

THE EMERGENCE OF MODERN AMERICA

Dr. William D. Bryan

This course traces the emergence of the modern United States between 1877 and 1919. This was an era of unprecedented upheaval—a time in which the nation shifted from a largely rural and agrarian society to an urban and industrial one. In the process, Americans had to deal with the effects of industrialization and the rise of corporate capitalism, the growth of urban areas, labor struggles, the evolution of new social classes, the rise of Jim Crow, immigration and mass migration, changing ideas about family and gender, and new ways of thinking about the place of the United States in the world. This course will be especially focused on the theme of region. Following the end of Reconstruction, there were pronounced differences between northern, southern, and western parts of the nation. Yet this was an era in which regional lines were being eroded by new forms of transportation and communication technology, increases in federal power, national business organizations, migration between regions, nation-wide markets for new consumer goods, national attempts at reform, and other shared views about the best paths for the nation's future. As we trace the emergence of modern America, this course will explore the tension between nationalizing influences and persisting regional identity.

Required Materials:

Besides shorter materials, which will be provided on ANGEL, there are six books required for this class:

- David Nasaw, *Children of the City: At Work and At Play* (ISBN #: 978-0195040159)
- Charles Chestnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition* (ISBN #: 978-0486431635)
- Thomas G. Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (ISBN #: 978-0674046917)
- Ellen M. Fitzpatrick, ed., *Muckraking: Three Landmark Articles* (ISBN#: 978-0-312-08944-3)
- Susan Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed: The Making of the American Mass Market* (ISBN #: 978-1588341464)
- Eric Rauchway, *Blessed Among Nations: How the World Made America* (ISBN #: 978-0809030477)

Grading Policy:

The class grade will be formulated from a midterm exam, a final exam, class participation, and a series of short document analyses related to the weekly readings. The grade breakdown and due dates are listed below:

Mid-term Exam (20%): October 16

Final Exam (20%): TBA

Class Participation (10%)

Document Analyses (50%): 5 responses total

The majority of the grade will be made up of five document analyses, due at the beginning of each corresponding discussion class. We will talk about this more thoroughly in class, but you will be expected to find one primary source document relevant to the weekly topic, and to write a two page response analyzing your document, how it fits into the main theme of the week, how it relates to other readings for the week, and what interesting questions it raises.

Grades will be calculated using PSU's grading scale: A (100-95), A- (94.9-90), B+ (89.9-87.9), B (87.8-83.3), B- (83.32-80), C+ (79.9-75), C (74.9-70), D (69.9-60), F (59.9 and below). Students who fail to take exams during the assigned exam period will receive a zero for the assignment, unless clearing their absence with me at least one day prior. Fifteen points will be deducted each day an assignment is late, and those more than four days late will not be accepted.

If you ever have questions or concerns about your performance in the course, please come talk with me.

Attendance:

I do not formally take attendance during lecture classes, but I will keep track of attendance for all discussion classes. You are allowed one unexcused absence for the term. Excused absences—such as illness, family emergencies, religious observances, and university-approved curricular and extra-curricular activities—must be cleared by me beforehand and should be properly documented. If you have an excused absence that causes you to miss an assignment, please schedule a time to make it up beforehand.

Academic Integrity:

All forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited. All students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts (Faculty Senate Policy 49-20). Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students.

For further information about academic integrity at Penn State please refer to:
http://www.la.psu.edu/CLA-Academic_Integrity/student_policies/protect.shtml.

Disability Access:

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified people with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell me as soon as possible.

Course Schedule and Assignments: (*subject to change)

Week 1: Reconstruction

August 26: Introduction to the Class

August 28: Reconstruction's "Unfinished Revolution" North and South

August 30: America in 1877, The Hope of Democracy

Week 2: The New Corporate Capitalism

September 2: HOLIDAY, Labor Day

September 4: The Rise of Big Business, America's Uneven Industrialization

September 6: DISCUSSION: The Gospel of Wealth and its Critics, *Discuss Weekly Responses*

Assignment: Andrew Carnegie, Selections from *The Gospel of Wealth*; Henry George, Selections from *Progress and Poverty* (ANGEL)

Week 3: Immigrants in the City

September 9: Immigration and Mass Migration

September 11: Urban Growth in the United States, The Urban Environment

September 13: DISCUSSION

Assignment: Nasaw, *Children of the City* (ALL)

Week 4: Gilded Age Politics

September 16: Corruption and Politics in the Gilded Age

September 18: Radicals and Anarchists

September 20: DISCUSSION, Fears of Monopoly (Film: *A Corner in Wheat*)

Assignment: Henry George, "What the Railroad Will Bring Us"; Selections from Frank Norris, *The Octopus* (ANGEL)

Week 5: The New West

September 23: The New West and the End of the Frontier

September 25: The Fate of Native Americans

September 27: DISCUSSION

Assignment: Andrews, *Killing for Coal* (ALL)

Week 6: Labor Questions

September 30: Laborers North, South, and West

October 2: Labor Agitation

October 4: DISCUSSION, Labor Struggles: A Regional or National Phenomenon?
Assignment: Daniel Letwin, “Interracial Unionism, Gender, and ‘Social Equality’ in the Alabama Coalfields”; Selections from Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward*; Selections from T. V. Powderly, *Thirty Years of Labor* (ANGEL)

Week 7: The New South

October 7: The New South
October 9: The Emergence of Jim Crow
October 11: DISCUSSION
Assignment: Chesnut, *The Marrow of Tradition* (ALL)

Week 8: Radical Agrarians West and South

October 14: Review for Mid-Term
October 16: **MID-TERM**
October 18: The Origins of Populism in the West and South

Week 9: The Gilded Age?

October 21: The Populist Moment
October 23: DISCUSSION
Assignment: Political cartoons from the presidential election of 1896; Documents relating to North Carolina’s election of 1898; Populist Party platforms (ANGEL)
October 25: “Looking Backward” on the Gilded Age

Week 10: Changing Consumer and Leisure Behavior

October 28: New Leisure Activities and Consumer Goods
October 30: Film: *Coney Island*
November 1: DISCUSSION
Assignment: Susan Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed* (Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 7)

Week 11: Changes At Home

November 4: Changing Ideas About Family and Gender
November 6: Manhood
November 8: DISCUSSION
Assignment: Ellen Carol DuBois, “The Limitations of Sisterhood”; Selections from Gilman, *Women and Economics*; Selections from Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (ANGEL)

Week 12: An Era of Reform

November 11: Suffrage
November 13: The Reform Impulse

November 15: DISCUSSION, The Muckrakers
Assignment: Fitzpatrick, *Muckraking* (ALL)

Week 13: Progressivism and America's Expanding State

November 18: Progressive Reforms and Politics
November 20: Conservation of Natural Resources
November 22: DISCUSSION, Progressivism and the Expansion of Federal Power
Assignment: Eric Foner, "Freedom and the Progressive State"; U.S. Supreme Court, *Muller v. Oregon*; Selections from Theodore Roosevelt, *The New Nationalism*; Selections from Woodrow Wilson's First Inaugural (ANGEL)

Week 14: HOLIDAY (November 25-29)

Week 15: The United States and the World

December 2: American Imperial Ambitions
December 4: DISCUSSION, The Debate Over Empire
Assignment: Selections from Theodore Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life*; William J. Bryan's Speech at Indianapolis Democratic Convention (ANGEL)
December 6: Trade

Week 16: Looking to the Twentieth Century

December 9: World War I and Beyond
December 11: DISCUSSION
Assignment: Rauchway, *Blessed Among Nations* (ALL)
December 13: Review for Final Exam!

FINAL EXAM: DATE TBA