

Dr. Eric Platt (eplatt@stfranciscolllege.edu)
HIS 1201-3: MWF 10:10-11:05, Room 3314
Office: Room 7008
Office Hours: M 12:30-1:30, W 12:30-2:30 & by appointment

US History 1896 to Present

Course Description:

This course traces the political, economic, cultural, and social history of the United States since 1896. In the process we will examine the events, ideas, institutions, and people that have helped make the United States of America what it is today.

Learning Goals:

- Explain the evolution of 20th-century American political democracy.
- Trace the progress of American foreign policy during the 20th century as the country transitioned from an emerging power to the world's only superpower.
- Describe economic developments during the 20th century and their impact on the average American worker.
- Recognize the similarities and differences in the historical experiences of diverse groups in American society and these groups' roles in shaping American society.
- Gain awareness of cultural trends in 20th-century America.
- Improve critical thinking, research, and communication skills.

Requirements:

- Attend and **participate** in class
- Complete assigned readings
- Immigration project: Wednesday, September 28
- Coney Island group project: Monday, November 7
- Exam 1: Wednesday, October 12; Exam 2: Friday, November 18
- Final exam: TBD

Readings:

- James L. Roark et al., *The American Promise: A History of the United States* (Vol. C: From 1900), 4th ed.
- Charles Denson, *Coney Island: Lost and Found* [Do **NOT** purchase. This book will be given to you during the second week of class.]
- Additional readings from the class website [Angel]

Class Schedule and Assignments:

Week 1: Introductions

September 7: Introduction to the Course

September 9: The Gilded Age

Week 2: Turn-of-the-Century America

September 12: Immigration and Urbanization

September 14: Introduction to Coney Island

September 16: Documentary Film: "Coney Island"

Reading:

- [Angel] Patterson, *America in the Twentieth Century: A History* (Chapter 1)
- Denson, *Coney Island: Lost and Found* (Chapter 3)

Week 3: Turn-of-the-Century America (cont.)

September 19: American Imperialism

September 21: Labor Unrest and Grassroots Populism

September 23: **Discussion**

Reading:

- American Promise, Chapter 21 (pp. 745-756)
- [Angel] Moss, *America Since 1900* (pp. 23-32)
- [Angel] Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden"
- [Angel] Editorial from *San Francisco Call*
- [Angel] Selection from Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*

Week 4: Progressive Crusades at Home and Abroad

September 26: Progressivism and Politics

September 28: American Involvement in World War I [**Immigration Project Due**]

September 30: **Discussion**

Reading:

- American Promise, Chapters 21 (pp. 756-782) and 22
- [Angel] Selection from Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*
- [Angel] "A Doughboy's Letter from the Front"
- [Angel] Wilson's Fourteen Points Speech

Week 5: The 1920s: The First Modern Decade?

October 3: Boom Times

October 5: The Roaring Twenties

October 7: **Discussion**

Reading:

- American Promise, Chapter 23 (pp. 825-853)
- [Angel] "Flapper Jane"
- [Angel] "The Monkey Trial"
- [Angel] "Scopes Trial, Day 7: Darrow Examines Bryan"

Week 6: Introduction to Brooklyn Historical Society

October 10: Columbus Day [**No class**]

October 12: **Exam 1**

October 14: Introduction to Brooklyn Historical Society

Week 7: Coney Island Projects

October 17: Choose Topic of Coney Island Group Projects (Brooklyn Historical Society)

October 19: WordPress Training

October 21: Group Work on Projects (Brooklyn Historical Society)

Week 8: The Great Depression

October 24: “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?”

October 26: Roosevelt and the New Deal

October 28: **Discussion**

Reading:

- American Promise, Chapters 23 (pp. 853-858) and 24
- [Angel] “Hard Times and Hooverilles”
- [Angel] Franklin Delano Roosevelt, “First Inaugural Address”
- [Angel] “Working People’s Letters to New Dealers”

Week 9: World War II

October 31: America Enters World War II

November 2: Fighting the Fascists

November 4: **Discussion**

Reading:

- American Promise, Chapter 25
- [Angel] Franklin Delano Roosevelt, “Four Freedoms Speech”
- [Angel] “Soldiers Send Messages Home”
- [Angel] Willard Waller, “The Coming War on Women”

Week 10: Cold War

November 7: Beginning of the Cold War [**First Draft, Coney Island Group Projects Due**]

November 9: Height of the Cold War

November 11: **Discussion**

Reading:

- American Promise, Chapters 26 (pp. 947-960; 972-978), 27 (pp. 988-995), and 29 (pp. 1064-1069)
- [Angel] Joseph McCarthy on Communists in the U.S. Government
- [Angel] North Dakota Civil Defense Agency, *How You Will Survive*
- [Angel] John F. Kennedy, “Address on the Cuban Crisis, October 22, 1962”

Week 11: Middle-Class World of the 1950s

November 14: “Fair Deal” to “Middle Way”

November 16: Society and Culture of the 1950s

November 18: **Exam 2**

Reading:

- American Promise, Chapters 26 (pp. 960-972) and 27 (pp. 983-988; 996-1008; 1015-1016)

Week 12: Birth of the Civil Rights Movement

November 21: Jim Crow Era [**Final Draft, Group Projects Due**]

November 23 and 25: Thanksgiving Break [**No class**]

Week 13: The Civil Rights Movement and Vietnam

November 28: Civil Rights Movement

November 30: Civil Rights Movement (cont.)

December 2: Vietnam

Reading:

- American Promise, Chapters 27 (pp. 1009-1015), 28, and 29 (1070-1096)
- [Angel] Selection from *Rosa Parks: My Story*

Week 14: Malaise? Revival?

December 5: Nixon and Watergate

December 7: The Carter and Reagan Administrations

December 9: The End of the Cold War

Reading:

- American Promise, Chapter 30

Week 15: Turn-of-the Century America, Take II

December 12: Recent American History/**Review for Final**

Reading:

- American Promise, Chapter 31 (pp. 1141-1157)

Grade Breakdown:

Exam 1: 20%

Exam 2: 20%

Immigration Project: 10%

Coney Island Group Project: 15%

Reading Quizzes: 5% (Drop lowest grade)

Class Participation: 5%

Final Exam: 25%

Grading Scale:

A 92-100%

A- 90-91%

B+ 88-89%

B 82-87%

B- 80-81%

C+ 78-79%

C 72-77%

C- 70-71%

D 60-69%

F Below 60%

Classroom Policies

Reading and Class Participation:

Class discussion is very important for this course. You are expected to attend every class and to be fully prepared to discuss the assigned reading. Your class participation grade will reflect your attendance, the frequency and **quality** of your contribution to class discussion, and your

willingness and ability to listen and respond to the ideas of others. **Please feel free to ask questions during lecture.**

Academic Honesty:

You are encouraged to collaborate with other members of the course in studying and preparing assignments, but all final work must be your own. Cheating on tests will have severe consequences, as you will receive an automatic “F” (zero points). Plagiarized work will also not be accepted and is surprisingly easy to discover. To avoid plagiarism:

1. Do not copy word-for-word from the source you are using. Instead, **summarize** the main points or ideas of the material in **your own** words and phrasing, and give credit to the source you have used.
2. If you do need to use someone’s exact words, be sure to put quotation marks around the direct quote and cite the source and page number(s).

Talk to me if you have any questions about how to avoid plagiarism.

Attendance:

St. Francis College’s academic policies require regular attendance to all classes, including this one. Four unexcused absences will result in a lower grade for the class. If you are unable to make it to a class for a legitimate reason, please let me know. An excused absence is usually granted for illness, family emergency, and participation in college events. If you will be missing class due to a college event, please tell me ahead of time.

You are expected to be to class on time and remain until the end of the period. I will be taking attendance at the beginning of each class. If you are late, it is your responsibility to talk to me after class in order to make sure that you are not marked absent for the day.

Phones and Other Electronic Equipment

Phones and other pieces of electronic equipment are great at keeping us all in touch with each other and the world around us. But they can also be disruptive and interfere with class. I want to hear you participating in class discussion and asking questions, not hear your phone going off in the middle of lecture! Phones, iPods, etc., must be silenced or turned off once class begins. Also, laptops should be used for taking class notes, not surfing the web or playing games.

Late Work:

All assignments are due the day they are assigned. You are welcome to either e-mail me your work or turn it in during the class period. Unexcused late work will result in a lower grade for the assignment. No unexcused late assignments will be accepted after the last regular day of class.