HISTORY 134:
U.S. HISTORY 1877 – Present

Course Description:

This course will help you make sense of the complex history of the United States since Reconstruction. It meets Texas state requirements for all graduates. We will focus on the cultural, religious, social, and political changes that have shaped modern American life. The first half will examine American life from the end of the Civil War to the Great Depression. The second half will examine American life since World War II.

Course Goals:

1) To provide an overview of American life since the end of the Civil War, focusing on popular culture to understand the development of modern America.
2) To make history more interesting than the regurgitation of names and dates.
3) To encourage creativity by allowing you to answer complex questions with a variety of correct answers.
4) To train critical thinking by reading, analyzing, and discussing documents from the past.
5) To develop clear and concise writing skills.

Texts and Materials:

Assigned Reading:
- Various readings on D2L

Recommended Textbook
- The American YAWP (http://www.americanyawp.com/)

Course Requirements:
The course will consist of three elements: lecture, readings, and discussion.

Lectures are your opportunity to learn the key topics and themes of the class. It is imperative that you take a good set of lecture notes. Taking good quality notes is not easy. It is important that you show up to class rested and prepared to take a few pages of notes in a 50-minute period. I suggest that students come see me early in the semester if you have any questions about notes to make sure that you are getting the most important themes.
Readings: Each week, you will be asked to read or watch a handful of primary sources and scholarly essays. These are essential to your learning and will make your experience in the class more enlightening. The readings for the course were chosen carefully in order to enhance your understanding of American history and life. The readings should do a number of things: 1) Teach you something new; 2) Frustrate you. We are dealing with people from the past and, inevitably, one of them will say something that you find offensive; 3) Challenge you to think about American history in a different light.

Discussion: In the discussion sections you will have the opportunity to explore the themes of the lectures by discussing your reading assignments for that week. These will usually be firsthand accounts written by people who lived through the period we are discussing. The discussion sections are also an opportunity for you to meet and learn from your fellow classmates. Each meeting of your discussion section will include a reading quiz worth 10 points. They will not be incredibly difficult. If you do the reading, you will not struggle with the quizzes. But if you do not do the reading, you will not do well on the quizzes or in the course.

Grades:
Your grade will be calculated out of 500 points:
- 100 points will come from a midterm exam
- 100 points will come from a final exam
- 200 points will come from papers (100 points each)
- 80 points will come from reading quizzes (lowest 3 grades dropped)
- 20 points will come from the primary source analysis

Assignments will be graded on the standard letter grade scale beginning with A (100-90) and ending with F (59-0). The professor reserves the right to raise a student’s final grade, but a student will not receive a grade lower than the points earned in the course.

Exam Format:
The exams will consist of short answer questions and an essay question. The first exam will cover material from the Civil War to the Great Depression; the second exam will cover material from the World War II to the present with one cumulative essay. Be sure to purchase a blue book (available at the bookstore) for each exam. Please use pen (blue or black ink only please) on the exams.

Papers:
You will write two short (750-1000 words) papers worth 100 points each. The first paper, due during week 6, will cover race and American culture, a topic that will be a prominent theme for the first few weeks of the semester. The second paper, due during week 13, will be a critical analysis of the 1958 film The Blob. Only course materials can be used in the papers.

Missed Assignments:
Exams and other assignments must be taken on time. If an emergency occurs preventing you from taking an exam, it is your responsibility to make a reasonable and timely effort to contact me. Late papers will receive a 10-point per day penalty. Exams may only be made up with a valid note from a relevant source (doctor, psychiatrist, university department, etc.). Make-up
exams are likely to be more challenging than those given at regularly scheduled times. Students must wait 24-hours after receiving a grade before they can inquire about it. All questions regarding the accuracy grades must be addressed no later than two weeks after you receive it.

**Attendance Policy:**
There is no formal attendance policy for this course. However, you will not succeed in this course without coming to class. I will not send out my PowerPoint slides or recordings of my lecture. They will not be posted on D2L.

**Academic Integrity (A-9.1)**
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

_In addition, you may include your own guidelines for academic integrity as appropriate._

**Withheld Grades (Semester Grades Policy, A-54)**
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Students with Disabilities**
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).
Course Calendar  
(Subject to Revision):

WEEK ONE: INTRODUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION

January 17: Introduction to the Course

January 19: Baptized in Blood: The American Civil War and Reconstruction

WEEK TWO: VICTORIANISM AND WESTWARD EXPANSION

January 22: Discussion Section – How to take notes  
**Reading:** Syllabus, “How to Read a Primary Source.”

January 24: So Many Feels: Victorianism and American Culture

January 26: Go West, Young Man: The American West and Closing the Frontier

WEEK THREE: THE GILDED AGE AND RACE

January 29: Discussion Section – How to read  
**Reading:** Frederick Jackson Turner, “Significance of the Frontier in American History,” Listen to Lone Ranger, “Custer Rides with the Lone Ranger”

January 31: Janus Face: The Increasing Importance of Race in America

February 2: Mo’ Money, Mo’ Problems: The Rise of Corporate America

WEEK FOUR: VICTORIANISM IN CRISIS

February 5: Discussion Section – How to find a thesis statement  
**Reading:** Robert Toll, “Minstrels and African Americans in the Nineteenth Century”; YouTube: “Minstrel Show Blackface Stump Speech” and “Cotton and Chick Watts”

February 7: Eight Hours for What We Will: The Rise of American Leisure Culture

February 9: The Strenuous Life: Race, Sports, and Gender

WEEK FIVE: AMERICAN PROGRESSIVISM AT HOME AND ABROAD

February 12: Discussion Section – Writing seminar  
**Reading:** Teddy Roosevelt, “The Strenuous Life,” Brian Phillips, “Pedestrian Mania”
February 14: “Our Little Brown Brothers”: Race and American Imperialism

February 16: The Many Faces of American Progressivism

WEEK SIX: WORLD WAR I AND THE JAZZ AGE

February 19: Discussion Section – How to edit a paper
   Reading: Brian Phillips, “72 Days, Six Hours, and 11 Minutes,” Margaret Sanger, “The Civilizing Force of Birth Control”

February 21: The War to End All Wars: America and World War I

February 23: Booze, Sex, Flappers, Gangsters, and Hollywood: American Culture during the 1920s

FIRST PAPER DUE BY 11:59PM ON FRIDAY

WEEK SEVEN: REJECTING MODERN AMERICA AND THE GREAT DEPRESSION

February 26: Discussion Section – How to study
   Reading: Commission on Training Camp Activities: “When You Go Home” and “The Commission on Training Camp Activities”

February 28: Klansman, Movies, and Reform

March 2: Whistle While You Work: The Great Depression

WEEK EIGHT: MIDTERM

March 5: Midterm Review

March 7: MIDTERM

March 9: NO CLASS

WEEK NINE: SPRING BREAK WEEK

NO CLASS

WEEK TEN: WORLD WAR II

March 19: The Good War: America and the Second World War

March 21: Hollywood Goes to War: American Popular Culture during World War II

March 23: A Consumer’s Republic: Economic Prosperity after WW II
WATCH THE BLOB MARCH 22, 7-9PM
LOCATION TBD

WEEK ELEVEN: THE POSTWAR WORLD

March 26: Discussion Section

March 28: Better Dead than Red: The Second Red Scare in Cold War America

March 30: NO CLASS – EASTER HOLIDAY

WEEK TWELVE: COLD WAR AND RACE

April 2: Discussion Section
Reading: Watch: “Duck and Cover,” YouTube: “The Millionaire” (FOLLOW LINK ON D2L)

April 4: A Stone of Hope: Cold War and Civil Rights Movement

April 6: As Long as They Don’t Move Next Door: The Black Freedom Movement

WEEK THIRTEEN: THE RADICAL SIXTIES AND THE RIGHTS REVOLUTION

April 9: Discussion Section – Primary Source Analysis
Reading: NO READING BEFOREHAND

April 11: You’ve Got to Fight for Your Rights: The Rise of Student Activism and the Vietnam War

April 13: Battle of the Sexes: Men, Women, and the Family during the 1970s

SECOND PAPER DUE BY 11:59PM ON FRIDAY

WEEK FOURTEEN: THE FORGOTTEN DECADE

April 16: Discussion Section

April 18: The Forgotten Decade: American Culture during the 1970s

April 20: A Dream Come True?: Black America After the Civil Rights Movement
WEEK FIFTEEN: THE REAGAN YEARS

April 23: Discussion Section

April 25: Rambo, Reagan, and American Foreign Policy in Film

April 27: Morning in America: Ronald Reagan and American Life at Home

WEEK SIXTEEN: AMERICA AT THE MILLENNIUM

April 30: Discussion Section

May 2: A New World Order to the War on Terror: America after the Cold War

May 4: Is Google Making Us Stupid? America in the Digital Age

WEEK SEVENTEEN: FINALS WEEK

**FINAL EXAM**

HIS 134-015 (8am MWF) – **May 7, 8-10am**

HIS 134-016 (9am MWF) – **May 7, 10:30-12:30am**

HIS 134-017 (11am MWF) – **May 9, 10:30-12:30am**