

History 114b: The United States Since the Civil War Spring 2006, Moravian College

Dr. Francis Ryan

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Office: Comenius 301

Office Hours: Tuesday 10-12, Thursday 10-12, and by appointment.

Classroom: Comenius 305

Class Meets: Monday and Wednesday 8:50-10:00.

Course Overview:

This course is designed to provide a general introduction to the significant events that shaped United States history since the end of the Civil War to present times. Through readings, class discussions, lectures and films, the course will highlight such questions and themes as the period of Reconstruction, the settling of the Western states, the rise of cities and industry, Progressivism, the 1920s and the New Deal periods, the experience of the First and Second World Wars and the emergence of mass consumer society in the post-war period.

Required Texts:

The American Story: Volume II, Since 1865. (Second Edition) Penguin, 2005.

Laura Ingalls Wilder, Little House on the Prairie. Harper Trophy, 1935.

Michael Gold, Jews Without Money. Carroll & Graf, 1930.

Course Requirements:

Participation/Preparation: 15%

Each student is expected to read all assigned materials closely and critically, and to come to class prepared to discuss the readings thoughtfully. Each week, students will be provided with "Focus Questions." It is expected that students will be able to respond to these questions in depth; however, it is also hoped that you will be able to go beyond these questions and be able to discuss connections to course material and related reading and presentations. The class may have periodic unannounced quizzes to test student knowledge, and these will be included as part of the overall participation grade. It is imperative that each student be present and on time so that they may contribute to discussions. Excessive absences (more than two) and/or lateness will necessarily affect your final grade. If you anticipate that you will be late or absent, please inform me via email or telephone. While such notification will be appreciated and understood as courtesy, it will not be viewed as excusing the absence or lateness. Cases of absence based on medical reasons will be excused, provided a doctor's note is provided. Movies will be shown in this course, and will be arranged for viewing at a scheduled evening period. Although all efforts will be made to accommodate student schedules, each student

is responsible for viewing the movie on their own if they are unable to attend the scheduled viewing.

Please also observe common courtesy in class in regard to cell phones and eating in class.

Mid-term exams: 15% each

Students will take two in-class examinations based on assigned readings, lectures, films and discussions, the first on February 20 and another on March 27.

Short papers: 15% each

Students will write two essays (4 pages each) analyzing specific themes from the assigned primary readings. Further details will follow. Out of justice to the other students in this class, all late papers will be downgraded one letter grade for each day of lateness. Please be familiar with the Moravian College Code of Academic Conduct provided in the Student Handbook covering issues of academic integrity.

Final in-class Examination: 25%

This final exam, to be scheduled by the Registrar during finals week, will focus primarily on topics raised in class since the previous mid-term exam. However, students can expect to address a final essay question that draws on the major cumulative themes raised in this class.

Note: All of the course requirements listed above must be successfully completed to pass the course.

Topics and Readings (tentative)

Week 1: Introductions

Reading: The American Story, Chapter 16, p. 387-403 Begin reading Laura Ingalls Wilder, Little House on the Prairie.

January 16: Introduction to the class.

January 18: Background on the Early American Republic and the Civil War.

Week 2: The Crisis of Reconstruction, 1865-1877

Reading: The American Story, Chapter 16, p. 403-414; Little House.

January 23: Reconstruction

January 25: Reconstruction Continued.

Week 3: The Transformation of the Western United States

Reading: The American Story, Chapter 17; Little House.

January 30: The Western Myth in the American Imagination.

February 1: The West Continued.

Week 4: Urban and Industrial Society

Reading: The American Story, Chapter 18-19; Little House.

February 6: New Urban Communities.

February 8: Discussion on Little House on the Prairie.

Week 5: The 1890s and the Spanish-American War

Reading: The American Story, Chapter 21.

Begin reading Michael Gold, Jews Without Money.

February 13: The War of 1898

February 15: Social Changes of the 1890s

Week 6: Midterm Week

February 20: **1st mid-term exam.**

February 22: Visit to Moravian College Archives. Details to follow.

Week 7: Progressivism

Reading: The American Story, Chapter 23.

February 27: Introduction to Progressivism

March 1: Movie: *Iron Jawed Angels*

Week 8: Spring Break

Continue reading Jews Without Money

March 6: No Classes

March 8: No Classes

Week 9: Industrial Reform and Progressivism

Reading: The American Story, Chapter 22.

Have Michael Gold's Jews Without Money completed by Monday.

March 13: Progressivism

March 15: Industrial reform

1st short analysis paper due in class.

Week 10: World War One

Reading: The American Story, Chapter 24.

March 20: The Origins of the "Great War"

March 22: The First World War and Social Impacts.

Week 11: The 1920s

Reading: The American Story, Chapter 25

March 27: **2nd Midterm**

March 29: Babe Ruth, Flappers and the New Consumer Society

Week 12: The Great Depression, Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal.

Reading: The American Story, Chapter 26.

April 3: The Origins of the Great Depression

April 5: New Deal Reforms

Week 13: American and the Origins of World War II

Reading: The American Story, Chapter 27.

April 10: Background on the War

April 12: The Soldier's Experience

Week 14: World War Two

Reading: The American Story, Chapter 27.

April 17: No Classes

April 19: The War at Home and the Challenges of Victory

2nd Short Analysis Paper Due in Class, April 19.

Week 15: The Post-War Experience

April 24: The Rise of Consumer Society

April 26: Challenges and Affirmations: The Contradictions of Post-War Society

Final Exam time and location to be announced by Registrar.

