists of three parts:

- fifteen multiple-choice questions about readings and lectures
- short answer identifications
- Essay on *Hiroshima* due in class on the day of the exam

### 3. Exam III = 1/3 of the final grade

**TBA—Finals Week, in class.**

The exam consists of three parts:

- fifteen multiple-choice questions about readings and lectures
- short answer identifications
- Essay on *Showbiz Politics* due in class on the day of the exam

Grading Scale:

A- to A+: 90 – 100%

B- to B+: 80 – 89%

C- to C+: 70 – 79%

D- to D+: 60 – 69%

F: 59% and below

### Classroom Conduct

Learning takes place most readily in an environment of respect. Comments that are disrespectful or disparaging of others will not be tolerated. Disagreements, based on evidence, are welcome and fully part of the educational experience at the university level.

In order to maintain a respectful learning environment, students arrive on time (let one of us know if you have a particularly long walk from your previous class or if you have to leave early to make a special appointment) and stay until the end of the class period. Talking during lecture is distracting not only to the professor but also to those around you who are trying to take notes and hear the presentation. So please refrain from conversation during lectures and other class activities.

I do not ban cell phones, i-pads, and laptops from the classroom, because they are important tools for learning about possible emergencies and for taking notes. However, I ask that you do not use them during class for texting, videos, YouTube, FaceBook, etc. etc. If you are more interested in being entertained with material other than the lectures in this class, please do not attend (see Attendance Policy below).

**Attendance Policy**

I do not take attendance on a regular basis, but I do pay attention to who is in class. There are no points assigned to attendance, but you may well see a deficit in points on exams and papers because of your absence from class; namely, because you may not know the answers to questions based on in-class material. You are university students, paying to get an education. What you get for your tuition dollars is up to you. My teaching assistants and I will do all that we can, short of forcing you to come to class, to help you succeed in this course.

**Academic Honesty**

We adhere to the passage sent from the Provost's office regarding academic honesty: "Academic integrity is one of the highest values that Purdue University holds. Individuals are encouraged to alert university officials to potential breaches of this value by either emailing [integrity@purdue.edu](mailto:integrity@purdue.edu) or by calling 765-494-8778. While information may be submitted anonymously, the more information that is submitted provides the greatest opportunity for the university to investigate the concern." In short, we expect you to turn in work that is yours and yours alone. We will discuss what constitutes plagiarism in class, and it should come as no surprise that cheating in any form will not be tolerated.

Remember, Purdue University has an Honors Pledge that was written by Purdue University students; we quote it below:

"As a boilermaker pursuing academic excellence, I pledge to be honest and true in all that I do. Accountable together - we are Purdue."