**Recent United States History:**

**1945-Present**

**Fall 2019**

**Instructor: Dr. Jared N. Day**

Class time: Mondays and Wednesday, 11:00-12:15pm

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesday, 12:30-1:20pm and by appointment

Phone: 412-337-2524 – Texting is often the best way to reach me quickly

Email: [**jday@trcc.commnet.edu**](mailto:jday@trcc.commnet.edu)

**Course Study**

The basic goal of this course is to ground students in the essential history of their own time and that of their parents. Several themes will be stressed, including the growth of the state, race relations and civil rights, industrial impacts on day-to-day life, and the evolution of American politics and culture. In the area of foreign affairs, the course will examine the changing principles and policies that have governed US actions abroad and America’s emergence as a global power and ultimately the sole superpower by the end of the century. In addition, we will explore the rapid pace of technological and social change that has created our present society. I hope that by the end of the semester you will understand the history of the United States better then you did at the semester’s outset, that you will be critical readers of historical (and other) texts, and that you will examine your own choices in life explicitly and self-consciously in light of what you have learned.

The purpose of this class is to learn how to historically analyze the past with particular reference to American history in the modern world from 1945 to the present. Students will thus investigate how different communities, cultures, economies, and political forces interacted and how they impacted each other since the World War II. Due to the comprehensive nature of this course, all areas will suffer in treatment at some point or other. This course is meant to both enhance the student’s general intellectual growth as well as foster particular abilities to think both historically and comparatively across the country and across time. In this course, we will explain common social, organizational, political, economic, historical, and cultural elements that have impacted recent American history. We will also delve into issues of ethnic and racial diversity. We will also be exploring different theories of historical explanation, research methods, and ways of exploring and explaining historical phenomena. In sum, this investigation of America’s recent past allows students to understand the fundamentals of the contemporary world as well as the ways modern historians view the past.

**Learning Objectives**

The goals and objectives for this course are specific to the study of history and integrated with the college’s general education goals. Working through a variety of methodologies, the successful student will develop the following competencies:

1) Explore the complexity of the human experience;

2) Develop a body of historical knowledge explaining the dynamics of change over time;

3) Interpret and contextualize the past on its own terms;

4) Evaluate a variety of historical sources, primary and secondary, for their credibility and utility;

5) Generate a historical argument that is reasoned and based on historical evidence;

6) Combine argument and evidence into effective narrative that describes and analyzes the past.

**Student responsibilities**

You, the student, will be responsible for the following tasks:

1. **Daily Attendance and Participation -- 20% of final grade**

The attendance policy for this class is as follows. Attendance will not be taken on a daily basis. That being said, you are responsible for content covered in class. Additionally, in a class size not exceeding 30 students, repeated absences are easily noticed. Thus, even though your grade will not be directly affected by absences, performance on unannounced pop quizzes and exams will indicate your presence and engagement in the class. Your lowest three quiz scores will be dropped. These quizzes will count for 10% of your final grade.

If a student misses a quiz, it may be made up only in the case of an excused absence such as a doctor’s appointment, funeral and the like. An absence will be excused with presentation of verifying documents e.g. a doctor’s note. A midterm exam missed for an excused absence may be made up by appointment.

1. **Historical Landscape Quiz – 10% of the final grade**

One (1) map quiz

This quiz will allow the student opportunities to demonstrate essential knowledge of the timeline of key events in American history from 1945 to the present with special reference to the essential people and events that will be the focus of the course.

1. **Essays -- 30% of final grade**

Two (2) short papers of three to four (3-4) pages each.

These assignments allow the student opportunities to demonstrate analytical thinking on three levels. The first, and most basic level such writings assignments allow for the student to show their writings skills (vocabulary, grammar, style etc.)

The opportunities these assignments afford are first to demonstrate the ability to craft an argument, and lastly, how to do so in the specific context of historical thought.

1. **Examinations 40% of final grade**

Exams will consist of a midterm and a final. These exams will be broken into two sections, first a section of identification terms and secondly an essay. Each of these exams will be worth 20% of the final grade. The final will NOT be cumulative.

Please feel free to stop by my office hours or make an appointment if you are unavailable at those times should you have any questions, conflicts, or concerns at all.

1. **Textbook:**

Brands, H.W., *American Dreams: The United States Since 1945*, Penguin, (2010).

Other readings will be distributed as handouts.

1. **Grading and Distribution:**

DAILY attendance and participation: 20%

Hist. Landscape Quiz: 10%

Essay One: 10%

Midterm: 20%

Essay Two: 20%

Final Exam: 20%

A+: (97-100%)

A: (94-96%)

A-: (90-93%)

B+: (87-89%)

B: (84-86%)

B-: (80-83%)

C+: (77-79%)

C: (74-76%)

C-: (70-73%)

D+: (67-69%)

D: (64-66%)

D-: (60-63%)

F: (0-59%)

1. **Make-up Work**

* **Late** assignments (unless the student has an excused absence, see next paragraph) may be turned in within one week of the due date for half the points that would have been earned if the assignment would have been completed on time. After a week, late work will not be accepted. This penalty will apply regardless of the reason the assignment is late (e.g. computer malfunction), so plan accordingly and do not get behind in your work.
* If you have an **excused** absence, you must submit make-up work on the day of the next session from the absence to avoid the late penalty.
* Tests and quizzes may be made up only following an excused absence and must be completed during a time designated by the instructor.

1. **Accommodation and Disability**

I am happy to work with students who have disabilities and/or need accommodation. It is the student’s responsibility, however, to first contact the appropriate institutional officers and to notify the professor of the appropriate accommodation needed.

1. **Cell Phones**

Cell phones should be turned off and put away while in the classroom.

1. **Food & Drinks**

Drinks in covered containers are permitted. No food, please.

1. **Classroom Guidelines**

Together, we will make this class a positive learning experience!

1. When there are opportunities to participate, GENERATE your participation
2. ALWAYS bring the day’s assigned reading to class
3. Be in your seat and ready to begin when the class is scheduled to begin.
4. Respect and be polite to all people
5. Speak at appropriate times, using appropriate voice and language
6. **Sexual misconduct**

Sexual misconduct by or toward a member of the TRCC community is prohibited. If you have any questions or concerns about this definition, or experience any unwelcome behavior that seems to fit this description, please contact me, another faculty member, or see this resource: <https://www.threerivers.edu/about/policies/sexual-misconduct/>

1. **Academic misconduct**

Academic misconduct according to TRCC policy, includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism and all forms of cheating:

1. *Plagiarism is defined as the submission of work by a student for academic credit as one’s own work of authorship which contains work of another author without appropriate attribution.*
2. *Cheating includes, but is not limited to:* 
   1. *use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests or examinations;*
   2. *use of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems or carrying out other assignments;*
   3. *the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the University faculty or staff; and*
   4. *engaging in any other behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus.*

**XIV. Course Calendar**

Week 1 - Introductions

Aug 28 (W): Topic: World War II and its Aftermath

Week 2 – The Postwar World

Sep 4 (W): Topic:

Brands, Chap. 1, pp. 3-23

**HIST. LANDSCAPE QUIZ\*\*\***

Week 3 – Choosing War or Peace

Sep 9 (M): Topic: The War That Never Ended,

Brands, Chap. 2, pp. 24-44

Sep 11 (W): Topic: Social Anxiety in the Early Cold War Era

Reading: Richard Hofstadter, “The Paranoid Style in American Politics,” pp. 77-86 [Handout]

Week 4 – The Emerging Cold War

Sep 16 (M): Topic: Agnostics and Believers

Reading: Brands, Chap. 3, pp. 45-67

Sep 18 (W): Topic: The Early Cold War

Reading: G. Kennan, The ‘Long Telegram’ [Handout], pp. 1-8

Week 5 – Postwar Prosperity and Anxiety

Sep 23 (M): Topic: The Golden Age of the Middle Class

Reading: Brands, Chap. 4, pp. 68-99

**ESSAY #1 PROMPT**

Sep 25 (W): Topic: More of the Early Cold War

Reading: Paul Nitze, *Nat. Sec. Council Doc. 68*, pp. 7-17

Week 6 – The Postwar Civil Rights Movement

Sep 30 (M): Topic: Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight

Reading: Brands, Chap. 5, pp. 100-132

**ESSAY #1 DUE**

Oct 2 (W): Topic: The Civil Rights Movement

Reading: Hunt, Preface & Chap. 1, pp. vii-18

Week 7 – The Apex of Liberalism

Oct 7 (M): Topic: Paved with Good Intentions

Reading: Brands, Chap. 6, pp. 133-158

Oct 9 (W): Topic: Fortunes of War

Readings: Hunt, ½ of Chap. 2, pp. 19-29

Week 8 – The Collapse of the New Deal Coalition

Oct 14 (M): Readings: Hunt, rest of Chap. 2 and Chap. 3, pp. 30-72

Oct 16 (W): **MID-TERM EXAM\*\*\***

Week 9 – Turning Points in Recent US History

Oct 21 (M): Topic: The Triumph of Cynicism

Reading: Brands, Chap. 7, pp. 159-186

**MID-TERM GRADES DUE TODAY**

Oct 23 (W): Topic: The Malaise of the 1970s

Readings: Brands, ½ of Chap. 8, pp. 187-197

Week 10 – The Emerging Conservative Consensus

Oct 28 (M): Topic: The Malaise of the 1970s

Readings: Brands, 2nd ½ of Chap. 8, pp. 197-212

Oct 30 (W): Topic: South by Southwest

Readings: Brands, ½ of Chap. 9, pp. 213-223

Week 11 -- Cold War Developments

Nov 4 (M): Topic: South by Southwest

Readings: Brands, 2nd ½ of Chap. 9, pp. 223-236

Nov 6 (W): Topic: Fire or Iceland

Readings: ½ of Brands, Chap. 10, pp. 237-246

Week 12 – Cold War Conclusions

Nov 11 (M): Topic: Fire or Iceland

Readings: 2nd ½ of Brands, Chap. 10, pp. 246-264

Nov 13 (W): History Without End

Readings: Brands, ½ of Chap. 11, pp. 265-273

Week 13 – Politics in the 1990s

Nov 18 (M): History Without End

Readings: Brands, 2nd ½ of Chap. 11, pp. 274-290

**ESSAY #2 PROMPT**

Nov 20 (W): Topic: The Good Old Bad Old Days

Readings: Brands, ½ of Chap. 12, pp. 291-299

Week 14 – Cultural Transformations and Anxieties

Nov 25 (M): Topic: The Good Old Bad Old Days

Readings: Brands, 2nd ½ of Chap. 12, pp. 300-315

**ESSAY #2 DUE**

Nov 27 (W): NO CLASSES TODAY

Week 15 – The New Century

Dec 2 (M): Topic: Culture Clash

Readings: Brands, All of Chap. 13, pp. 315-340

Dec 4 (W): Topic: Blowback

Readings: Brands, ½ of Chap. 14, pp. 341-350

Week 16 – Major Themes

Dec 9 (M): Topic: Blowback

Readings: Brands, 2nd ½ of Chap. 14, pp. 350-366

Dec 11 (W): **FINAL EXAM\*\*\***

Week 17

**Dec 17: FINAL GRADES DUE**

**Historical Landscape Quiz**

**Part I. Administrations:** Make sure to include the **date periods** of each.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1933-1945

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Ronald Reagan, 1981-1989

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Donald Trump, 2017

**Part II. Identifications of individuals**

You will need to write 1-2 sentences identifying who these people are and why they are important. You do NOT need to be comprehensive here.

Dean Acheson

John Foster Dulles

Allen Dulles

Willy Brandt

Robert McNamara

Adlai Stevenson

Barry Goldwater

Pat McCarran

J. Robert Oppenheimer

Ho Chi Minh

Klaus Fuchs

Henry Kissinger

Chiang Kai-shek

J. Edgar Hoover

Helen Gahagan Douglas

Charles de Gaulle

William Westmoreland

Douglas MacArthur

Dean Rusk

Thurgood Marshall

McGeorge Bundy

Paul Robeson

Ethel Rosenberg

George Marshall

Gamal Abdel Nasser

Betty Friedan

Curtis LeMay

A. Phillip Randolph

Edward Teller

Che Guevara

Francis Gary Powers

Mark Felt

A few basic notes on writing papers

1. Avoid using the passive voice.

Use the active voice rather than the passive voice. You will lose one point for every passive sentence I find! [You will be allowed to get those points back if you wish to rewrite the paper with the passive sentences corrected]. I will review this in class.

Example 1: Mistakes were made. [Passive voice]

The Board of Regents made mistakes. [Active voice]

Example 2: The relations between owners and workers was altered forever.

[Passive]

Industrialization altered forever the relations between owners and workers [Active]

Why is this important? The active voice includes the **main actor** while the passive voice routinely excludes it. I want to know who the actors are! Also, passive sentences tend towards flat wordiness.

2. A suggestion: in using the evidence and interpretations from secondary sources (like the books we’re reading), here’s a basic rule of thumb:

1. If you are using facts, *paraphrase the wording*; don’t use quotation marks; and make sure the line is footnoted.

Example: During the depression of 1828, Pittsburgh lost 20,000 jobs.[[1]](#footnote-1) (note: no quotation marks)

1. Avoid what are called “blind quotes” – quoted material with no attribution in the text. You are quoting from someone and the reader can’t tell who without checking your notes. The significance of a quote lies in the authority of the person who is speaking it. To leave that name out defeats the whole purpose of a quote.

If you are quoting directly from the texts, use quotation marks, a footnote, and an attribution in your paper such as “According to …” or “As Kenneth Jackson has noted, …”

Example 1: As Richard Wade has noted, “Cities came first, then came outer

settlements.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

Example 2: According to one New York City official, “The Irish should go back

to Ireland or there’ll be blood in the streets!”[[3]](#footnote-3)

3. Excessive direct quoting bogs down an essay. Your voice gets lost. Begin to train

yourself to paraphrase while still acknowledging the original source both

through attributions in the text and the use of footnotes.

4. As noted earlier: Do not plagiarize – which is to say, do not pass off other

people’s work as your own. It doesn’t matter what the other source is.

1. Richard Wade, *The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790-1830* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1959), p. 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Wade, *Urban Frontier*, p. 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Sam Bass Warner, “The Advent of Political Machines in New York,” *Journal of American History* (Spring, 1988), p. 455. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)