

## **United States History Survey since 1865**

Spring 2009

HIST 114

Tuesday-Thursday 10:20-11:30 am

Moravian College

Comenius 305

Instructor: Dr. Sharon Sauder Muhlfeld

Office Hours: by appointment

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### **Course Introduction:**

This course will cover approximately one hundred years of United States history, stretching from the post-Civil War reconstruction period to the early 1960s. Both ends of this one-hundred-year span featured significant social, political, racial, and legal upheaval, which will give us ample opportunity to analyze the country's response to this kind of change in different eras. While many historians focus on the dramatic transformation of the US since the Civil War, we will also examine the ways in which the nation remained the same. For whom did change occur? Whose lives were circumscribed in the same way as their ancestors? What social, political, and economic factors determined whether someone's life was marked by continuity or change? To answer these questions, we will strive to get inside the heads of nineteenth- and twentieth-century figures, enabling ordinary people to share the stage with the most prominent movers and shakers.

### **Primary Sources:**

To help you better understand what made these people tick, we will be examining some primary sources (i.e. memoirs, letters, transcripts of speeches). I will supply these documents as handouts or put them on reserve for you in the library. Reading primary sources can be a tricky thing. You will have to adjust to unfamiliar language and even more creative spelling, but I have confidence that the more you read, the more comfortable you will become with the writings of your fellow Americans.

It is also my intent that handling primary sources will introduce you to the task of the historian. History is not simply a collection of facts that historians spend their life chasing. Rather historians carefully examine the existing evidence (primary sources) and present an argument about it, much like a lawyer appearing before a jury. The evidence, however, is often tricky, requiring historians to analyze rigorously before reaching any conclusions about the past. For example, what might seem like a straightforward essay or travel narrative has to be inspected: What audience did the author intend to reach? How might the author have misread a situation? By the end of the course, I trust that asking such questions will seem natural to you.

These primary sources will also be at the heart of several of your assignments for this course. Three times throughout the semester, I will ask you to analyze several documents. Your job will be threefold: summarize the documents, identify what you don't understand and how those missing pieces might help to clarify the source, and connect the document to the broader course (ex: does the author seem to agree with the interpretations we talk about in class or you read in your textbook?). You do not need to write formally for these assignments (think of them as a primary source blog), and I will grade on a check plus, check, and check minus system, which correspond roughly to the letter grades A, B, and C. Each of these assignments will not necessarily be weighted equally; rather I will assign a "document analysis" grade at the end of the semester based on all three assignments. I will be looking for improvement over the course of the semester as well as effort.

### **Writing:**

While examining primary sources is an important part of the historian's job, another major segment is converting interpretations of the documents into coherent prose. Having analyzed primary material, this course will also enable you to practice the historian's craft through some of your written assignments. Again, writing history means making an argument and then supporting your claim using evidence from the past. Your first paper and the Midterm exam will require you to practice this skill.

### **Papers and Exams:**

1. The first assignment will be on the book *Bread Givers* and is due in class on **February 24**. In this somewhat autobiographical novel, Anzia Yeziarska introduces us to the world of Jewish immigrants in turn-of-the-twentieth-century New York. For your **3-5 page paper** you will discuss the unique challenges that immigration produced for women. I will give you a more detailed assignment sheet during the first few weeks of class.
2. **Midterm Examination.** This exam will be in-class and will occur on **March 12**. The format for this exam will be True/False/Justify. The entire exam will consist of several statements to which you will respond either true or false and then justify your answer. Points will be awarded only upon how completely and persuasively you justify your answer, not upon whether you select true or false.
3. Your final project will require you to use several document collections in addition to material from lectures and the textbook. Your task will be to pretend that you are teaching a week-long unit in a high school history classroom. You will have a choice of two topics, and you will need to decide how to cover the appropriate material in the allotted time as well as devise assignments to evaluate your students' learning. More details will be given later in the semester. The project is due in class on **April 21**.

4. **Final Examination.** The final exam will be administered on Friday, **May 8** at 1:30. The exam will consist of approximately a dozen short answer questions, covering material since the Midterm. You will be given three hours to take this exam.

### **Grades:**

Documents	10%
First paper	20%
Midterm	20%
Final paper	25%
Final exam	25%

### **Policies:**

1. **Participation:** I have not included participation as a specific percentage of your grade, but it will significantly affect my overall evaluation of your performance in this course. Participation will affect your grade by as much as one third (ex: good participation will move your grade from a B+ to an A-; poor participation will reduce your grade from a B+ to a B). I realize that some of you are more reticent than others, so participation in discussion will not be the only basis for my evaluation, but your insightful comments and questions are the easiest way to indicate to me that you have thought about the material and are prepared for class. Each class will include both lecture and discussion so there will be plenty of opportunities to make your voice heard. For those of you who are naturally shy, I suggest that you come to class having already thought about what you can contribute ahead of time. I prefer to not randomly call on students, but I will resort to that tactic if you are persistently silent.
2. **Attendance:** Attendance will also factor into my evaluation of your class participation. **Missing more than two classes without written permission from the health center or the dean will automatically result in a lowering of your grade.** Should you be absent for health or personal reasons, your written excuse should be delivered to me on your first day back. Any absence (even those without good excuse) should be reported or explained to me.
3. **Late assignments** will be accepted but will be reduced by a third of a grade for every day that the assignment is late (including weekends and breaks). **Papers receiving a grade lower than a C- must be rewritten unless the low grade is a result of being late. The student must also consult with me before rewriting.** For the first paper, students receiving a grade of C+, C, or C- have the option to rewrite (again, unless the grade has been altered by lateness) but only after consulting with me. In both cases, I will average the two grades together. No rewrites will be accepted for the first paper after **March 26.**

4. **Plagiarism** will not be tolerated. Plagiarism occurs whenever you use someone else's words or ideas without putting them in quotation marks and citing their work in a footnote. The most egregious forms of plagiarism occur when students copy entire paragraphs or sentences from another source and try to pass them off as their own, but copying short phrases is just as illegal. Simply changing a few words from another author's paragraph or sentence does not get you off the hook for plagiarism—you have still pilfered words and ideas. Moravian's plagiarism policy is that you will either fail the entire course or fail the assignment. I have found that most students who have resorted to plagiarism in the past did so out of desperation, fearing that their paper would be poor or late. Please remember, however, that both of these conditions would be preferable to academic dishonesty, which affects not only your grade but your overall academic record as well.
5. I reserve the right to alter this syllabus should the need arise during the semester.

### **Readings:**

The schedule of readings accompanies the course outline listed below. Readings are to be completed by class time on their scheduled date. Your papers and some exam material will be based on these readings, and I will expect you to be able to converse in class about them. The following books are available at the bookstore:

**Give Me Liberty**, vol. 2, Eric Foner  
**Bread Givers**, Anzia Yeziarska

### **Course Outline**

Jan. 20: Course Introduction

Jan. 22: Reconstruction

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, ch. 15**

Jan. 27: The Rise of Big Business

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 556-568, 579-588**

Jan. 29: Labor's Response

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 589-608**

Feb. 3: Shifting Frontiers: the South

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 608-616**  
**Document: “Peonage in the South”**

Feb. 5: Shifting Frontiers: the West

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 568-579**  
**\*Document Analysis #1 due\***

Feb. 10: Urbanization and Immigration

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 617-622, 640-646**  
**Bread Givers**

Feb. 12: Discussion of *Bread Givers*

Reading: **Bread Givers**

Feb. 17: Spanish-American War

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 624-636**

Feb. 19: Progressivism: the Age of Reform

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 637-639, 650-661**

Feb. 24: Presidential progressivism

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 669-677**  
**\*Bread Givers paper due\***

Feb. 26: The Women’s Movement

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 647-648, 658-661, 666-669**

March 3: Spring Break: **No Class**

March 5: Spring Break: **No Class**

March 10: World War I

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 678-700, 710-718**

March 12: **Midterm Exam**

March 17: Race relations and the Great Migration

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 700-710**

March 19: Fundamentalism, prohibition, and flappers

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 739-748**

Documents: **“Happiness in Marriage” and “Moving Pictures”**

March 24: New technology and “mass culture”

**\*Document Analysis # 2 due\***

March 26: The “Business of America is Business”

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 719-738**

March 31: The Great Depression

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 748-755**

Essay: **“The Worst Hard Time”**

Documents: **“The Okies in California”**

April 2: The First New Deal

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 756-772**

April 7: The Second New Deal

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 772-795**

**\*Document Analysis # 3 due\***

April 9: World War II: prelude to Pearl Harbor

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 796-807**

April 14: World War II: On the home front

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 807-832**

April 16: World War II: Allied Victory

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 832-837**

April 21: The Cold War and McCarthyism

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, ch. 23**

**\*Second Paper Due\***

April 23: Consumerism and Suburbia

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 871-887**

April 28: The Growth of the Civil Rights Movement

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 899-911**

April 30: Conclusion and Review

**Friday, May 8: Final Exam, 1:30-4:30**