Course Description:
This course will introduce you to many of the major themes in U.S. History from the very
difficult time in American History--the Civil War to the present. There will be several
facets to the class as we try to understand some of the major events, trends and issues in
American history. Specifically, we will examine the major debates concerning the shape
that the nation would take after the Civil War; the legal, economic and social status of
African-Americans; the rise of industrial capitalism and the experience of workers; the
involvement of the United States in two World Wars; the expansion of imperial power;
the meaning, privileges, and restrictions of citizenship, and much more.

In addition, we will examine history from the “bottom up” by looking at the everyday
experiences of “ordinary” Americans. This “bottom up” approach will utilize tools from
the fields of social and cultural history to explore the significance of race, class, ethnicity
and gender in American life.

Course Goals and Objectives:
• Study the major events and themes of early American history.
• Analyze primary source documents and use historical method to construct an
  understanding of the past.
• Analyze the nature of key cultural diversity concepts such as difference, privilege,
  power, prejudice and discrimination.
• Recognize social, political, historic and economic factors contributing to cultural
differences.
• Apply historical concepts and frameworks to understand the implications of cultural
diversity.

Guidelines and Expectations:
• Attendance is required and will be taken everyday. If you miss more than 3 class
  sessions, this will lower your grade.
• I expect you to do all the assigned reading in advance for each class as scheduled.
  Bring all assigned reading materials to class.
• Please be on time, prepared to discuss and engage the material.
• To receive full credit, papers are due on the scheduled dates. As a general rule, late
  work will not be accepted; in unavoidable circumstances, such as illness, you have
  the responsibility to contact me as soon as possible to make arrangements for timely
  completion of assignments. I will not, however, accept papers over a week late.
• Note the scheduled mid-term and final exams. You must take the exams as
  scheduled. Make sure you do not make travel arrangements before your last exam.
• Please come to class on time. It is disrupting to your fellow students and myself
  when you walk in late.
• Please turn off your cell-phones and i-pods and please put away newspapers
• If you are going to use a lap-top computer, please sit in the first two to three rows of the classroom.
• I need for you to do help to make this a safe classroom. Do not talk over people, and refrain from using sexist, racist, homophobic, or any derogatory language. If you disagree with a fellow student (which is fine!), say so in a respectable manner.
• Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is the cornerstone of the university and will be strongly enforced in this course. Any student found in violation of the academic integrity policy will not receive credit for the course and will be referred to the Dean of Students
• H1N1 information: The Dean of Students has released information about the school’s policy for this upcoming influenza season. If you are having any symptoms of the flu—H1N1 or otherwise, please stay home, contact me, and we will make arrangements for you to complete your work. You will not be penalized for not attending class due to the flu.

NOTE: If you have a disability and are in need of academic accommodations, please notify me immediately to arrange needed support. PSU’s Disability Resource Center is located at Smith Memorial Student Union, Suite 435. They can be reached at (503) 725-4150.

A Note on Grading:
When grading papers and essay exams, I follow the guidelines described below.

An “A” paper is outstanding work that goes beyond analysis of course material to synthesize concepts in a valid and/or novel way.

A “B” paper is very good to excellent work that analyzed material explored in class and is a reasonable attempt to synthesize material.

A “C” paper is adequate work that satisfies the assignment with a limited analysis of material explored in class.

“D” or “F” papers do not respond adequately to the assignment, or are marred by errors, unclear writing, and poor organization which indicate that you do not understand the material presented in the course.

Assigned Reading: These books are available at the PSU Bookstore.
Anne Moody, Coming of Age in Mississippi (Dell Books, 1968)

Norton has a helpful site for students: http://www.wwnorton.com/college/history/oner2/

Grading:
25% Mid-Term. This will include a short essay question, as well as identification questions.
25% Final. The format for the final will be the same as that of the mid-term.
20% Quizzes: Every week you will answer one question based on the reading for that week. They will be short and simple, but will require you having read the material.

20% Four, one-paged synopses of a selected primary document. This assignment will be done over the course of the quarter and is clarified at the end of the syllabus.

10% Discussion Starters: I expect that all of you come to class well versed in the assigned readings and ready to participate. I am interested in the quality of your comments, not just their quantity. A basic premise of this course is that ideas count, both yours and mine, and that a mutual sharing of ideas will be intellectually stimulating for all of us. To facilitate this process, you will be required to lead small group discussion of the primary documents during the session. Once a week, students will break into small groups to discuss the week’s reading assignment. Students will be responsible for drafting “discussion starters”—questions, comments or identification of key passages from the text to get conversation going. Each member of the group will then lead a small group in discussion. The class will re-convene as a large group for shared feedback and for more discussion. Each group leader will then turn in the questions to the professor. You will sign up for a week.

Course Schedule

NOTE: The readings will be noted as follows: “Foner” refers to the main textbook and “VOF” is your smaller, primary textbook.

Week One
Reconstruction: African-Americans Negotiate Freedom
Jan. 4, 6, 8
Readings: Foner and VOF, Ch. 15

Week Two, American in the Gilded Age and the Rise of Industrial
Jan. 11, 13, 15
Capitalism and the Labor Movement
Readings: Foner and VOF, Ch. 16

Week Three
Freedom’s Boundaries at Home and Abroad, 1890-1900
January 18, 20, 22
Readings: Foner and VOF, Ch. 17

Week Four
The Progressive Era
January 25, 27, 29
Reading: Foner and VOF, Ch. 18

Week Five
United States and World War One
February 1, 3, 5
Readings: Foner and VOF, Ch. 19

Week Six
The 1920s: Roaring, Normal, or Contested?
February 8, 10, 12
MID-TERM EXAM, FEBRUARY EIGHT
Readings: Foner and VOF, Ch. 20

Week Seven
The Great Depression and a New Deal for America
February 15, 17, 19
Readings: Foner and VOF, Ch. 21
Week Eight  “The Good War:” America and World War II
February 22, 24, 26  Readings: Foner and VOF, Ch. 22

Week Nine  Cold War Politics and Domestic Containment
March 1, 3, 5  Readings: Foner Ch. 23, 24 and please start Anne Moody, Coming of Age in Mississippi

Week Ten  The Sixties and Reconstruction’s Unfinished Business
March 8, 10, 12  Readings: Finish Moody’s Coming of Age; Foner, Ch. 25

Final Exam: Tues., March 16 8:00 a.m. to 9:50

Guidelines for Discussion Starters
1. What is the main argument or theme in the document/reading? What kinds of ideas about the world does the author take for granted or challenge? How do these assumptions inform the arguments in the document?

2. Who is the intended audience for the document/article? How does the author craft their argument for a specific audience? What kind of evidence is stressed? What is left out?

3. Compare and contrast two elements, characters, or points of view in two different documents/articles. What does the comparison tell you?

Quarterly Assignment: Synopses of Primary Documents:
For this assignment, you will write four, one to two paged (no more than two pages, please) typed and double spaced essay that summarizes and analyzes the significance of one of the pre-selected primary document assigned for each quarter of the term’s reading. This assignment will be evaluated on your ability to write clearly as well as your engagement with the text. If you have any questions or concerns, please come see me and/or make an appointment with the Writing Center, CH 188

Choose one of the primary documents from the following documents for each quarter of the term to complete this assignment:

First Synopsis:  Docs. 94, 96-98 (due Jan. 11); or Docs. 100, 102 (due Jan. 18); or Docs. 105- 107, 111 (due Jan 25)
Second Synopsis:  Docs. 113, 115, 117 (due Feb. 1) or Docs. 120-122, 124 (due Feb. 10);
Third Synopsis:  Docs. 129, 130, 132 (due Feb. 15) or Docs. 134-137; 139-141 (due Feb. 22)
Fourth Synopsis:  Docs. 142, 147 (due March 1)

The following text provides some helpful tips as you approach this assignment.

How to Read and Analyze a Historical Document:

Place the Document in Context.
Your first job in analyzing a document is to answer two questions: Who created it? And what circumstances was he or she responding to in writing it? Answering these questions will provide important clues as to what the document can tell you and what it can not. Like all statements, historical documents don't tell the whole truth. In the first place, they reflect the biases and assumptions of the people who wrote, spoke, sang, drew, or painted them. They allow us to understand the mind-set of particular social and political groups—but only if we know what social and political group the author belonged to. Just as important, documents are usually responses to specific situations (wars, rebellions, political controversies, accusations against the author, etc.) and, more often than not, are efforts to change those situations (to raise armies, put down rebellions, triumph in political controversies, refute accusations against the author, etc.). The author of a document doesn't always tell the entire truth he or she knows—he/she tells what they want their audience to hear, in order to get that audience to act in a certain way. As historians, it's your job to ask several questions that will help you understand what you can and can't learn from a document:

1. Who was the author of the document? What was his/her social position (his/her race, class position, gender, etc.?) What were his or her political and religious commitments? How might their social position, politics and religion have affected his or her view of the subject he or she wrote about?
2. What was the situation in which the author was writing, painting, etc.? What events was he or she responding to?
3. Who was the author speaking to, writing to, or otherwise addressing? People often tailor what they say or write depending on their audience.
4. What was the author trying to accomplish by speaking, writing, singing, or painting?
5. How might his or her agenda have affected what part of the story he or she chose to tell, and what parts he or she chose to leave out?

You won't always get certain answers for all these questions. Sometimes it's easy to tell. Sometimes you will be able make an educated guess. At other times, you simply won't know. But it's important to try every time—you won't know if you can find out until you try.

**Read Closely and Actively**

To answer any of these questions, you often need to read very closely. People in the past often spoke and wrote in ways that are strange and hard to understand to us; they sometimes used words that are unfamiliar to us, or gave familiar words meanings that are unfamiliar to us. It is thus essential that you use a good dictionary when reading a document. When you don't know what a word means, or if an author is using a word in a way you don't understand, look it up. Look at the second, third, and fourth definitions of a word as well as the first—often these were the most common definitions in past centuries. It's also important that you read slowly and carefully, until you understand precisely what an author was saying—and, on another level, until you have good answers to the questions you
A Note on Bias, Untruths, and Objectionable Beliefs:

Many of the documents you will be reading will seem "biased" to you. That's fine; they probably are. So are all the documents; everyone's beliefs reflect their social position, as well as their political and religious commitments. **But your job is not to pass judgment on who in the past was biased and who understood things clearly.** And although you should feel free to pass moral judgment on people in the past, you need to be careful not to let it get in the way of your main job as a historian, **which is to understand all the historical actors you study**--even those you find biased or otherwise objectionable. You should try to understand the way each writer or actor you study thought--his or her beliefs, assumptions, and yes, biases.

You should ask the same of writers and historical actors whom you find morally objectionable. You may find yourself doubting that any human being could really believe what you're reading. You may doubt that any moral person could think that the actions you are reading about were justifiable. In many or all cases, your outrage will be justified. **But your first job as a historian isn't to pass judgment--it's to understand the people in the past. You will need to figure out how people could have believed or done these objectionable things.** Once you do that, **then** you can pass judgment. But if you pass judgment first, your outrage will get in the way of understanding the people you are studying.

Many of the documents you will read contain things that are patently untrue. You should always make an effort to figure out when an author might be lying, or be telling an untruth that they think is true. But even if a document is full of untruths, it can still be an extremely useful document, because it can reveal a lot about the author's beliefs and agenda. When you find a person saying something that is untrue that he or she probably believes ask yourself what do these beliefs tell us about the author's values and worldview? How do these beliefs serve, or fail to serve, the social, political, and/or religious interests of the author? When you suspect an outright lie, ask yourself why might this person be lying? What is he or she trying to accomplish? What beliefs is he or she trying to instill in his or her readers?

If you have any further questions about this assignment, please do not hesitate to discuss these questions with me in class or in my office hours.

**EXTRA-CREDIT:** You may watch up to two of PBS American Experience documentaries that concern U.S. History after the Civil War and write a thoughtful, two-three paged discussion of the documentary and the themes it explores. For each extra-credit completed I will add **up to .75** to your overall grade. (i.e. an 85.25 to an 86, which would be a B+ as opposed to a B ) You can find more information about these films here: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amERICANexperience/allFilms/
Here is how your synopses will be graded:

**Essay Evaluation Form**

**Student:**

**Grade:**

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<th>GOOD -&gt;</th>
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<td></td>
<td>NEEDS WORK</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Argument</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thesis - well-defined, interesting, insightful</td>
<td>1 * 2 * 3 * 4 * 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence - There is adequate textual support for each step in argument--selected and presented well.</td>
<td>1 * 2 * 3 * 4 * 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Analysis - relevant, interesting, well-developed</td>
<td>1 * 2 * 3 * 4 * 5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction - draws in reader, announces topic and point of view</td>
<td>1 * 2 * 3 * 4 * 5</td>
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<td>Conclusion - makes connections, extends argument</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structure of Argument - logical development of ideas throughout the paper</td>
<td>1 * 2 * 3 * 4 * 5</td>
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<td>Paragraph Development - logical development of ideas within paragraphs. Paragraphs are unified and coherent. Purpose of each paragraph is clear</td>
<td>1 * 2 * 3 * 4 * 5</td>
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<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Style - smooth, lively and engaging</td>
<td>1 * 2 * 3 * 4 * 5</td>
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<td>Words and sentences - clear and precise</td>
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<td>Correct Grammar, Syntax, and Punctuation</td>
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**Comments:**