History 104: American History from 1877 to the Present

MWF 11:00-11:50
King 123

Spring 2010
Oberlin College

Instructors:
Clayton Koppes
Rice 305
Office Hours: MW 9:30-11:00, 12:00-1:00, 2:30-3:15
F 9:30-11:00
(and by appointment)

Shelley Lee
King 141F
Office Hours: MW 8:00-10:30
(and by appointment)

Pablo Mitchell
King 141E
Office Hours: Th 11-12, F 9-10:30
(and by appointment)

DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course will explore American politics, society, and culture from the post-Civil War era to the present, focusing on the theme of "freedom" as a way to bind together multiple threads of the nation's past. From revolution to emancipation to "freedom flights" and "free to be you and me," calls for freedom have animated political struggles and cultural change in the country for over two centuries.

We will focus on changes in power relations in American society produced by social and political movements. Major topics will include civil rights movements, foreign policy, immigration from Asia, Latin America, and Europe, sexuality, and consumer culture. This course will also emphasize the use of primary sources, different modes of historical analysis and interpretation, and scholarly controversies.

As a team-taught course, the syllabus will alternate between lectures by the three instructors on Mondays and Wednesdays and discussion sections, usually held on Fridays. Course assignments will include a paper comparing a primary and a secondary source, in-class exams, and a take-home final.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Eric Foner, Give Me Liberty!: An American History
Anzia Yezierska, Bread Givers
Thomas Borstelmann, The Cold War and the Color Line
Gail Bederman, Manliness and Civilization

Textbooks are available at the college bookstore and on reserve at Mudd Library.

REQUIREMENTS

Paper #1 20%
In-class exam 20%
Paper #2 25%
Take-Home Final 25%
Attendance/participation 10%

HONOR CODE

By enrolling in this class you are agreeing to abide by Oberlin's Honor Code and Honor System. Be sure you have read and understood your rights and responsibilities. You can find it at this link:
http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code.html

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SPECIAL NEEDS
We will make every effort to accommodate the needs of students with physical or learning disabilities. Do see us as soon as possible to discuss what steps need to be taken and any modifications that might be necessary.

WEEK 1

2/8 Course overview

2/10 Introductory discussion sections
Reading: Foner, Preface, Chapter 15

2/12 Westward expansion and the end of the frontier
Reading: Foner, Chapter 16

WEEK 2

2/15 U.S. empire and the Spanish-American War
Reading: Foner, Chapter 17; Bederman, Chapter 1

2/17 Conservation
Reading: Bederman, Chapter 5

2/19 Discussion sections
Reading: Bederman, Chapter 2

WEEK 3

2/22 Jim Crow America
Reading: Bederman, Chapter 3

2/24 Progressivism
Reading: Foner, Chapter 18

2/26 Discussion sections
Reading: finish Bederman

WEEK 4

3/1 World War I
Reading: Foner, Chapter 19

3/3 Leisure and consumerism in the 1920s
Reading: Foner, Chapter 20

3/5 The Great Depression
Reading: Yezierska, Chapters 1-5
WEEK 5
3/8 The New Deal
   Reading: Foner, Chapter 21
3/10 Discussion sections
   Reading: Yezierska, Chapter 6-epilogue
3/12 Labor and the Dust Bowl

WEEK 6
3/15 World War II
   Reading: Foner, Chapter 22
3/17 World War II and Race
3/19 Discussion sections
   Reading: “A Call to March on Washington,” The Black Worker, May 1941; U.S. Department of War,
   “Final Report: Japanese Evacuation from the West Coast, 1942”

PAPER #1 DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 19 IN CLASS

WEEK 7
3/22 The Cold War
   Reading: Foner, Chapter 23
3/24 American culture during the Cold War
3/26 Discussion sections
   Reading: Borstelmann, Prologue-Chapter, 3

WEEK 8  SPRING RECESS

WEEK 9
4/5 The modern American state
   Reading: Foner, Chapter 24
4/7 Visit by Professor Peter Boag
4/9 In-class exam

WEEK 10
4/12 Brown v. Board and the struggle for civil rights in the 1950s
Reading: Foner, Chapter 25

4/14 Guest Lecture: Renee Romano, Department of History, Oberlin College
The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s
Reading:

4/16 Discussion sections
Reading: Borstelmann, Chapters 4, 5

WEEK 11

4/19 Vietnam War
Reading: TBA

4/21 The women’s movement
Reading: excerpt from Friedan, The Feminine Mystique

4/23 Discussion sections
Reading: New York Radical Women, “No More Miss America!”; Bella Abzug, Testimony Before the New York City Human Rights Commission

WEEK 12

4/26 Social movements of the late 1960s

4/28 Queer history
Reading: TBA

4/30 Discussion sections
Reading: Foner, Chapter 26

WEEK 13

5/3 The rise of conservatism

PAPER #2 DUE BY MONDAY, MAY 3 IN CLASS

5/5 The new immigration
Reading: Foner, Chapter 27

5/7 Discussion sections
Reading: Borstelmann, Chapter 6

WEEK 14

5/10 End of the Cold War/Neoliberalism and the economic crisis (CK and SL)
Reading: Foner, Chapter 28
5/12   Three takes on the Age of Obama (CK, PM, SL)
       Reading: TBA

5/14   American freedom today? (CK, PM, SL)

TAKE HOME FINAL DUE THURSDAY, MAY 20, 2010 BY 9PM

**The contents of this syllabus are subject to change. We will notify you in class of any updates or modifications.**