

Dr. Eric Platt (eplatt@sfc.edu)  
HIS 1201-4: MWF 11:15-12:10, Room 3402  
Office: Room 7008  
Office Hours: M 3:00-4:00, WF 12:30-1:30 & 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 20<sup>th</sup>-century American political democracy.
- Trace the progress of American foreign policy during the 20<sup>th</sup> century as the country transitioned from an emerging power to the world's only superpower.
- Describe economic developments during the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup>-century America.
- Improve critical thinking, research, and communication skills.

### *Requirements:*

- Attend and **participate** in class
- Complete assigned readings and responses
- Complete blog postings
- Exam 1: Wednesday, February 22; Exam 2: Monday, April 2
- Coney Island project: Wednesday, March 14
- Final exam: TBD

### *Readings:*

- James L. Roark et al., *The American Promise: A History of the United States* (Vol. C: From 1900), 4<sup>th</sup> 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**

January 18: Introduction to the Course

January 20: The Gilded Age

## **Week 2: Turn-of-the-Century America**

January 23: Immigration and Urbanization

January 25: Introduction to Coney Island

January 27: Word Press Training/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.)**

January 30: American Imperialism

February 1: Labor Unrest and Grassroots Populism **[First Blog Due]**

February 3: **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**

February 6: Progressivism and Politics

February 8: American Involvement in World War I

February 10: **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?**

February 13: Boom Times

February 15: The Roaring Twenties

February 17: **Discussion**

*Reading:*

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

## **Week 6: Brooklyn Historical Society**

February 20: Presidents' Day **[No class]**

February 22: **Exam #1**

February 24: Introduction to Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS)

### **Week 7: The Great Depression and New Deal**

February 27: Choose Source for Coney Island Projects (BHS) [**Second Blog Due**]

February 29: “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?”

March 2: Roosevelt and the New Deal [**Third Blog Due**]

### **Week 8: The Great Depression and New Deal (cont.)**

March 5: Work on Coney Island Projects (BHS) [**Fourth Blog Due**]

March 7: The Second New Deal

March 9: **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**

March 12: America Enters World War II

March 14: Fighting the Fascists [**Coney Island Projects Due**]

March 16: **Discussion**

*Reading:*

- American Promise, Chapter 25
- [Angel] Franklin Delano Roosevelt, “Four Freedoms Speech”
- [Angel] “Press Release on Use of Atomic Bomb”
- [Angel] Willard Waller, “The Coming War on Women”

### **Spring Break: March 17-25 [No Class]**

### **Week 10: Cold War**

March 26: Beginning of the Cold War

March 28: Height of the Cold War

March 30: **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**

April 2: **Exam #2**

April 4: “Fair Deal” to “Middle Way”

April 6: **No Class [Easter Break]**

*Reading:*

- American Promise, Chapters 26 (pp. 960-972) and 27 (pp. 983-988; 996-1009)

## **Week 12**

April 9: **No Class [Easter Break]**

April 11: Society and Culture of the 1950s

April 13: Jim Crow Era

## **Week 13: The Civil Rights Movement and Vietnam**

April 16: Civil Rights Movement

April 18: Civil Rights Movement (cont.) / **Discussion**

April 20: Vietnam

*Reading:*

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

## **Week 14: Malaise? Revival?**

April 23: Nixon and Watergate

April 25: The Carter and Reagan Administrations

April 27: The End of the Cold War

*Reading:*

- American Promise, Chapter 30

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

April 30: Recent American History/**Review for Final**

*Reading:*

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

## *Grade Breakdown:*

Exam 1: 20%

Exam 2: 20%

Blog Posts: 8% (2% each)

SAFA Web Project: 15%

Responses: 6% (Drop lowest grade)

Class Participation: 6%

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." 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 updating your Facebook status.

#### **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 class. 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.