

The History of the United States since 1896

St. Francis College

Dr. Sara Haviland, shaviland@stfrancis.edu

Office: Room 7008; Office Hours: TTH 7:30 - 8; 2:45 - 4:15

Course Description

This course examines the social, political, economic, and cultural developments in modern United States history. Beginning with progressivism, we will trace the development of the lives of Americans through the twentieth century. We will explore politics, social movements, culture, and labor. This course will emphasize race, gender, class, religion, sexuality, internationalism, and region as key categories of analysis. We will examine the ways in which regional, national, and international politics influenced the everyday lives of ordinary American men and women. In addition to covering the narrative of U.S. history since 1896, we will explore history as an academic discipline. In other words, what does it mean to be an historian, and what is it that historians do?

As a member of this section of History 1201, you are fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in an exciting project funded by the U.S. Department of Education, along with other St. Francis students, students at Long Island University, and City Tech. This funding allows us to spend several weeks utilizing the vast resources available at the Brooklyn Historical Society. The core project in this class, described in the "Course Requirements" section, includes additional details.

The following syllabus is subject to change in order to satisfy the goals of the course.

Required Text:

William H. Chafe, *The Rise and Fall of the American Century: The United States from 1890-2009*

Additional readings are available on Angel.

Course Requirements

Attendance Policy and Classroom Etiquette

- Students are required to attend class. You should arrive on time and be ready to participate. Three unexcused absences are allowed; each additional unexcused absence will result in the lowering of your grade by half a letter grade. It is your responsibility to talk to me if you believe an absence meets the conditions for being excused.
- In addition, students are expected to arrive to class on time. Every three late arrivals will count for one unexcused absence. Please notify me in advance if you have any foreseeable absences, tardiness, or if you need to leave early.
- Silence your cell phones before coming to class and do not use them. Texting is also disruptive, not only to me, but to your classmates, and it indicates that you are not intellectually present in class. Any student seen using a cell phone during class will automatically lose credit for participation and any other activity done during class that day.
- If you intend to use your computer during class, please do so only to take notes. Do not use any websites or social media during class. Students seen doing so will lose credit for participation and activities that day.

Reading Responses and Participation -

--- 25% OF FINAL GRADE

At the beginning of each class, students will spend roughly five minutes writing down something you learned from the assigned reading. This assignment is informal and closed-book. Each class you will turn these in. Some days, they will be anonymous and others you will put your name on them and be graded (check, check plus, or check minus).

In addition, there will be discussion components to this class. Students are expected to be prepared and ready to participate. Small group work, large group discussion, and overall engagement in the material will be assessed.

Midterm exam --- **25% OF FINAL GRADE**

- The first exam will be in class on October 18. It will consist of five short identifications and one longer essay. It will cover all of the material addressed to date in this class.

Brooklyn Historical Society/SAFA Website project --- **25% OF FINAL GRADE**

- This class has the exciting opportunity to participate in a Students and Faculty in the Archives project utilizing the archive at the Brooklyn Historical Society. For four consecutive Thursdays starting in late October, we will meet at BHS (two blocks from SFC) and spend time exploring several sets of documents related to racial discrimination in Brooklyn housing and community responses during the 1960s, all of which come out of the Arnie Goldwag Brooklyn Congress of Racial Equality collection.

The goal of this project is to provide the class with an understanding of and appreciation for the archive, as well as hands-on exposure to the work historians do. Students will conduct archival research and publish their findings on a website. Students will work in 5 groups of 3, and each group will have individual components. Grading will be on an individual basis, but each individual and group will contribute to the website's end result, which will be a whole-class effort.

Each group will have one document from the Brooklyn CORE collection that they will analyze. Each group will discuss and determine three components of the document that need further explanation, and each individual within the group will take on one of the three components to explain as their own research project. All five groups in the class will have documents that are linked to one another and students will have access to the five main documents as well as supplemental documents from the archive.

All five documents will go onto the website, and each document's page will include the three individual research projects related to that document. You will be able to link to other documents in the set.

Therefore, in addition to the research components of the project, students will be required to write three short reflections on archive visits. What did you learn? What was surprising? What questions do you have?

A detailed outline of assignments and the project as a whole will follow.

Final exam --- **25% OF FINAL GRADE**

- The final exam will consist of five short identifications and one longer essay. The exam will cover material addressed since the midterm. **Please discuss any scheduling conflicts with me well in advance of the final.**

Plagiarism Policy: When you use the words or ideas of other scholars, authors, or students in your written work without giving them appropriate credit in your citations, you are committing plagiarism. A sheet offering examples of appropriate and inappropriate usage is attached to the end of this syllabus. Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity and will result in a failing grade on the assignment. In the event of severe plagiarism cases or repeated plagiarism, your case will be presented for formal inquiry to the Committee on Academic Integrity.

If you have any questions or are confused in any way about what constitutes plagiarism, please discuss it with me. I am more than willing to address any question you may have, but I have a zero tolerance policy on plagiarism. It is in your best interest to communicate any questions or concerns you have with me before an issue arises.

All of your written work must contain the following statement:

“I understand the definition of plagiarism and I certify that the material handed in constitutes my original work.”

Class Schedule

9/8 - **The Gilded Age**

9/13 - **Imperialism**

Readings: *Rise and Fall of the American Century* Introduction

9/15 - **Race at the Turn of the Century**

Readings: Selections from W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, on Angel

9/20 - **Progressivism**

Readings: *Rise and Fall 2*

9/22 - **Progressivism and beyond**

Readings: selections from Sarah Vowell, *Assassination Vacation*

9/27- **World War I**

Readings: *Rise and Fall 3*

9/29 - **The Roaring Twenties**

Readings: *Rise and Fall 4*

10/4 - **The Great Depression**

Readings: *Rise and Fall 5*

10/6 - **The New Deal**

Readings: Selections from Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White*

10/11 - **World War II**

Readings: *Rise and Fall 6*

- 10/13 - **World War II part 2**
Readings: Selections from Ronald Takaki, *Double Victory*
- 10/18 - **MIDTERM IN CLASS**
- 10/20 - **The Postwar World**
Readings: *Rise and Fall* 7
- 10/25 - **The Cold War at Home**
Readings: *Rise and Fall* 8; Sally Belfrage, "Catching Commies" in *Un-American Activities: A Memoir of the Fifties* ON ANGEL
- 10/27 - **Brooklyn Historical Society**
Readings: Selections from Massey and Denton, *American Apartheid*
- 11/1 - **The Civil Rights Movement**
Readings: Melba Patillo Beals, *Warriors Don't Cry*, Ch 7-12, ON ANGEL
- 11/3 - **Brooklyn Historical Society**
Reading: Brian Purnell, "Drive Awhile for Freedom" in Woodard, *Groundwork*, ON ANGEL
- 11/8 - **The Sixties**
Readings: *Rise and Fall* 9
- 11/10 - **Brooklyn Historical Society**
No readings due
- 11/15 - **The New Right**
Readings: *Rise and Fall* 10
- 11/17 - **Brooklyn Historical Society**
No readings due
- 11/22 - **Globalization**
Readings: Selections from Horowitz, *Jimmy Carter and the Energy Crisis of the 1970s*, on ANGEL
- 11/29 - **Reagan and Eighties Culture**
Readings: *Rise and Fall* 11
- 12/1 - **The 1990s**
Readings: *Rise and Fall* 12
- 12/6 - **The 21st Century**
Readings: *Rise and Fall* 13 and "Entertainment Wars: Television Culture after 9/11" by Lynn Spigel, *American Quarterly* 56 (Jun., 2004), 235-270
- 12/8 - **Reflections on the American Century**

Readings: *Rise and Fall* Epilogue