

How to use this site and syllabus

How to use this Site and the Syllabus

There are four parts for you to focus on and pay attention to during this online course. Many of these can be found clearly labeled in the syllabus. Here are the principal points that are critical to doing well this term.

Weekly assignments: These are set out as lessons, numbered 1 – 15. Each lesson will summarize the overview and objectives for that week, provide study prompts to help students focus on the assigned reading, along with a series of prompts to help begin discussion posts and threads (see below). The weekly lesson will also provide links or narrated power points to supplement the weekly reading assignments.

Weekly online discussions: Students will post a comment and create a discussion thread based on one or more of the discussion prompts provided in the lesson. The syllabus contains a brief description of expectations regarding a satisfactory post and thread. Discussion boards will be open for approximately one week, after which time, they will close. Students will be placed in groups of four or five, contingent on enrollments to facilitate posts and discussion. Each weekly post is worth 10 points for a total of 150 points for the semester. This represents about 20% of your semester grade.

Two essay exams: Each exam will be a *minimum of four pages*, standard essay style with *in-text citation*. There is no need for a works cited page *unless you use materials outside the class, in which case you need my approval before doing so*. Please use a font no larger than 12 pt, double spaced pages; recommended fonts are Arial or Times New Roman. English Department faculty can best answer any further questions about a standard essay format. Each exam is worth 100 points.

Plagiarism means failure--a grade of "F" for the exam.

A final project: Rather than a final exam, this course will introduce you to some visual materials created and used from the period 1930 to 1970. These are not well known today, but circulated among educators, employers, and the federal government to train and inform people about the ideal way to think and behave. You can have a quick look at the sites archiving these materials by following the links in the syllabus. The syllabus also explains this final project, worth 100 points.

Plagiarism mans failure--a grade of "F" for the assignment.

Plagiarism means that you fail the assignment. Period. No make-ups or extra credit. If you are unsure if what plagiarism entails, check out one of these sites: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism?wssl=1> (Links to an external site.)

or <http://people.ucalgary.ca/~hexham/content/articles/plague-of-plagiarism.html>

Full Syllabus

Office Hours: The best way to contact me is via email jkleiman@uwsp.edu

Students may schedule their own office visits by sending me an email (see above) and we can chat via zoom or another platform. I am happy to meet students in groups; given zoom, we do not all have to be in the same place. this is easily arranged by coordinating a convenient time.

Required Readings: There are two books for this class. Edwards et alia., *America's History* (volume 2, ninth edition) and Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*. (20th anniversary edition, 2003)

Course Themes: In this semester, we will look at the rise of the United States from its rise as the largest economic and military global power of the early twentieth century until today. It is a complex and compelling story frequently overlooked in the haste to teach names and dates instead of real history. *During the process we will ask what have been the guiding values of our society in this ascent to greatness. What benefits have Americans accrued during this time? What might we have lost?*

Course Outcomes: include the ability to recognize major events, actors, and motives in key historical events. **To this end, students will need to answer the prompt(s) with a clearly stated response/ thesis supported by the best relevant evidence. In this regard, the essays require open-ended responses. These prompts are treated as quizzes. Answered thoughtfully and not at the last minute. Exams are structured for students to demonstrate a degree of understanding along with basic factual knowledge, and are open ended.**

By the end of this course, students will appreciate the following: (a) the economic struggle prompted as farms declined in importance as cities and factory work rapidly increased; (b) the concentration of economic power into fewer and fewer hands since the 1880s to the present; (c) how American politics gives expression to these conflicting interests; (d) the role played by culture as expressed in a number of myths (rugged individualism, the self-made man, Social Darwinism, hard work assures success).

Course Requirements: There will be **four opportunities** for grades in this class based on **two exams** and a **final project**. Each will be worth 100 point for a total of 300 points for the term. Weekly posts/ quizzes serve as responses to a common prompt. Students have been assigned randomly to discussion groups. Each weekly post is worth 10 points, for a total of 150 points, more than 20% of the final semester grade. Posts and exams require **in-text citation** (e.g., **Smith, p. 24**). Failure to follow this format means points deducted from your score.

All exams and the final project paper will follow a standard essay form is double-spaced, 12 point font (no larger) with regular margins. If you are unsure, check with the English department for their statement of standards. **Plagiarism means that you fail the assignment.** Period. No make-ups or extra credit. If you are unsure if what plagiarism entails, check out one of these sites: <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism?wssl=1> (Links to an external site.) or <http://people.ucalgary.ca/~hexham/content/articles/plague-of-plagiarism.html> (Links to an external site.)

Semester grades are based on the following percentage of possible points:

95-100 A	85-89 B+	70-74 C+	55-59 D+	0-50 F
90-94 A-	80-84 B	65-69 C	50-54 D	
	75-79 B-	60-64 C-		

To help you prepare and think about these exams in advance there are study prompts for each chapter. The function of these chapter-based study sheets is to provide a balance of some specific events, people and/ or places along with the **context** of their importance. Through a give-and-take answer of the questions in class, augmented by lecture and discussion, students should be in a better position to understand the significance of larger trends as encapsulated in terms of specific events. Consider the specific items of the identification lists and exams as prompts to larger patterns of concerns discussed in the textbook and class.

Student Responsibilities:

1. Reading: The various readings serve in place of the traditional lectures and provide the important evidence. Please complete the readings before each posting.
2. Participation: There is a positive relationship between full participation (via posts/ discussion) and grades; I expect you to commit yourself intellectually to this class.

THREE GOLDEN RULES for Exams and Discussion:

1. It is insufficient to assert something
2. One must have some evidence/examples to support the assertion.
3. The evidence must be relevant and from a reliable source.
4. More than one source makes for a stronger and more credible argument.

1. Look for connections
2. Among sources
3. Across periods
4. Across topics discussed

1. Think in terms of continuity and change; what remains constant?
2. What changes?
3. For whom?
4. When and where?
5. Under what conditions?

Final Project Description

Research Project: Final Project: Ephemeral Films and their significance

Students will select at least two “ephemeral films” from the online archives and report on (a) how these reflect the context—social, economic, or political—of the time they appeared, (b) where the period(s) examined appear in the textbooks and how that source treats the subject matter (if at all), and (c) how useful these might be in terms of teaching a history course of modern America. We will discuss some of this in class during the semester.

There is additional information about the final project, including my recorded zoom discussion about expectations (be patient, it is a large files and may take some time to load). **You will find it in the module after Lesson 15.**

What is an “ephemeral film?”

The word *ephemeral* means fleeting, transient, short-lived. These visual documents have their roots in educating students in high school and college, or factory workers while at the plant in the cafeteria. Schools sometime brought the various classes to watch a film into the school auditorium, or perhaps brought one or two groups into a classroom. Their very value rests with how easily dated they are, not merely by the dress and the language, but also the ideas presented. Here are some examples:

“A Date with Your Family”

(1950) https://archive.org/details/0248_Date_With_Your_Family_A_E00190_19_29_54_00 (Links to an external site.)

“Make Mine Freedom” (1948)

https://archive.org/details/4050_Make_Mine_Freedom_01_01_10_02 (Links to an external site.)

“Are You Popular?” (1947)

<https://archive.org/details/AreYouPo1947> (Links to an external site.)

“Our Changing Family” (1957)

<https://archive.org/details/OurChang1957> (Links to an external site.)

“The All American Soap Box Derby” (1936)

<https://archive.org/details/AllAmeri1936> (Links to an external site.)

“The Plantation System in Southern Life” (1950)

<https://archive.org/details/Plantati1950> (Links to an external site.)

The two websites:

<https://archive.org/details/ephemera> (Links to an external site.)

The subject matter of these videos picks up in the 1960s and goes through the next twenty years or more.

<https://archive.org/details/prelinger> (Links to an external site.)

This collection covers a more diverse series of topics and goes back much further, into the 1930s and then into the 1950s. Both collections have public service announcements, television commercials, along with “education” and “informational” films (such as “Why not become a librarian?”).

Schedule for the Semester

These dates will let you know the deadlines for completing the assigned weekly readings and discussions. Generally, the lessons and the discussion boards open on a Monday at midnight and close on a Sunday at 11:59 PM.

Lesson	Opens	Closes	
1	8/31	9/6	
2	9/7	9/13	
3	9/14	9/20	
4	9/21	9/27	
5	9/28	10/4	
6	10/5	10/11	First Exam due by 10/12
7	10/12	10/18	
8	10/19	10/25	
9	10/26	11/1	
10	11/2	11/8	
11	11/9	11/15	

12	11/16	11/22	Second Exam due by 11/23
13	11/23	11/29	
14	11/30	12/6	
15	12/7	12/11	
16	Final project due on date schedules for the week of 12/14-12/18.		