

**History 104: American History from 1877 to the Present**  
**MWF 11:00-11:50, King 241**  
**Spring 2019**

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Office Hours:  
Wednesdays, 1:30-4:00  
Thursdays, 10:00-12:00  
(and by appointment)

This introductory course explores American history from the end of the Civil War through today with a focus on exploring and interrogating the major historical transformation that have taken place since 1865. This class will help students understand the forces and themes that shaped life in the United States and that continue to influence the present-day. While we will touch on many topics during the semester, the course will be focused around four key questions:

- How have different groups of Americans contested the meanings of freedom and fought to expand or constrict the meanings of freedom and equal rights for themselves and others? We will pay particular attention to issues of race and gender in exploring this question.
- How and why has the federal government changed and grown in the period since the Civil War and how have Americans encouraged or challenged the growth of centralized government?
- How and why has the nature of the American economy changed since the Civil War, how have policymakers responded to those changes, and what kinds of political critiques and struggles have economic changes generated?
- How has the way the United States interacts with the larger world evolved since the Civil War? How did America move from being a largely isolated nation to a dominant world power?

History 104 will also introduce students to how historians work and think. Students will encounter a wide variety of primary sources, will analyze secondary works, and will explore and engage in historical debates. Typically, the Monday and Wednesday classes will be lectures, while the Friday session will be devoted to discussion and to small group in-class “Doing History” activities. Through lectures, discussions, and activities, this class will encourage students to ask big questions about the past, to weigh competing answers, to put forth their own arguments based on historical evidence, and to grapple with how the past has shaped the world we live in today.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

By the end of the semester, students should:

- Have a good understanding of the major developments, themes, and events of American history from the Civil War to today
- Understand what can be learned from different kinds of primary sources and know how to use primary sources as evidence for historical arguments
- Be able to analyze and compare the arguments put forth by different historians
- Understand that history is an interpretation and argument about what happened in the past based on evidence and feel confident developing and debating their own historical interpretations and arguments
- Improve their written and oral communication skills and become adept at working in small-groups

## REQUIRED TEXTS

The following required texts are available at the college bookstore and are on reserve at Mudd.

- Steven Lawson and Charles Payne, *Debating the Civil Rights Movement*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (2006)  
 Anzia Yezierska, *Bread Givers: A Novel*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (2003, c. 1925)  
 Joe Bageant, *Deer Hunting with Jesus: Dispatches from America's Class War* (2008)

All other assigned works are available as links on the electronic syllabus on the blackboard site. I recommend downloading a word version of the syllabus with working links so that you can easily access the non-book readings. If the syllabus links are not working, some of the readings are also in a google drive folder, which is linked on the blackboard site. Many of the primary source readings assigned for this class come from The American YAWP Primary Source Reader, which can be accessed online at <http://www.americanyawp.com/reader.html>. There is also an online American YAWP textbook, which describes itself as “a massively collaborative open U.S. history textbook.” Students who would like more background or who have had little introduction to U.S. history will benefit from reading the optional recommended chapters from the [YAWP textbook](#).

## REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Your grade in History 104 will be based on attendance and participation, two short papers, an in-class midterm, and a take-home final exam.

Paper #1 (Full draft due Friday, March 8; Final due Sunday, March 10)	15%
In-class Midterm Exam (Friday, March 22)	20%
Paper #2 (Full draft due Friday, April 12; Final due Sunday, April 14)	20%
Take-Home Final (Due Wednesday, May 16 at 9:00pm)	25%
Attendance/participation	20%

### **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (20% of total grade)**

Your active involvement with the class is extremely important. Attendance, reading, and participation are critical to your learning and your success in History 104. Regular class attendance is expected; a pattern of regular unexcused absences will affect your final grade in the class. Please be sure to sign into the attendance sheet at the front of the classroom for each class. It is also vital that you do the reading for each class session and that you come prepared to the “Doing History” and discussion sessions.

Each student will be assigned to a smaller learning group early on in the semester and part of most discussion/activity sessions will be spent in learning groups. Your participation grade will be based upon both your engagement during the class sessions on Monday and Wednesday and your participation with your learning group during Friday sessions. For six of the “Doing History” sessions, you are required to post an online response to your learning group forum on the blackboard site in advance of our class meeting. Sessions with required postings are: Feb 15, Feb. 22, March 1, March 15, April 19, and April 24<sup>th</sup>. Prompts for each required posting are in the syllabus. Your completion of required postings will be reflected in your participation grade.

### **PAPER #1—DRAFT DUE FRI., MARCH 8 IN CLASS; FINAL DUE MARCH 10 (15%)**

Students will write a 4-page paper in response to a prompt about Anzia Yezierska’s 1925 novel, *Bread Givers*. A full description of the assignment is available on the course blackboard site. A full first draft of the paper is due in class on Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup> for a discussion and peer review session. Final drafts are due on Sunday, March 10<sup>th</sup> by 10:00pm.

**PAPER #2—DRAFT DUE FRIDAY APRIL 12 IN CLASS; FINAL DUE APRIL 14 (20%):**

Students will write a 5 to 6 page paper related to *Debating the Civil Rights Movement*. The complete description of the assignment is available on the course blackboard site. A full first draft of the paper is due in class on Friday, April 12<sup>th</sup> for a discussion and peer review session. Final drafts are due on Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup> by 10:00pm.

**IN-CLASS MIDTERM—FRIDAY, MARCH 22 (20%):**

The in-class midterm will consist of a few short identifications and an essay question, chosen by me from a list of possible questions that will be handed out in advance of the exam.

**TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM—DUE BY 9:00 PM ON WEDNESDAY, MAY 16 (25%):**

The take-home final exam will be handed out at the last class session. It is due back at the end of the time of our regularly scheduled exam, 9:00 pm on Wednesday, May 16th. The exam will ask you to bring together course readings and lectures to respond to a question in an essay of 6-8 pages.

**COURSE POLICIES**

Late and Incomplete Policy: Assignments must be submitted on time to receive full credit. If an assignment is due at the beginning of class, it must be turned in at the start of class to count as on time. An assignment that is handed in late will be marked down 3 points for every 24 hours it is late. Requests for extensions must take place before the assignment is due. I will gladly grant extensions in cases of illness or family emergencies, but not because you have another paper due on the same day, so please plan accordingly. You must complete all assignments in order to pass the course.

Classroom Conduct: Please come to class on time, and once you're here, plan on staying for the full class session. While you are welcome to use laptops to refer to course readings, you will be asked not to bring a laptop to class if you are found to be using it for non-class related activities.

Oberlin Honor Code: All work for this course must be done in compliance with the Oberlin Honor Code, which means that it must be your own. Any cases of plagiarism will be dealt with immediately according to the letter of college policy. You must acknowledge when you use the ideas of other people (whether that be other students or published materials from websites, books, the media, etc.). If you have questions about citations, academic honesty, or the acceptability of collaborations, please see me. You should include the honor code on all the written work you hand in for this class. The Honor Code reads: "I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code on this assignment."

Educational Access: I am committed to designing a course in which all students can learn and to creating inclusive learning environments. Please let me know if any aspects of the instruction or design of the course result in dis/ability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact Disability Services in Peters Hall for official documentation if you require specific accommodations.

Extra Help: My door is open if you need help or would like to discuss the reading or other topics of interest to you. Drop in to my office hours anytime or email to schedule a specific appointment. In addition, there are two Writing Associates who are assigned to the History Department this term and either of them (Juna Keehn or Grace Winters) can assist you with the writing assignments for this class. To set up an appointment with either, email at [jkeehn@oberlin.edu](mailto:jkeehn@oberlin.edu) or [gwinters@oberlin.edu](mailto:gwinters@oberlin.edu).

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1 (Background optional reading, YAWP, Chapter 15)

**2/4 Course Introduction: The US before 1877**

**2/6 A New Birth of Freedom?: Reconstruction and What Might Have Been**

Read: [Documents/images on "Reconstruction," YAWP Primary Source Reader](#)

**2/8 Doing History: Connecting the Past and the Present**

Read: [David Blight, "Frederick Douglass and the Memory of the Civil War," \*Journal of American History\* 75:4 \(March 1989\): 1156-1178](#)

Listen: [Podcast, "Monumental Lies," Center for Investigative Report, Dec. 8, 2018, minutes 1-37](#)

### WEEK 2 (Background optional reading, YAWP, Chapters 16 and 17)

**2/11 The New Industrial Order and Its Discontents**

Read: [Documents/images on "Capital and Labor," YAWP Primary Source Reader](#)

**2/13 Westward Expansion and Territorial Consolidation**

Read: [Documents/images on "Conquering the West," YAWP Primary Source Reader](#)

**2/15 Doing History: Analyzing Primary Sources about the Gilded Age**

Each learning group will do to do a close analysis of documents we read for this week.

Assignment: *Before class, go to the online forum for your learning group and write a short post explaining which of the primary documents we read for this week you'd most like to talk about and why. Postings are due by 10am.*

### WEEK 3 (Background optional reading, YAWP, Chapter 19)

**2/18 Creating Jim Crow America (RR)**

Read: [Plessy v. Ferguson Opinion and Dissent \(1896\)](#)  
[Ida B. Wells-Barnett, "Lynch Law in America"](#)

Watch: [Ethnic Notions \(Kanopy Streaming\), 1 hour-long documentary](#)

**2/20: U.S. Empire and the Spanish-American War (RR)**

Read: [Albert Beveridge, "The March of the Flag" \(1898\)\\*](#)  
[Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden" \(1899\)](#)  
[Anti-Imperialist League Platform \(1899\)](#)

Review: [Collection of political cartoons related to American imperialism](#)

**2/22 Doing History: An Introduction to Historiography**

*Each learning group will read a different historical interpretation that seeks to explain American involvement in the Spanish-American War and the taking of colonies in its aftermath. In class we will both work in groups to analyze these interpretations and then work across groups to compare interpretations.*

LG 1 and 2: [Walter LaFeber, "Preserving the American System"](#)

LG 3 and 4: [Kristin Hoganson, "Manhood, Chivalry, and McKinley's Reluctant Decision"](#)

LG 5 and 6: [Louis A. Perez, Jr., "Derailing Cuban Nationalism, Establishing US Hegemony"](#)

LG 7 and 8: [Richard Hofstadter, "Cuba, the Philippines, and Manifest Destiny"](#)

Assignment: *Before class, go to the online forum of your learning group and write a short paragraph summarizing what you see as the key arguments of your assigned reading. Postings are due by 10am.*

#### **WEEK 4 (Background optional reading, YAWP, Chapters 20)**

##### **2/25 Immigration, Nativism, and the Shift to an Urban Nation (RR)**

Read: Yezierska, *Bread Givers*, Book 1, chapters 1-9

[Madison Grant, excerpt from \*The Passing of the Great Race\* \(1916\)](#)

[Speech by Senator Ellison Smith for Immigration Restriction, April 9, 1924](#)

##### **2/27: The Progressive Movement**

Read: Yezierska, Book 2, Chapters 10-16

##### **3/1 Doing History: Defining Progressivism**

Each learning group will be assigned a different faction of the Progressive Movement to represent in class based on a collection of primary documents. What social problems is your group concerned with? Who do they want to help? How would you characterize their approach to social change? Documents will be posted to the blackboard site.

Assignment: *Before class, go to the online forum of your learning group and write a short reflection on your first thoughts about the views and approach of the group you've been assigned. Postings are due by 10am.*

#### **WEEK 5 (Background optional reading, YAWP, Chapters 21 and 22)**

##### **3/4 World War I and America's Changing Place in the World**

Read: Yezierska, Book 3, Chapters 17-21

[Documents/images on "WWI and Its Aftermath," YAWP Primary Source Reader](#)

##### **3/6 The Jazz Age and the Great Crash**

Read: [Five Short Letters to Eleanor Roosevelt](#)

Peruse: [Great Depression Photo Essay, online](#)

Watch: [PBS Documentary, "The March of the Bonus Army" \(30 minutes\)](#)

##### **3/8 Doing History: Writing and Peer Review**

Complete draft of the first paper about *Bread Givers* is due today in class. Class will be devoted to a peer review session and a discussion of papers.

**WEEK 6 (Background optional reading, YAWP, Chapters 23 and 24)****3/11 The New Deal**

Read: [Documents on "The Great Depression," YAWP Primary Source Reader\\*](#)  
[David Kennedy, "What Did the New Deal Do?" \*Political Science Quarterly\* \(2009\):251-268](#)

**3/13 World War II**

Read: [Charles Lindbergh, "America First," Speech from April 23, 1941](#)  
 Listen: [Franklin Roosevelt, Fireside Chat on the Progress of the War, February 23, 1942](#)

**3/15 DOING HISTORY: Analyzing Visual Representations**

Class today will focus on analyzing images and film in learning groups.

*Assignment: Post one image (photo, poster, cartoon, etc.) related to US involvement in World War II to your learning group online discussion forum and explain why you think this is a particularly interesting image to discuss in a short paragraph. Postings are due by 10am.*

**WEEK 7 (Background optional reading, YAWP, Chapter 25)****3/18 World War II at home**

Read: ["A Call to March on Washington," \*The Black Worker\*, May 1941](#)  
[Lt. General John DeWitt Recommends Japanese American Removal," 1942](#)  
[Carey McWilliams, "The Zoot Suit Riots," \*The New Republic\*, June 21, 1943, p. 18-20](#)  
[Ann Sothorn, "'What Kind of Woman Will Your Man Come Home To?,' Nov. 1944](#)

**3/20 The Cold War**

Read: [The Truman Doctrine \(1947\)](#)  
["X" \(George Kennan\), "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," \*Foreign Affairs\*, July 1947](#)  
[NSC-68 \(1950\)](#)

**3/22 In-Class Midterm Exam****WEEK 8 SPRING RECESS—NO CLASSES****WEEK 9 (Background optional reading, YAWP, Chapter 26)****4/1 American Politics and Culture in the 1950s (RR)**

Read: [Elaine Tyler May, "Cold War, Warm Hearth: Politics and the Family in Postwar America"](#)  
[Lizbeth Cohen, "A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America" \*Journal of Consumer Research\* 31 \(1\): 336-339](#)  
 Watch: ["He May Be A Communist" \(US Armed Forces Video\)](#)

**4/3 Guest Lecture by Wendy Kozol, Professor of Comparative American Studies**

Read: ["Survival Under Atomic Attack," Civil Defense Pamphlet \(1950\)—skim this booklet](#)

**4/5 No Class Meeting**

Start reading Lawson and Payne, *Debating the Civil Rights Movement*

**WEEK 10****4/8 Stirrings of Change: The Civil Rights Struggle in the 1950s**

Read: Continue with *Debating the Civil Rights Movement*

**4/10 The Black Freedom Struggle**

Read: Finish *Debating the Civil Rights Movement*

**4/12 Doing History: Comparing Arguments and Interpretations**

Full first draft of paper on *Debating the Civil Rights Movement* due in class today. Class will be devoted to discussion and peer review activity.

**WEEK 11 (Background optional reading, YAWP, Chapter 27)****4/15 Liberalism, The Great Society, and the Modern American State**

Read: [Lyndon Johnson, Address to Congress Proposing a War on Poverty, March 16, 1964](#)  
[George Lipsitz, "The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: Racialized Social Democracy and the 'White Problem' in American Studies," \*American Quarterly\* \(Sept. 1995\): 369-387](#)

**4/17 The Vietnam War and the End of the Cold War Consensus**

Read: ["The Vietnamese Declaration of Independence," 1945](#)  
[Lyndon Johnson, "Peace Without Conquest," April 6, 1965](#)  
[Vietnam War Resistance Leaflet \(1968\)](#)

**4/19 Doing History: Debate and Discussion**

Did inequality of the postwar period increase or decrease during the Age of Affluence (roughly post-WWII until the late 1960s)? We will discuss and debate in class.

Assignment: *Before class, go to the online forum of your learning group and write a short reflection based on lectures and course readings about what historical forces/developments might have decreased inequality and what historical forces/developments may have increased inequality. Be as specific as possible in citing facts and arguments. Postings are due by 10am.*

**WEEK 12 (Background optional reading, YAWP, Chapters 28)****4/22 The Woman's Movement**

Read: [Gloria Steinem, "Statement in Support of the Equal Rights Amendment " "Redstockings Manifesto" \(1969\)](#)  
[Combahee River Collective Statement \(1977\)](#)

**4/24 Doing History: Teach-In on the 1960s [Note: Our Doing History session is on Wed. this week]**

Each LG is assigned to read primary documents and to be prepared to teach other students about one social/political movement of the 1960s. In addition, each learning group is assigned to read the documents of one other group. Learning groups will first discuss the ideas, critiques, and goals of their assigned group before being paired with their partner group to compare approaches and concerns. What kinds of critiques or solutions did your group advocate and

what does it have in common with other groups? How should we characterize the social and political movements of the 1960s?

Assignment: *Before class, post your initial thoughts on the views of your assigned group. Postings are due by 10am.*

LG 1 *The New Left*: [The Port Huron Statement](#) (1962); Excerpt from the [Weathermen's Call for Revolution](#) (1969) [READ ALSO LG2, *The New Right*]

LG 2 *The New Right*: [Young Americans for Freedom, National Review article and the Sharon Statement](#) (1960); George Wallace, "[American Independent Party Platform, 1968](#)," YAF, "[King Was a Collectivist](#)" (1968) [READ ALSO LG1, *The New Left*]

LG 3 *Black Power*: Stokely Carmichael [speech at Berkeley on "Black Power,"](#) 1966; [The Last Poets, "When the Revolution Comes" \(1970\)](#) [contains some offensive language] [READ ALSO LG 4, *Yellow Power*]

LG 4 *Yellow Power*: Larry Kubota, "[Necessary but Not Sufficient: Yellow Power!](#)" *Gidra*, 1969; [Amy Uyematsu Proclaims the Emergence of Yellow Power](#) (1969) [READ ALSO LG3, *Black Power*]

LG 5 *American Indian Movement*: [Indians of all Tribes Alcatraz Proclamation](#) (1969); Jimmie Durham, "[The Process of Coming Back Into the World](#)" (1974) [READ ALSO LG6, *The Chicano Movement*]

LG6 *The Chicano Movement*: [Young Lord's 13 Point Program and Platform](#) (1970); [Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Azatlan](#) (1973) [READ ALSO LG6, *AIM*]

LG 7 *Gay Liberation Movement*: Carl Wittman, "[Refugees from Amerika: A Gay Manifesto with Red Butterfly Commentary,](#)" 1970; "[The Furies,](#)" *Lesbian/Feminist Monthly, Volume 1, January 1972 [READ ALSO LG8, *The Counterculture*]*

LG 8 *The Counterculture*: "[Summer of Love, Chapter 1,](#)" *PBS American Experience, Youtube*; [Raymond Mungo on the New Age at Total Loss Farm](#) (1970) [READ ALSO LG7, *Gay Liberation*]

#### 4/26 Contemporary Immigration and the Changing Face of America

Read: [George Sanchez, "Face the Nation: Race, Immigration, and the Rise of Nativism in Late Twentieth Century America," International Migration Review \(Winter 1997\): 1009-1030](#)

#### WEEK 13 (Background optional reading, YAWP, Chapter 29)

#### 4/29 The End of the Boom: American Society in the 1970s

Start reading: Bageant, *Deer Hunting with Jesus*

Read: [Jimmy Carter, "The Crisis of Confidence" speech, excerpt \(1979\)](#)  
[Barbara Jordan, 1976 Democratic Convention Keynote Address](#)

#### 5/1 The Rise of Neo-Conservatism or How Americans Came to Hate their Government

Continue reading: Bageant, *Deer Hunting with Jesus*

Read: [Documents on "The Triumph of the Right," YAWP Primary Source Reader](#)



**5/3 9-11 and its Aftermath**

Continue reading: Bageant, *Deer Hunting with Jesus*

Read: [George Bush, 2002 State of the Union Address](#)  
[The 9-11 Commission Report, "Reflecting on a Generational Challenge" \(2004\)](#)

**WEEK 14****5/6 DOING HISTORY: CLASS DISCUSSION**

*In class: Discussion of Joe Bageant, Deer Hunting with Jesus*

**5/8 From Obama to Trump**

Read: ["Obama Elected President as Racial Barrier Falls," New York Times, Nov. 4, 2008](#)  
Barack Obama, "Eulogy at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church" (2015)  
[Watch speech \(37 minutes\) \[recommended\]](#) or [Read Transcript](#)

**5/10 The 21<sup>st</sup> Century: American Decline?****5/16 Take-Home Final Exam Due at 9:00pm**

**\*\*The contents of this syllabus are subject to change. I will notify you in class of any updates or modifications.**