**History 177 America since 1877 Fall Semester 2019**

**M W 9.30-10.45 AM CBB (Chem Bio Building) room 135**

Prof. Jeff Kleiman 441 Laird Fine Arts

Office Hours: M-F generally noon-1 PM; by appointment or feel free to call 715-389-6558 or email [jkleiman@uwsp.edu](mailto:jeffrey.kleiman@uwsp.edu)

**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 costs and rewards to our society in this ascent to greatness.***

**Course Proficiencies**: There are two basic proficiencies students will work to master during this class, all of which are part of the larger aim to learn critical and analytical thinking skills. *The first of these is an awareness of quantitative measure*. In plain English, how many, how far, how often were things taking place. What information can we glean from a map, a chart, a graph, and how do we translate into judgmental terms, such as good or bad, successful or failed, quick or slow rates of change. Our society offers up a great deal of numbers in a variety of forms, but we perform very little assessment of those numbers by ourselves.

*The second proficiency is blending multiple sources*. We have a textbook that contains written accounts of events along with quantitative data, as well as two other accounts of important people and events. It is not enough to summarize information from one source, or to analyze information from another source. You must begin to look at a variety of information from several sources and see how they come together to create a picture. Effectively, students must begin the hard task of interpreting events rather than merely repeating what they read about them.

**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 Requirements**: There will be **four opportunities** for grades in this class based on three essay exams (these will all be take-home) and a final project. Each will be worth 100 point for a total of 400 points for the term. Each exam is written in the syllabus at the end of relevant study prompts with a due date noted. These exams are to be written in standard essay form\*, with **in-text citation (Smith, p. 24) of the assigned sources (see above)**. **If you wish to use an outside source, please get my approval first.** Unapproved sources will not be accepted and points deducted from your exam.

\*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>

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

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.

**Attendance Policy:** Students are permitted three unexcused absences for the semester. Any other absences must be documented. Suitable reasons for unexcused absences include family emergencies, personal health concerns, other unanticipated needs or religious holidays. It is the assumption of this institution that you have committed the appropriate time to class attendance in addition to work required outside of class time.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:**

A. Reading: The various readings are the basis of class discussions. Please complete the readings before each meeting.

B. Attendance: There is a positive relationship between attendance and grades; students who do well attend class. I expect you to commit yourself intellectually to this class. If you are absent, you are responsible for all work presented in class. ***More than three unexcused absences will lower your class grade.***

**Instructor Availability:** I am generally pretty good about keeping office hours, but if you miss them—or I have other commitments at the time and must forgo office hours—please feel free send me an email, or stop by and chat with me anywhere on campus. I am happy to help students with study strategies, clarification of the textbook, and the study sheet prompts.

**THREE GOLDEN RULES for Exams and Discussion:**

**I. It is insufficient to assert something**

**a. One must have some evidence/examples to support the assertion.**

**b. The evidence must be relevant and from a reliable source.**

**c. More than one source makes for a stronger and more credible argument.**

**II. Look for connections**

1. **Among sources**
2. **Across periods**
3. **Across topics discussed**

**III. Think in terms of continuity and change**

1. **What remains constant?**
2. **What changes?**
3. **For whom?**
4. **When and where?**
5. **Under what conditions?**

**PLEASE NOTE:** You are expected to come to class prepared by reading the provided chapter prompts. This makes covering the material during class time easier and more likely. Be aware that **you remain responsible for the day’s materials** even if we do not finish all the prompts within the scheduled period.

**Tentative schedule for fall semester 2019**

**Week/Day Lecture/Discussion Study Prompt**

1 W 9/4 Intro lecture: Taproots of Our Current Discontent

2 M 9/9 Edwards, Chapter 14 “Reconstruction” (450-460) #1

W 9/11 Zinn, Chapter 9 “Slavery without Submission, #2 Emancipation without Freedom” (171-210)

3 M 9/16Edwards, Chapter 16 “Industrializing America: Upheavals #3

and Experiments” (496-515) W 9/18 Edwards, Chapter 17 “Industrializing America: #3

Upheavals and Experiments” (516-524)

4 M 9/ 23 Zinn, Chapter 11 “Robber Barons and Rebels” (253-295) #4 W 9/25 Edwards, Chapter 18 “Civilization’s Inferno: #5

The Rise and Reform of Industrial Cities” (558-587)

5 M 9/30 *Lecture on Understanding the Importance of Cities in National*

*Electoral Politics*

W 10/ 2 Edwards, Chapter 19 “Whose Government? Politics, #6

Populists, and Progressives” (586-614)

**First Exam Due (at the start of class)**

6 M 10/7 Edwards, Chapter 20 “An Emerging World Power” #7

(620-632)

W 10/9 Zinn, Chapter 15 “Self Help in Hard Times” (377-406) #8

7 M 10/14 Edwards, Chapter 22 “Managing the Depression, #9

Forging the New Deal” (740-750)

W 10/16 *Lecture on World War II: Causes and Outcomes*

8 M 10/21 Edwards, Chap 24 “Cold War America” (748-767) #10 W 10/23 *Lecture on Cultural Baggage of the Cold War*

9 M 10/28 Edwards Chap 25 “Triumph of the Middle Class”(780-808) #11

W 10/30 “Triumph of the Middle Class” (continued)

10 M 11/4 Edwards, Chapter 26 “Walking into Freedom Land: #12

The Civil Rights Movement” (810-842)

W 11/6The Civil Rights Movement (continued)

**Second Exam Due (at the start of class)**

11 M 11/11 Edwards, Chapter 27 “Uncivil Wars: Liberal Crisis and #13

Conservative Rebirth” (846-852; 870-876)

W 11/13 *Class discussion*: Where and what did you learn about Vietnam?

12 M 11/18 Zinn, Chap 18 “The Impossible Victory: Vietnam”(469-502) #14

W 11/20 Vietnam (continued) Compare with Edwards (853-868)

13 M 11/25 *Lectures on Economic Shifts, the First Oil Embargo,*

W 11/27 *Class canceled to allow students to head home for Thanksgiving*

14 M 12/2 Edwards, Chapter 30 “Confronting Global and #15

National Dilemmas” (942-957 up to “Clashes”)

W 12/4 *Class Discussion: Why do we think that America Isn’t Great?* (As compared to what and when?)

15 M 12/9 *Lecture on the Rising Tide of Inequality*

W 12/11 Putting the Pieces Together

**Final Exam Due no later than 5:00 PM, December 13 (Friday)**

**Project due no later than 5:00 PM, December 17 (Tuesday)**

Study Prompts for History 177

Study Prompt #1

Edwards, Chapter 14 (450-460) “Reconstruction”

1. After more than a decade of trying to implement political and economic equality for the newly freed slaves, Republicans simply gave way to other issues. What were these issues? Why might they have taken precedence over the issue of racial equality?
2. How did citizens of the former Confederacy help accelerate the erosion and eventual loss of rights gained by newly freed slaves? Why did the federal government refuse to step in? What animated this rejection of “Reconstruction?”
3. Where did the legend of the “Lost Cause” come from and how did it grow? (458-459) Given that the war was about slavery, did this help foster the myth that the Civil War was about “states’ rights?”

Read the very brief article with maps “Confederate Monuments” at <https://www.politico.com/interactives/2017/confederate-monuments/>

1. Google: politico 2017 Confederate Monuments and this should come up with the title “1,503 Confederate Monuments are on Display across America.”

see also: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOkFXPblLpU>

Study Prompt #2

Zinn, Chapter 9 “Slavery without Submission, Emancipation without Freedom” (171-210)

1. Why does Zinn talk about large-scale violence as the only way to remove slavery from the United States?
2. What are several of the many outrages against slaves that Zinn cites? Who does he note as sources in his description of slavery? What forms of resistance did slaves offer to their condition of forced labor and status as private property?
3. How valid are the claims made by Frederick Douglass in his Fourth of July Oration of 1852? (182-183) Why might some people be upset by this—at the time he spoke, but perhaps even today?
4. How do interpret Lincoln’s great reluctance to move toward emancipation?
5. To what does Zinn attribute the fact that the deeply rooted racism before the war—in the North as much as the South—failed to attenuate during Reconstruction? What were the consequences of this continued racism?
6. What are key points raised by W. E. B. Du Bois in the words selected by Zinn? How does this frame the issue of slavery—and powerlessness—in a larger context for Americans of that time? (The last two excerpts on 210.)

Study Prompt #3

Edwards, Chapter 16 “Industrializing America: Corporations and Conflicts”

1. How did business corporations after the civil begin to diverge from those before the war—in terms of size and economic power?
2. According to the textbook, who benefited primarily from this consolidation of power? (Figure 16.1, 546)
3. What is the difference between a monopoly and the trust (cartel)? Do these fulfill or betray the notion of a free market and competition as American ideals?
4. Have the issues raised by the section on “Poverty and Food” (506-507) become any different now than a century ago?
5. To what degree was this industrial transformation dependent on the relatively unrestricted immigration from Europe?
6. How does this new urban and industrial environment help to explain the various efforts to consolidation of efforts by farmers and wage-dependent workers in the years after 1880?

Study Prompt #4

Zinn, Chapter 11 “Robber Barons and Rebels”

1. What does Zinn say about the American “rags-to-riches” story? How valid was it in fact—and if not, then why does the story persist today? What does that suggest about the persistence of great wealth in the United States?
2. If the Supreme Court justices were not simply “interpreters” of the Constitution, but advocates for the wealthy, how does that explain the decisions regarding commerce during this era? (See esp. bottom of 261.)
3. Cite three strikes and Zinn’s coverage of them in this chapter; how does the evidence he presents support his opening arguments? Are any of these covered in the Edwards book? If so, do the details match up?
4. How would you summarize this chapter—and what several episodes/ pieces of evidence might you bring forward to illustrate your summary?

Study Prompt #5

Edwards, Chapter 18 “Civilization’s Inferno: The Rise and Reform of Industrial Cities” (558-587)

Generating wealth requires more than markets, it requires processing raw materials into various forms and the financing to underwrite those processes—along with transportation to markets, whole and retail distribution driven by the demands to keep the entire system going.

1. How does a major urban center such as Chicago, or Milwaukee, or St. Louis reflect these developments?
2. Urban growth took place virtually overnight. What were the approximate square miles encompassed by the original city in 1865? (Measure, roughly, the length and width using the scale provided on the map, then multiply these two numbers for the volume.) How large had it increased by 1902? What had happened to the population in the same time? (If this information is not in the text, check online for Chicago census reports for 1860 and then 1900.)
3. What sort of problems emerged with the rapid increase of population and the concomitant density? What new opportunities for recreation and other forms of entertainment?
4. Who formed the backbone of the Progressives? What did they want and how did they go about achieving it? How did they define governmental corruption and what solutions did they propose?
5. Given the structure of the Electoral College, what impact did these large cities have on presidential politics?

Study Prompt #6

Edwards, Chapter 19 “Whose Government? Politics, Populists, and Progressives” (620-632)

1. What were the Solid South and the “new national realities?” How did they reflect significant changes that had gone on since the end of the Civil War?
2. What major lessons about the role of cities on national politics show up in the election of 1896? (Map 19.4, 601) As you view this, recall the lecture materials on the role of cities in the Electoral College.
3. How did the decisions against racial justice and the labor movement by the federal Supreme Court reflect these new realities in attitudes favoring the rich and powerful?
4. What was the “Brandeis brief” and how did it have an impact on reforming labor conditions for women? How did W. E. B. Du Bois also pursue judicial relief in terms of civil rights? Through what organization and why?
5. Which major problems of the new urban, industrial and corporate economy did the federal legislation associated with the Progressive Era address? And how did the legislation address these problems?

**First Exam Questions**

**Students will answer all four questions with a minimum of one page, doubled-spaced response using a font no larger than 12 point (Times New Roman is a good example.) You will use the materials assigned in class for your answers. If you use an outside source, you must clear it with me first. Each portion of the exam is worth 25 points for a total of 100.**

* 1. **Why did the federal government abandon the newly freed slaves after 1877? What did the Republican Party have to gain by doing this?**
  2. **How did new economic developments and immigration influence the sectorial shift of the 1890s?**
  3. **Cities surpassed rural areas in growth reflecting the new economic and demographic shifts after 1880. What impact did this have on national politics?**
  4. **How did the Populist and Progressive political movements mirror economic and demographic shifts after 1880?**

Study Prompt #7

Edwards, Chapter 21 “An Emerging World Power” (620-632)

1. How did Josiah Strong’s book *Our Country* articulate a series of readily understood reasons for American expansion beyond our shores? (622-623)
2. How did these come into play in justifying war against Spain? How did these help justify crushing Filipino independence and annexing the Philippines as a colony of the U.S.? What do you make of the evidence presented in the open debate? (628-629)
3. How did economic interests, especially sugar plantations in Cuba and Hawaii, influence the decisions to declare war? How did these same interests find expression in the “Open Door Policy” regarding China?
4. America finally sided with the Allies in World War I, ending the stalemate on the Western Front; this helped bring about a rapid German retreat and collapse of the war. Yet after four years of fighting by Europeans, how much did this end of costing the United States in comparison with other nations? What sort of benefits did American reap during the war?

Study Prompt #8

Zinn, Chapter 15 “Self Help in Hard Times” (377-406)

1. Why does Zinn highlight the violence against the IWW at the start of the chapter? What the economic environment in which this takes place?
2. How profound is the collapse of the economy in 1929? How widespread are the impacts—and what evidence does Zinn present to illustrate his points?
3. How did these circumstances play into the increased credibility of and interest in socialism and communism (the two are **not** the same).
4. Why did so many people advocate doing nothing in the face of the economic collapse?
5. How would you summarize this chapter—and what several episodes/ pieces of evidence might you bring forward to illustrate your summary?

Study Prompt #9

Edwards, Chapter 22 “Managing the Depression, Forging the New Deal” (678-693)

1. What were the basic problems that the New Deal tried to solve? Why did it seem to require the scope and power of the federal government to deal with these problems?
2. How did each of the programs listed (Table 22.2, 693) seek to stabilize various parts of the economy? How did they address the various problems (as noted in question #1 above)?
3. Why did this approach become so controversial? Why does it remain so controversial for some Americans? Do the letters of 80 years ago (684-685) continue to resonate today in people’s response to various government social welfare programs?

Study Prompt #10

Edwards, Chapter 24 “Cold War America” (748-767)

1. How well do the textbook’s authors explain the origins of Cold War? Does it make sense? Why should the United States fear the Soviet Union in 1946?
2. Why might we see containment as a global policy for the long term rather than an immediate or short-term solution?
3. The Cold War had profound economic and political consequences.
   1. What do we see about the economic ones in terms of the military-industrial complex? Why would people be unwilling to question this? (Map 24.3, 762)
   2. How did Senator Joseph McCarthy exploit these political conditions to his own advantage? Why did so many Americans refuse to confront him in his tirades?
4. How did the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 mark a turning point in the Cold War?

Study Prompt #11

Edwards Chapter 25 “Triumph of the Middle Class” (780-808)

As Americans, we pride ourselves on being a solidly middle class nation of homeowners and consumers. Yet much of what we have come to accept as natural or normal for entirety of our history has been the product of the past 60 years or so.

1. What factors left the United States as the unchallenged economic power in the years after 1945? How did this domination of the global economic have an impact on the prosperity of many wage earners? (Figure 25.1, 785)
2. How did the high rate of unionization contribute to these conditions? (Figure 25.2, 787)
3. Might we also cite the changing birthrate as a factor in this situation? (Figure 25.3, 793) What might be the connection among these factors (global economic domination, unionization, and birthrate)?
4. Who was most likely to leave the cities and move to the suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s (in terms of class, race, and age)? Would there be longer-term political implications for this shift in population?

**Second Exam: Students will answer all three questions with a minimum of two pages, doubled-spaced response using a font no larger than 12 point (Times New Roman is a good example.) You will use the materials assigned in class for your answers. If you use an outside source, you must clear it with me first. Each portion of the exam is worth 33 points (plus a bonus point for spelling my name correctly) for a total of 100.**

1. **During the first part of the Global Economic Collapse (1929-1933) the belief in “self-help” and “rugged individualism” helped to shape responses by the fall levels of government along with individual perceptions. Why did it give way to the New Deal in 1933?**
2. **How did World War II reshape America’s economic prospects? What impact did this have on the post-war prosperity during the Cold War?**
3. **To what degree did the emergent and growing Civil Rights movement reflect the larger changes in the Cold War period in the U.S.? (Consider what the U.S. opposed in fighting Nazi Germany along with who did/did not fully benefit from the post-war prosperity.)**

Study Prompt #12

Edwards, Chapter 26 “Walking into Freedom Land: The Civil Rights Movement” (810-842)

1. How shocking would the civil rights demands beginning in the late 1940s be for a nation that officially endorsed apartheid (legal segregation) in 1896? (See *Plessy v Ferguson*, 539)
2. Which key episodes—protest events and legal actions—serve as benchmarks for the origins of the Civil Rights movement in the early 1950s?
3. Given the importance and violence attached to voter rights in the South, how successful would you rate the efforts? (Map 26.4, 834)? Do you see the current drive under conservative state governments to create Voter ID Laws as an assault or a protection of these hard-won voter rights?
4. Why would similar demands for recognition of rights and respect among Indians and Mexican immigrants prove so frustrating to many Americans by the 1980?

Study Prompt #13

Edwards, Chapter 27 “Uncivil Wars: Liberal Crisis and Conservative Rebirth” (846-852; 870-876)

1. What were some of the specific programs of President Johnson’s Great Society? How did they expand upon the efforts to promote economic stability and greater opportunity begun during the New Deal? (Table 27.1, 849)
2. What stands at the center of the so-called “Days of Rage?” How did these events/ trends fuel the appeal of conservatism among many Americans? How did this find expression in the politics of the “Silent Majority” and election of 1972?

Study Prompt #14

Zinn, Chapter 18 “The Impossible Victory: Vietnam” (469-502)

1. What reasons does a Zinn give for the origins of the war? How did the US get involved?
2. How critical is the context of the Cold War to explain American interests in Southeast Asia?
3. What was the path to escalation by the United States in Vietnam? What response did it evoke—and why?
4. What is the significance of the Pentagon Papers? Why did the Nixon administration seek to prevent their publication?
5. Why were Americans surprised by events at My Lai?
6. How would you summarize this chapter—and what several episodes/ pieces of evidence might you bring forward to illustrate your summary?

Study Guide #15

Edwards, Chapter 31 “Confronting Global and National Dilemmas”

With the end of the Cold War, there remains no clear resolution to regional conflicts or where an American presence (either military or economic) seems as decisive as in the years before 1991. Additionally, the United States is not as powerful a global player economically as before; the emergence of other global competitors and innovators (e.g., German and Japan have challenged markets formerly dominated by the U.S. Additionally, American investors and corporate leadership have shifted jobs overseas to reduce costs and maximize short-term profits. It is this context we look at America today and think about questions raised in this chapter.

1. The distinction of household income worth noting—this includes a two-income household rather than a single wage-earning income. What has happened to the general levels among American workers since the 1970s? Looking at the rise in two income households (28.5, 901) how are the data there augmented by the data on family income levels? (Figure 30.1, 945; please note that in the past, rising wages/ benefits paralleled rising productivity. (Where is the additional profit going in this case since 2000?)
2. How do these developments (as noted above) compare with the conditions experienced by American workers in the years from the 1930s through to the 1970s? Do you think that this has played a role in the rise of conservative movements in the United States?

**Final Exam: Students will answer both questions with a minimum of a two-page, doubled-spaced response using a font no larger than 12 point (Times New Roman is a good example.) You will use the materials assigned in class for your answers. If you use an outside source, you must clear it with me first. Each portion of the exam is worth 50 points for a total of 100.**

* 1. **How did Vietnam become a central focus for polarizing American society in he 1960s and 1970s? What issues received greater public attention during the war? (Consider what we said the U.S. was fighting for in Vietnam, contrasted to domestic realities.)**
  2. **Do any of these issues continue to have an impact on American lives since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975? (U.S. troops pulled out in 1973, but the official end to the war is April 30, 1975.) Have they emerged in our current political climate?**

**Final Project: Ephemeral Films and their significance.**

Students will select at least three “ephemeral films” from the two 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.

**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>

“Make Mine Freedom” (1948)

<https://archive.org/details/4050_Make_Mine_Freedom_01_01_10_02>

“Are You Popular?” (1947)

<https://archive.org/details/AreYouPo1947>

“Our Changing Family” (1957)

<https://archive.org/details/OurChang1957>

“The All American Soap Box Derby” (1936)

<https://archive.org/details/AllAmeri1936>

“The Plantation System in Southern Life” (1950)

<https://archive.org/details/Plantati1950>

**The two websites:**

<https://archive.org/details/ephemera>

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>

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?”).