

HSTAA 345
U.S. POLITICAL & ECONOMIC HISTORY, 1920-2020
University of Washington – Winter 2020
TuTh 3:30-4:50
CMU 230

Prof. Margaret O'Mara
204B Smith
Office hours TuWedTh by appointment
Email: momara@uw.edu

How has the past century of American history shaped the political and economic landscape of today? What is the broader context and historical backstory of contemporary political and social movements, business practices, and global flows of people, capital, and ideas? How can we use historical knowledge and the tools of historical analysis to better understand and address present-day challenges? With these questions in mind, this course explores key moments and people in the history of the United States from the end of World War I to the present.

Course organization is both chronological and thematic, performing deep, evidence-based study of particular events and people in recent U.S. history to explore the evolving role of government, grassroots activism and fights for individual and group rights, partisan political change, technology as a product and shaper of society, changing patterns of production and consumption, migration and immigration, financial systems and global markets, and America's changing role in the world.

The course is designed to build upon prior U.S. history knowledge gained in high school and lower-division college surveys, going deeper and including comprehensive coverage of very recent history.

LEARNING GOALS:

- A refined understanding of how governments, markets, and individuals and groups have functioned as agents of historical change;
- Understanding the causes and contingencies behind America's transition from an agrarian nation to an industrial and post-industrial superpower;
- Sharpened critical thinking and writing about history, including ability to distinguish different types of sources (primary, secondary) and analyze their context and meaning; and
- An ability to apply this historical awareness to understanding present-day political, economic, and social structures..

REQUIRED READINGS

Readings (75-150 pages per week) include books, primary sources, and scholarly articles available in PDF on Canvas. Required books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore, on 4-hour reserve at Odegaard Undergraduate Library, or electronically were indicated below. I encourage you to purchase physical copies; all are available in paperback, and you may purchase used copies or earlier editions if you prefer. Once you have purchased the books, please bring the week's readings with you to class.

Linda Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK*

Eric Rauchway, *The Great Depression and New Deal: A Very Short Introduction* (also an e-book at the Library)

Ellen Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History with Documents* (also available as e-text rental via Amazon)

Bruce J. Schulman, *Lyndon B. Johnson and American Liberalism: A Brief Biography with Documents* (also available as e-text rental via Amazon)

Kevin Kruse and Julian Zelizer, *Fault Lines: A History of the United States Since 1974*

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Eight 500-700 word **short essays** on reading assignments, to be posted on Canvas no later than 11:59PM on Friday. You get two “bye” weeks of your choice for these essays. I will pose questions related to the reading as prompts for this reflection; you do not need to answer all of them, but may choose one as a starting point for your post. This is more than merely a reading summary, but should be a substantive, thought-provoking memorandum that considers and cites specific examples from the reading to make your point. Lecture content can and should be engaged, but the primary purpose of these posts is to analyze the reading. You may also use your post to home in on other issues in the reading that you find particularly interesting and provocative. (5% per post, for 40% total)
2. **Participation**, consisting of discussion, group work, peer workshopping and content analysis, and additional in-class and “homework” discussion and research tasks. (ongoing; 10% of grade)
3. **Midterm essay exam**: written exam of original essays on lecture/reading content from the first half of the quarter, responding to prompts posted by instructor, taken online on Canvas over a long weekend, to be submitted no later than 11:59 PM on Monday, February 10. (25% of grade)
4. **Final essay exam**: written exam of original essays discussing lecture/reading content for the full quarter but with particular emphasis on the second half, responding to prompts posted by instructor. Word document or similarly editable format only; no PDFs, please. Taken online on Canvas over a long weekend, to be submitted no later than 11:59PM on Monday, March 16. (25% of grade)

SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 – JAN 7 & 9 – The “Roaring” 1920s

America 1920; Fordism and the auto industry; immigration restriction and racial terrorism

READING:

Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK*, pp. 1-138

Karen Cox, “Why Confederate Monuments Must Fall”

Bill McGraw, “100 Years Later, Dearborn Confronts the Hate of Hometown Hero Henry Ford”

Anna Clark, "Magazine Censored, Editor Dropped for Covering Henry Ford's Anti-Semitic Newspaper"

WEEK 2 – JAN 14 & 16 – What the New Deal did

Global financial crisis; Hoover vs Roosevelt; dissident politics; the New Deal and its legacy

READING:

Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK*, 163-180

Rauchway, *The Great Depression and New Deal*, 1-22, 72-125

Ira Katznelson, "Limiting Liberalism: The Southern Veto in Congress" (Canvas PDF)

WEEK 3 – JAN 21 & 23 – The war years at home

Manhattan Project and the first computers; World War II and the West; civil rights and the election of 1948

Lecture on Thursday, January 23 will be an ONLINE lecture with embedded multimedia and writing and analysis activities.

READING:

James Sparrow, "Freedom to Want" (Canvas PDF)

Jennifer S. Light, "When Computers Were Women" (Canvas PDF)

Margot Canady, "Building a Straight State" (Canvas PDF)

WEEK 4 – JAN 28 & 30 – Internationalism meets anti-Communism

America in the postwar world; McCarthyism; Korea and other dominoes

Lecture on Thursday, January 30 will be an ONLINE lecture with embedded multimedia and writing and analysis activities.

READING:

Shrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism*, 1-106, 134-154

Paul Kramer, "Is the World Our Campus?" (Canvas PDF)

WEEK 5 – FEB 4 & 6 – October 1957

From Little Rock to Sputnik to Fairchild Semiconductor

READING:

William Hitchcock, "The Color Line" and "Ike's Missile Crisis," Chapters 14 & 15 of *The Age of Eisenhower* (Canvas PDF)

MIDTERM GOES ONLINE THURSDAY FEB 6 AT 5PM; DUE MONDAY FEB 10 AT 11:59PM

WEEK 6 – FEB 11 & 13 – The revolution will be televised

The Great Society; new mass media; origins of the modern conservative movement

READING:

Schulman, *LBJ and American Liberalism*, 1-103, 169-177

WEEK 7 – FEB 18 & 20 – Crises of confidence

The incomplete civil rights revolution; Lyndon Johnson’s Vietnam

READING:

Schulman, *LBJ and American Liberalism*, 104-166, 198-212, 228-232
Leah Wright Rigueur, “Running With Hares and Hunting with Hounds” (Canvas PDF)

WEEK 8 – FEB 25 & 27 – The pivotal decade of the 1970s

Watergate; stagflation and globalization; rising conservatism

READING:

Kruse and Zelizer, *Fault Lines*, 1-112

WEEK 9 – MAR 3 & 5 – 1984 & 1999

Reagan; the end of the Cold War; Clinton and the New Democrats; dot-com boom

READING:

Kruse and Zelizer, *Fault Lines*, 113-242
Peter DeJonge, “Riding the Wild, Perilous Waters of Amazon.com” (Canvas PDF)

WEEK 10 – MAR 10 & 12 – The New Millennium

The history of the present: media; populism; financial systems; globalization

READING:

Kruse and Zelizer, *Fault Lines*, 243-358
Mark Singer, “Trump Solo” (Canvas PDF)

EXAM WEEK –

FINAL GOES ONLINE THURSDAY MARCH 12 AT 5PM; DUE MONDAY MARCH 16 AT 11:59PM

CLASS POLICIES

I am delighted to have all of you in this class with me, and I’m looking forward not only to sharing what I know of this subject but for you to become as engaged and excited about the study of history as I am. My intent is to work with you, wherever you might be in your learning curve, to make this a productive and information-rich experience that leaves you with new knowledge and skills that translate into multiple academic and professional environments. Assignments are designed with these goals in mind, as are the policies I have developed to guide our collective classroom experience.

NOTES: Writing helps us think, and note-taking is essential not only to remembering what you are hearing but in processing and analyzing it. Take them during lecture, either on a laptop, tablet, or by hand—whatever works best for your brain, your memory, and your penmanship. I hand out lecture outlines each day, but these are outlines only, and should be complemented by your detailed notes on the subject at hand.

ELECTRONICS: If you rely on a laptop for note-taking, you may use one, but the WiFi must be turned off. Please do not take notes on your phone. Keep phones on silent/do not disturb mode. When you are online during class, you distract and disrupt not only your learning process but also that of your peers. Yes, the internet may be a terrific complement to something I've just said in lecture, but take a note of it and save the Google searches for later.

WRITING GUIDELINES, RESEARCH RESOURCES, & OTHER HELPFUL STUFF: I have a number of handouts and links available on my web site at www.margaretomara.com/resources. Some of these are by me, others are by other professors and university centers. They can be helpful in answering questions you have about work in this class and in other classes. Please read and refer to these as needed, and feel free to share with others as long as you note where you found it.

FAIR USE: Sometimes assignments in this and other UW classes involve pulling digital materials from other places online. When repurposing this content, especially when using for a graded class assignment and *especially* when you plan to also publish online, do so with copyright law and fair use guidelines in mind. The UW Libraries has a useful and comprehensive guide for this: https://guides.lib.uw.edu/research/copyright/fair_use.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: In all assignments you are expected to adhere to the standards of academic integrity outlined by the University of Washington Student Conduct Code. In an age of internet-based research and writing, the standards for plagiarism and academic dishonesty can become unclear, and I strongly encourage all students to read UW statements and guidelines that outline acceptable practices and procedures: <https://www.washington.edu/cssc/for-students/student-code-of-conduct/>.

ACCESS AND ACCOMODATIONS: Your experience in this class is important to me. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course. If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924 or uwdrs@uw.edu or disability.uw.edu. DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and DRS. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES: Assignments submitted late on Canvas will be penalized 5%, with an additional 5% penalty added for every 12 hours of tardiness after that. This policy exists as a matter of fairness and equity to all the students in the class: how would you feel about crunching to make a deadline and then discovering that others had a few additional hours to work on an assignment? The answer to most deadline crises is good planning. Allow enough time before deadlines to avoid any technical/computer problems that might make your assignment late. If you have a medical or personal

situation that you realize will affect your ability to submit the assignment on time, email me directly as soon as possible with an explanation.

ABSENCES: Success in this course will depend on your being present and engaged in class. I also realize that life can get in the way. Please alert me to any expected absences well ahead of time so that we can make arrangements for makeup assignments. In cases of unexpected absences (illness, family emergencies), you must contact me within a week of the absence to be considered for makeup credit.

ILLNESS: Please follow common-sense guidelines in order to protect yourself and your fellow students. Stay home if you have a fever or any malady that might be easily communicated to those sitting near you in the classroom. Doctor’s notes are not required for occasional absence.

DISCUSSION/PARTICIPATION STANDARDS: In all lectures, I expect consistent participation—this means attention to lecture content, answering questions I pose in class, and working actively in pairs and small groups. Come every day, come prepared, give me your sustained attention.

OFFICE HOURS: These are a great way for me to more easily get to know you all individually, and vice versa. You can make an appointment with me by sending an email to momara@uw.edu. Come see me to talk about questions you have about class content or assignments, or because you’d like an opportunity to talk further about the topics of this class. You do not have to have a problem or question to come to office hours, and you also are welcome to bring a friend if you’d like to talk to me together.

FINAL GRADE SCALE: Each assignment is worth a certain percentage, totaling 100%. I convert the total into a four-point scale at the end of the quarter following this rubric:

| | | | | |
|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------------|
| ≥ 95% = 4.0 | 88 = 3.3 | 81 = 2.6 | 74 = 1.9 | 67 = 1.2 |
| 94 = 3.9 | 87 = 3.2 | 80 = 2.5 | 73 = 1.8 | 66 = 1.1 |
| 93 = 3.8 | 86 = 3.1 | 79 = 2.4 | 72 = 1.7 | 65 = 1.0 |
| 92 = 3.7 | 85 = 3.0 | 78 = 2.3 | 71 = 1.6 | 64 = 0.9 |
| 91 = 3.6 | 84 = 2.9 | 77 = 2.2 | 70 = 1.5 | 63 = 0.8 |
| 90 = 3.5 | 83 = 2.8 | 76 = 2.1 | 69 = 1.4 | 62 = 0.7 |
| 89 = 3.4 | 82 = 2.7 | 75 = 2.0 | 68 = 1.3 | 61 ≥ no credit |