

Class Meeting Times: MWF 11am-Noon (321 CCC)

Dr. Neil Prendergast
nprender@uwsp.edu

Office Hours:

Tuesdays 11am-Noon (Library 2nd Floor)
 Thursdays 1pm-2pm (Library 2nd Floor)
or by appointment

Freedom is the most contested idea in American history. Its widespread use in today’s political culture derives from a long past in which Americans—of all types—turned to the word as a symbol for their many hopes and dreams. In this course, we will ask a seemingly simple question: **What does freedom actually mean?**

As we will see, Americans have defined the word in several different ways, often depending on their own circumstances. As we investigate the meaning of this uniquely American word, we will tour the nation’s past. On our trip, we will see that not only did Americans in different time periods use “freedom” differently, but Americans in the same time period often fought over the word.

The goal of this tour is to leave us with an understanding that the vocabulary of our public culture is the result of not only our hopes and dreams, but also long-lasting battles over the meaning of America.

Enduring Understandings

- Americans have long fought over the *meaning* of freedom.
- Understanding *why* Americans fight about the meaning of freedom widens our perspective of diverse American experiences.

Learning Outcomes After taking this course, students will be able to:

- understand how ‘freedom’ became a central idea in modern American culture
- describe changes to American government, culture, and society
- synthesize information to understand social context

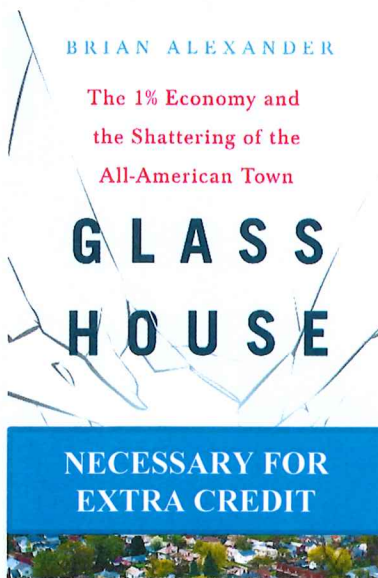
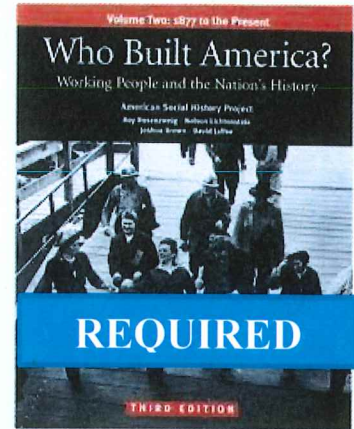


Although we think of the 1950s and early 1960s as a time of peace and prosperity, Americans were then passionately engaged in defining the meaning of freedom.

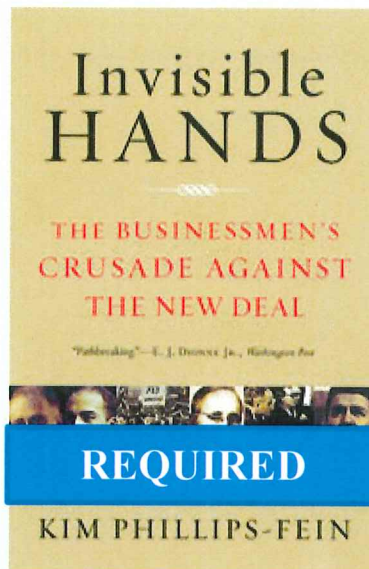
Required Materials: For this course, you need access to D2L and the three books listed below as required.

From Text Rental at the University Bookstore

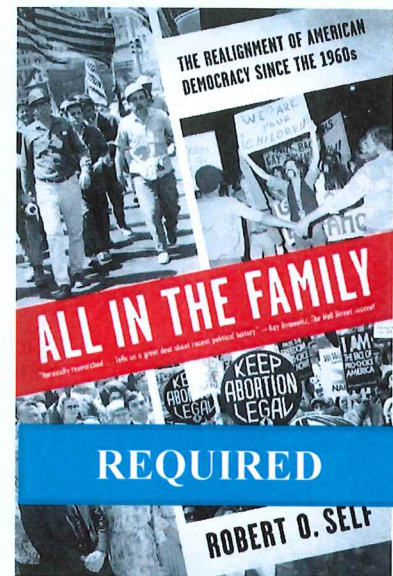
Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's History, Third Edition, Volume 2 (Boston and New York: Bedford St. Martin's Press, 2008). This is our textbook for the semester.



Brian Alexander, *Glass House: The 1% Economy and the Shattering of the All-American Town* (New York: St. Martin's, 2017).



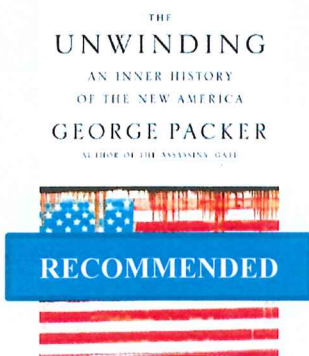
Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Businessmen's Crusade Against the New Deal* (New York: Norton, 2009).



Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy since the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012).

For Purchase at the University Bookstore For these “purchase” books shown above, feel free to buy them wherever you like. Any edition or format is fine. (Although for kindle or e-books the page numbers could be different and you'll have to figure that out.) There are lots of used copies out there, both in the university bookstore and elsewhere. Borrowing from a library is also fine.

Recommended Book Each semester I receive great questions about how the past is connected to the present. As a response, I have gradually shifted my teaching so that it explores new themes and investigates more recent history. Still, there is always more to learn. For those students wanting an expansive view of the last thirty years, I highly recommend George Packer's *The Unwinding: An Inner History of the New America*. The book is less about specific political events and more about the mood and changing beliefs of the nation.



Reading in a College History Course: In this course, 50-80 pages of reading a week is common. For many people, that amount will be a lot. So, how do you as a student deal with that?

First, there are some basic reading tips that will help: 1) read in a distraction-free environment, especially one without a smartphone nearby; 2) as you read, take notes or make notations on the page to better engage with the reading; 3) read at a time of day when your brain wants to read.

Second, you may need to dial in your perspective so that it accurately views the purpose of reading in history. In other disciplines, the purpose of reading is to know backward and forward everything in a textbook. In these cases, your job is to know and be able to explain everything on call. History is different.

Instead of emphasizing complete on-demand knowledge, the historian's *first* task is to organize or map knowledge. For example, as I'm writing this syllabus there is discussion in the newspaper about rising tensions between the United States and North Korea, which naturally call to mind the Korean War. For the life of me, I cannot conjure more than a handful of detailed facts about the war, at least not right away off the top of my head. What I do find easy to recall, however, is that the Korean War was a product of the broader Cold War, in which the United States saw itself in a global fight against communism. But for the life of me, I have no idea which side controlled the important city of Seoul at any given time. If you ask me that, I would have to look it up. I did read about that one time. Just let me get that book.

So, do not read as if you will be able to retain all the information you encountered. Read to organize events and patterns in your own mind. The assignments and exams in this course are designed to help you do that.

Course Structure: In brief, here's the layout of the course (further details are throughout this syllabus). Please note in the explanations below how these different parts of the course fit together.

Units: The course has three units, as listed on the schedule below. Each unit ends with an exam. The units themselves are divided into weeks, each of which has one guiding question that we will attempt to answer via the week's lectures, readings, and in-class discussions.

Guiding Questions: These questions are listed on the schedule. At the end of each week there will be a short quiz associated with the weekly question. These weekly questions *also* become the basis for the unit exam.

Quizzes: Most weeks will end with a quiz that checks our knowledge and understanding of the week's material. Immediately after the quiz, the correct answers will be given and discussed. Quizzes will be handed in and graded for completion.

Weekly Studyguides: These documents will be available for each week we have readings. They will typically include a keyword bank, the week's guiding question, and a template for answering that question. Use them to focus your reading, lecture notetaking, and quiz and exam preparation.

Exams: The three exams comprise the bulk of your semester grade.

Extra Credit: Five extra credit points are available at the end of the semester for successful completion of a paper regarding Brian Alexander's, *Glass House: The 1% Economy and the Shattering of the All-American Town*.

Tips from Previous Students in My U.S. History Courses:

“Come to class with an open mind. It’s not the same class you took in high school.”

“Take your own notes with your own thoughts, so you aren’t just copying down the slideshow.”

“Show up to class every day because it’s really fun and you could learn a lot.”

“Keep up on your reading.”

“Take notes on the chapter and try to relate each section of the chapter to the question each week.”

“Read the chapters ahead of lecture because it makes the lectures more interesting and you will have a better understanding of the material.”

“Take the reading seriously.”

“Read, Read, Read! But don’t try to capture every detail. Look for evidence to help with your argument.”

Grade Formula and Scale:

Unit 1: Building the American Dream Exam (20 points)
Unit 2: The American Century Exam (30 points)
Unit 3: Culture War Exam (30 points)
+ Weekly Question Quiz (2 points x 10 quizzes = 20 points)
100 points

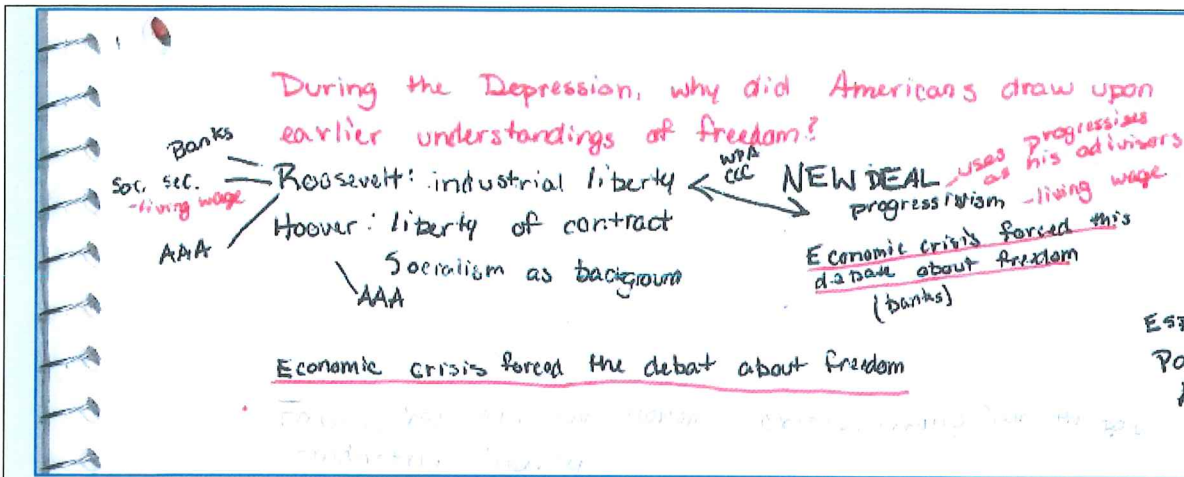
+ 5 possible extra credit points
105 possible points

Simply add up your points and then match the score to the letter grade below.

A 93-100	B+ 87-89.99	C+ 77-79.99	D+ 67-69.99	F 59.99 and below
A- 90-92.99	B 83-86.99	C 73-76.99	D 60-66.99	
	B- 80-82.99	C- 70-72.99		

Notetaking: Some wonderful tips for exam studying are available at UWSP’s Learning and Tutoring Center <http://www.uwsp.edu/tlc/> and online via the University of North Carolina <http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/essay-exams.html>

For notetaking, consider using the Cornell Method: <http://coe.jmu.edu/learningtoolbox/cornellnotes.html>



Examples of student notes are available on D2L.

Extra Credit: For five possible extra credit points, students may read *Glass House: The 1% Economy and the Shattering of the All-American Town* and write a paper following the guidelines here.

In 1500-2000 words, answer the following question: What drove the decline of Lancaster, Ohio?

Your response should consider to what degree the following course themes played a role: labor movement, free enterprise, changing gender roles, government regulation, and government as a social safety net.

An easy way to outline your essay is to dedicate one paragraph to each of the five themes above, then add another one or two for the introduction and another one or two for a conclusion. To take notes as you read and that will then become useful in writing the paper, consider keeping track of where you see each theme appear in the book. Some will be there much more often than others.

Papers will be assessed according to their persuasiveness, clarity, fairness to the reading, and demonstrated understanding of course themes.

Should you bother with the extra credit? I would. Not only will it help your grade, it will also help your mind grow. Formal writing is one of the best exercises for the brain.

The assignment is especially aimed at students who have worked hard all semester but for one reason or another have not scored as high on the exams as they expected or would have liked. Since the paper requires students to apply what they have learned, the paper is an opportunity to display that knowledge. And because it demands an analytical approach to writing—as opposed to a mere summary of events—the paper forces higher level thinking that warrants a higher semester grade.

Papers must be typed in 12 point, Times New Roman font with normal Microsoft Word margins and settings. Papers may be turned in as either .docx or .pdf documents only. When discussing a passage from *Glass House* or any other book, a citation must be made (any citation style is fine).

Due Thursday, December 21st by 5pm in the D2L Dropbox.

Life Happens: I understand that life might make it difficult to complete some assignments, attend class, or simply to do well. I do my best to be flexible because I know those circumstances are out of your control and my control. I'm on your team. I also know that some real learning has to take place in this class. You will have more opportunity in life if you understand history, read critically, and write well. This class has to be one of your priorities. I do my best to be flexible, but I have to adhere to some standards. If something comes up, let's talk.

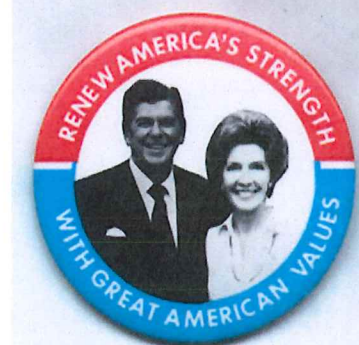
Office Hours: *You are welcome to visit me during office hours.* I set aside office hours so that I have the chance to talk with students one-on-one. During that time (Tuesday 11am-Noon and Thursdays 1pm-2pm, Library Second Floor), I do not have any other commitments. My only commitment is to speak with my students.

Course Policies: During the class, **laptops, cell phones and other electronic devices are prohibited.** If you are a parent or are otherwise obligated to be available to your family via cell phone, then please discuss that situation with me, so I know that you have a good reason for keeping your phone turned on.

The prohibition of electronics also extends to laptop computers (unless approved by the Disability Services Office). While laptops are great aides in studying, the focus in class is on class, not the computer screen. Further, the ability to take notes longhand is actually an important skill to develop, one that will be useful in any career you choose. If you do prefer to have your notes in a computer file, you will find that typing them from your handwritten notes will aid you greatly in digesting the material.

For information on plagiarism, consult <http://www.uwsp.edu/centers/rights>. See Chapter 14, *Student Academic Standards and Disciplinary Procedures*, pages 5 -10, for the disciplinary possibilities if you are caught cheating. As an instructor deeply concerned with fairness in the classroom, I pursue each and every case of plagiarism and cheating. Please note that turnitin.com is used for typed assignments.

Equity of Educational Access: If you have a learning or physical challenge which requires classroom accommodation, please contact the UWSP Disability Services office with your documentation as early as possible in the semester. They will then notify me, in a confidential memo, of the accommodations that will facilitate your success in the course. Disability Services Office, 103 Student Services Center, Voice: (715) 346-3365, TTY: (715) 346-3362, <http://www.uwsp.edu/special/disability/studentinfo.htm>.



The 1970s saw an economic slump that marked the beginning of the end for many manufacturing businesses. A conservative turn in American politics promised not only “family values,” but also a revival of the economy. The arrival of the digital economy aided growth, but failed to create the same living wage jobs for Americans that had made manufacturing so beloved a generation before.

Note: *The syllabus is a general plan for the course. Deviations announced in class may be necessary.*

Schedule Readings are assigned for the week, not by the day. At the latest, readings should be completed before Friday's class.

Week 1
Sept 6, 8

Introduction
"Introduction to Recent American History," PDF available on D2L.

BUILDING THE AMERICAN DREAM

After the abolition of slavery, why did African Americans still have to struggle for freedom?

Week 2
Sept 11, 13, 15

Who Built America?, "Reconstruction," 4-14.
"Reconstruction," PDF available on D2L.

Why did industrialization lead to new ideas of liberty (and what were they)?

Week 3
Sept 18, 20, 22

Who Built America?, "The Industrialization of America," 26-40; "Power and Profit," 41-48; "The Workingman's Hour," 91-105; "Labor Politics and Conflict," 106-120; "The Populist Moment," 134-144; "Territorial and Economic Expansion," 157-170; "Progressivism and Politics," 255-269.

During the Depression, how did liberals and conservatives differ in their approaches to bring back prosperity? (Hint: The answer involves different ideas about freedom.)

Week 4
Sept 25, 27, 29

Who Built America?, "Hard Times," 394-403; "President Hoover's Response to the Crisis," 404-415; "The Promise of a New Deal," 416-428; "The Revival of Organized Labor," 429-434; "The Counteroffensives Against the New Deal," 435-438; "The Second New Deal," 445-454; "Backlash Against Labor and the New Deal," 480-488.
Chapter 1, "Paradise Lost," *Invisible Hands*

Why did Americans use "freedom" to explain their reasons for fighting World War II?

Week 5
Oct 2, 4, 6

Who Built America?, "Origins of the Second World War," 497-505; "Fighting the War," 506-516; "Mobilizing the Home Front," 517-522; "Economic Citizenship for All?" 523-535; "The End of the War," 536-547.
Chapter 2, "Down from the Mountaintop," *Invisible Hands*

REVIEW WEEK

Week 6
Oct 9, 11, 13

EXAM FRIDAY - OCTOBER 13TH

THE AMERICAN CENTURY

During the postwar era of the late 1940s, the 1950s and early 1960s, what did liberals view as necessary for freedom to exist?

Week 7
Oct 16, 18

Chapter 1, "Are You Man Enough? Sixties Breadwinner Liberalism," *All in the Family*
Who Built America?, "Cold War in Global Context," 556-567; "Affluent Society and Its Discontents," 580-605; "The Liberal Hour," 626-636.

No Class
Oct 20

If you like this course and are considering a history major, then this article might be interesting:

Good News Liberal-Arts Majors: Your Peers Probably Won't Outearn You Forever

George Anders, *Wall Street Journal*, September 11, 2016

Six years ago, Andy Anderegg's decision to major in English looked like an economic sacrifice. When she left academia in 2010, with a master's degree in fine arts from the University of Kansas, the first job she landed was a [Groupon](#) Inc. [GRPN 2.62%](#) writing gig paying all of \$33,000 a year.

Now, however, Ms. Anderegg is riding high. She rose rapidly as Groupon expanded, becoming managing editor of the shopping-coupon site in 2012; by the time she left in 2014, she was earning more than \$100,000. Today, at age 30, she is executive editor at Soda Media Inc., a Seattle creator of online content, and building up her own digital-media consulting practice. She won't disclose her aggregate income but says: "It's better than what I made at Groupon."

Ms. Anderegg's delayed payoff is part of a little-noticed bright spot in the earnings picture for humanities and social-sciences majors. It's no secret that liberal-arts graduates tend to fare worse than many of their counterparts immediately after college: According to PayScale Inc., a Seattle-based provider of salary data, the typical English or sociology graduate with zero to five years of experience earns an average of just \$39,000 a year. By contrast, finance majors with that level of experience average \$52,000; nursing, \$57,000, and computer science, \$63,000.

The story tends to change, however, as careers play out. Over time, liberal-arts majors often pursue graduate degrees and gravitate into high-paying fields such as general management, politics, law and sales, according to an analysis by the Association of American Colleges & Universities, a trade group representing more than 1,350 schools. Once people reach their peak-earnings ages of 56 to 60, liberal-arts majors are earning an average \$66,185, the association found. That's about 3% ahead of the earnings pace for people with degrees in vocational fields such as nursing and accounting, though it remains more than 20% behind science and engineering majors.

Even more striking, however, are earnings trends for ultrahigh achievers across all majors.

Using Census Bureau data, the Brookings Institution's Hamilton Project analyzed lifetime earnings for each discipline's top 10% of moneymakers. It found that computer science's stars rang up lifetime earnings of at least \$3.2 million. Nice work, but not as impressive as philosophy majors' \$3.46 million or history majors' \$3.75 million.

Consider the executive leadership team at Seattle's [Zillow Group](#) Inc. The real-estate data firm's chief executive, Spencer Rascoff, chose a government and economics concentration at Harvard University. Chief Financial Officer Kathleen Philips studied political science at the University of California, Berkeley. Chief economist, Stan Humphries, earned a bachelor of arts in interdisciplinary studies from North Carolina's Davidson College.

Last year, Mr. Rascoff, Ms. Philips and Mr. Humphries each earned at least \$7 million in salary, bonus or stock options, according to Zillow's proxy statement. Mr. Humphries took the most roundabout route of the three; after graduating from college, he taught high-school science in Africa for the Peace Corps before eventually earning a Ph.D. in government from the University of Virginia.

"College shouldn't prepare you for your first job, but for the rest of your life," says John Kroger, president of Reed College in Oregon, the liberal-arts school that famously served as a starting point for Steve Jobs. Although Mr. Jobs dropped out of Reed in the early 1970s, the [Apple](#) Inc. founder often credited the school with stretching his horizons in areas such as calligraphy, which later influenced Apple's design ethos.

In the short-term, employers still say they prefer college graduates with career-tailored majors. A recent survey of 180 companies by the National Association of Colleges and Employers found that at least 68% want to hire candidates who majored in business or engineering. By contrast, only 24% explicitly want communications majors, 21% want social-sciences majors and 10% humanities majors.

When asked to define the résumé traits that matter most, however, the NACE-surveyed employers rated technical skills 10th. Four of the top five traits were hallmarks of a traditional liberal-arts education: teamwork, clear writing, problem-solving aptitude and strong oral communications. Mindful of those longer-term needs, some employers end up hiring humanities and social-sciences graduates, even if such majors aren't explicitly singled out when recruiting.

"It's easier to hire people who can write—and teach them how to read financial statements—rather than hire accountants in hopes of teaching them to be strong writers," says Liz Kirschner, head of talent acquisition at [Morningstar](#) Inc., a Chicago investment-research firm. Since its founding in 1986, Morningstar has hired an unusually large number of humanities and social-sciences majors.

One of them is Alec Lucas, a philosophy and classics major who earned a Ph.D. in theology, expecting to make a decent living in either ministry or teaching.

"The best job offer I could find involved being a visiting professor, teaching four classes per term and getting paid call-center wages with no health insurance," Mr. Lucas recalls. Morningstar snapped him up at roughly triple the divinity-school's pay package, and put him to work as a mutual-fund analyst. His longtime side interest in investment helped him find his footing; now he is Morningstar's expert on more than a dozen well-known equity-strategy funds.

Alice Harra, associate dean of students at Reed, says recent graduates of the college are landing hundreds of jobs with tech companies that value a liberal-arts ethos. Others have created startups such as Urban Airship, Puppet Inc. and Inspiration Software, she says.

"I love hiring liberal-arts graduates," says Dave Elkington, founder and chief executive of InsideSales.com, a Provo, Utah, company specializing in customer-data analysis. "They think broadly and communicate effectively. They aren't stuck in a rut. They can challenge ideas." Mr. Elkington, a philosophy major himself, says he came up with a lot of the ideas for his company's analytic tools by reflecting on Aristotle's classifications of knowledge.

Mr. Elkington isn't the only one who values liberal-arts degrees. Last year, LinkedIn data scientist Alice Ma analyzed the career paths of people who graduated from college between 2010 and 2013. Within that sample, she found that about 10% of all liberal-arts majors headed into tech-sector jobs. The figure jumped to 14% when she narrowed the list to 40 top-ranked schools, such as Harvard, Amherst College and Stanford University.

Liberal-arts graduates were most likely to join tech companies to work in sales (11.8%), marketing (5.2%) and project management or business strategy (5.1%), she says. Other common specializations included customer service, corporate communications and human resources.

Not every liberal-arts degree is equally likely to translate into a midcareer income boost. PayScale's data shows that for people with 10 to 20 years of experience, degrees in communications, political science, history and philosophy yield average annual income of \$70,000 or more. By contrast, degrees in French, anthropology, creative writing and film fit into a band of \$60,000 to \$69,000. Fields such as theology, photography and music bring up the rear; they pay less than \$60,000 on average.