HISTORY 104  SPRING 2008  OBERLIN COLLEGE

AMERICAN HISTORY, 1877-present

MWF, 10-10:50 a.m.
King 337

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Thursday, 11 a.m.-12 p.m. or by appointment.

Course Description: This course will explore American politics, society, and culture from the post-Civil War era to the present. We will study this period through the lens of changing and competing definitions of “America” and “Americans.” We will look at the roles that government, law, economics, foreign policy, ideology, culture, and social change movements play in shaping American identity as well as its relationship to the construction of gender, race, ethnicity, class. We will also ask what the rights, responsibilities, and entitlements of American citizenship are. Do you have to be a citizen to be American? Can an American citizen be “Un-American”? We will address these questions by examining a variety of primary sources and a range of historical interpretations.

Required Texts:
Amy Dru Stanley, From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation (Cambridge)
Gary Gerstle, American Crucible: Race and Nation in the 20th Century (Princeton)
Mine Okubo, Citizen 13660 (University of Washington)
Beth Bailey, Sex in the Heartland (Harvard)
Van Gosse, Rethinking the New Left: An Interpretive History (Palgrave MacMillan)

Other Required Sources:
A number of additional readings will be placed on ERES or are available online. Please print out copies of these readings and bring them to class on the days we’re scheduled to discuss them. If you have trouble finding or reading an ERES text, let me know ASAP so I can correct the problem. Hard copies of the ERES texts have been placed on regular reserve, so use those if you have problems accessing or downloading the ERES versions. In addition to the readings, we will be analyzing and discussing a variety of media, including films, TV programs, advertisements, popular music, etc. Paper and exam questions will require you to incorporate discussions of these audio-visual sources, as well as material covered by the readings, lectures, and discussions.
Course Assignments and Grading:

**Attendance and Participation (25% of course grade):** Student participation is crucial to the success of this course. Students are expected to come to class on time, having carefully read the assigned texts and ready to play an active role in class and small group discussions. Students will be permitted three unexcused absences over the course of the semester. Additional absences will result in the lowering of the student’s participation grade unless approved by the instructor in advance or in the case of documented illness or family emergency.

**Response Papers (15% of course grade):** Students will write three short (2 page) papers in response to class reading and viewing assignments that will be due on 2/15, 2/25, and 4/16. More detailed descriptions of the assignments will be handed out separately.

**Primary Source Analyses (30% of grade):** Students will write three papers (3-4 pages) analyzing a primary source document or artifact (e.g. advertisement, photograph, piece of music, cartoon, newspaper or magazine article) in relation to a specific historical event, trend, or social change. These will be due on 3/17, 4/7, and 4/28. More detailed descriptions of the assignments will be handed out separately.

**Final Take-Home Exam (30% of grade):** A cumulative take-home exam will be handed out during the last class and will be due on May 14.

**Academic Integrity:** All course work is governed by the Oberlin Honor Code. You will be expected to attach a signed statement of the Honor Pledge to every written assignment. We will discuss how the Honor Code applies to specific assignments in more detail over the course of the semester.
Class Schedule

Feb. 4  Introduction to Class

Feb. 6  The Promise and Failure of Reconstruction
Read: Judith Shklar, American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion, Introduction
(online at http://mfs.uchicago.edu/pastworkshops/citizenship/index.html#readings);
From Bondage to Contract, Preface; “Letter to My Old Master” and “Examples of
Sharecropper and Labor Contracts” (handouts); “A Georgia Sharecropper’s
Story of Forced Labor” (online at http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/28)

Feb. 8  Free or Idle? Work, Unemployment, and Poverty after Emancipation
Read: From Bondage to Contract, chapter 3

Feb. 11 Women’s Rights After the 14th & 15th Amendments
Read: From Bondage to Contract, chapter 5;
Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “The Solitude of Self” online at

Feb. 13 Whose West?
Read: Text of the Dawes Act; Chief Joseph, “An Indian’s Perspective”; Capt. Richard
H. Pratt, “Kill the Indian and Save the Man”; Ida Lindgren, “Letters from Kansas”; N.A.
Jennings, “A Texas Ranger” (all on ERES)

Feb. 15 The Immigrant City
Read: Anzia Yezierska, “How I Found America” (ERES);
Jacob Riis, How the Other Half Lives, chapters I, III, V, IX, X (online at
http://www.yale.edu/amstud/inforev/riis/contents.html)

Turn In: Response Paper 1

Feb. 18 Industrial Labor and Capitalist Wealth
Read: From Bondage to Contract, chapters 2 and 5; Andrew Carnegie,
“Wealth” and Jay Gould’s “Testimony Before the U.S. Senate” (ERES)

Feb. 20 Radical Activism
Read: “The Haymarket Affair”
(online at http://www.chicagohistory.org/dramas/overview/over.htm)

Feb. 22 Race, Nation, Empire
Read: American Crucible, Introduction and Chapter 1; Emilio Aquinaldo, “Case
Against the United States”; Albert Beveridge and Theodore Roosevelt, “On
U.S. Imperialism” (ERES)

Feb. 25 The Rise of Jim Crow
Read: Plessy v. Ferguson Decision, Congressman Frank Clark, “On
Justice,” Frances Harper, “A Black Woman’s Appeal for Civil Rights” (all on ERES)

Turn In: Response Paper 2
Feb. 27  Progressive Era Reforms
Read: American Crucible, Chapter 2; George Washington Plunkett, “Honest Graft and Dishonest Graft” and Jane Addams, excerpts from Twenty Years at Hull House (ERES)

Feb. 29  Feminism and Suffrage

Mar. 3  The New Popular Culture
Read: Frederic Thompson, “Amusing the Millions”; “Democracy at the Movies”; Kathy Peiss, “‘Charity Girls’ and City Pleasures” (ERES)

Mar. 5  World War I
Read: Woodrow Wilson, “Declaration of War” and “The 14 Points”; Eugene V. Debs, “Speech at Canton, Ohio” (ERES)

Mar. 7  The First Red Scare
Read: American Crucible, Chapter 3; A. Mitchell Palmer, “The Case Against the ‘Reds’” (ERES)

Mar. 10  The Roaring 20s
Read: “Debating Bobbed Hair” (online at http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5117 )

Mar. 12  The Harlem Renaissance

Mar. 14  Boom and Bust
Read: “Business…the Salvation of the World” (online at http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5049 );

Mar. 17  Everyday Life in the Great Depression
Read: Excerpts from Studs Terkel, Hard Times
Turn In: Primary Source Paper 1

Mar. 19  The New Deal and the Popular Front
Read: American Crucible, Chapter 4; Franklin D. Roosevelt, “Speech to the Commonwealth Club”; “Conservative Responses to the New Deal” (ERES)

Mar. 21  World War II
Read: American Crucible, chapter 5
Look at: Norman Rockwell’s Four Freedoms (online at http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/powers_of_persuasion/four_freedoms/four_freedoms.html )
Mar. 24  No Class—Spring Break
Mar. 26  No Class—Spring Break
Mar. 28  No Class—Spring Break
Mar. 31  No Class—Ms. Estepa away at conference

Apr. 2   The Home Front
         Read: *Citizen 13660; Sex in the Heartland*, Intro and Chapter 1

Apr. 4   Nuclear Fears and the Roots of the Cold War
         Read: George F. Kennan, “The Long Telegram”; National Security Council,
              “Objectives and Programs, 1950” (ERES)

Apr. 7   Postwar Dreams: Suburbia, Family Life and Gender Roles
         Read: *Sex in the Heartland*, Chapters 2-4; Bloom and Breines, “Past as
              Prologue: The 1950s as an Introduction to the 1960s” (ERES)
         **Turn In: Primary Source Paper 2**

Apr. 9   “Un-American” Activities
         Read: *American Crucible*, chapter 6 and *Rethinking the New Left*, chapters 1-3;
              Joseph McCarthy, “Wheeling Speech” (ERES)

Apr. 11  Emmett Till, the Montgomery Boycott, and Black Resistance
         Read: *Rethinking the New Left*, chapter 5; Rosa Parks, excerpt, *My Story* (ERES)

Apr. 14  Rock and Roll and Teen Culture
         Ronald D. Cohen, “The Delinquents: Censorship and Youth Culture in Recent
              U. S. History” (ERES)

Apr. 16  Cold War Conflicts: Vietnam and Cuba
         Read: *Rethinking the New Left*, Chapter 5
         Watch: *The Fog of War* (DVD-850 on reserve at Mudd)
         **Turn In: Response Paper 3**

Apr. 18  The New Left and the Counterculture
         Read: *Sex in the Heartland*, chapters 5-6; *Rethinking the New Left*, chapter 6-7

Apr. 21  The Vietnam War and the War at Home
         Read: *American Crucible*, Chapter 8; *Rethinking the New Left*, Chapter 8

Apr. 23  From Civil Rights to Black Power
         Read: *American Crucible*, Chapter 7; *Rethinking the New Left*, Chapter 9

Apr. 25  Nixon, the Imperial Presidency, and Watergate
         Read: Excerpts from the Watergate Tapes; Excerpts, *Nixon: An Oral History* (ERES)
Apr. 28  The Sexual Revolution and Identity Politics  
Read: *Sex in the Heartland*, Chapter 7-end; *Rethinking the New Left*, chapters 10-12  
**Turn In: Primary Document Paper 3**

Apr. 30  Decline of the New Left and Rise of the Christian Right  
Read: *Rethinking the New Left*, chapter 13; Jerry Falwell, “Listen America” and Ronald Reagan, “Speech to the National Association of Evangelicals” (ERES)

May 2  The End of the Cold War and the New World Order  

May 5  9/11, the War in Iraq, and the New Patriotism  
Read: Responses to 9/11 Excerpts from *Iraq and the Lessons of Vietnam* (ERES)

May 7  Hurricane Katrina and what the U.S. Government Owes Its Citizens  
Read: Michael Ignatieff, “The Broken Contract”; Kent B. Germany, “The Politics of Poverty and History: Racial Inequality and the Long Prelude to Katrina” (ERES)

May 9  First Draft of U.S. History in the 21st Century

**Take Home Final Due by Wednesday, May 14 at 7 p.m. in Ms. Estepa’s office or mailbox**