History 1493, Sec. 010: Syllabus

Lecture: Mondays and Wednesdays, 8:30-9:20 a.m., NH 170.
Weekly Discussion: see your class schedule.

Professor: David Chappell. Office: 421 Dale Hall Tower.
Office Hrs: Mondays, 10:45-1:00 or by aptmt.

This course will introduce students to the major developments in American politics and society from the end of the Civil War through the dawn of the 21st century. The idea behind OU’s approach to this course is that the best way to understand your history is to write some it yourself. To do that, you must track down and dig into sources that survive from the past, weigh recent expert opinions, and defend your own conclusions. In addition to learning how your country got into the mess it is in today, you can expect to improve your writing in this course. Your professor and the university administration agree that you deserve to acquire an indispensable skill: the ability to discover important facts on your own, analyze them in a fresh and reasonable way, and make your explanation of them understandable to different kinds of audiences. A clear writing style is essential to making your way as an educated adult in the world today. You have a right to learn how to develop such a style, and in this course, an opportunity to fulfill that right. America’s unfinished experiment in self-government, as well as your own job prospects, depend on your understanding complex realities and communicating clearly about them. If you apply yourself, you will take away from the course a polished work of original nonfiction prose. Your second essay, that is, will be the beginning of a portfolio to represent you at your best to future employers, graduate or professional school admission committees, and a wider public of fellow citizens.

Required books:
Alan Brinkley, The Unfinished Nation: A Concise History of the American People, Vol. 2. NB: THE CONSTITUTION appears as an Appendix at the end of this book. You will have to read it often & understand how it changed, 1865-2016. Wm. Strunk & E.B. White, Elements of Style.

Additional Required Readings: You will have to read all of the “sources” plus at least 5 of the secondary works (articles) posted on the website for this course: http://explorehistory.ou.edu/history-1493/ Your TA will explain in sections.

Grading:
- Thoughtful and informed participation in discussion sections: 200 points.
- First Essay: 100 pts.
- Proposal/preliminary engagement with your sources for your Second Essay: you lose 40 pts. (from your participation grade) if you fail to turn it in or do a lousy job.
- Draft Introduction + first paragraph of body of your Second Essay: 50 pts.
- Two 50-minute Exams: 100 pts., each.
- Possible extra credit assignments: 50 points, max.
- Final Exam: 225 pts.

If you are unhappy with your grades, or feel you deserve better ones, you must take the initiative to see your TA or professor, after class or during office hours, about how to improve your performance.

Rules: You must attend every class: two lectures and one discussion section each week. You must take careful, complete notes every day. You will be held responsible for everything your professor and TA say in class. If you have to miss because of a serious medical emergency (no other excuse is valid), you are still responsible for getting notes from a reliable fellow student, and (after you translate these notes into your own words) for consulting the professor/TA as to what you missed. Exams can be made up only on the basis of a signed letter from an MD, stating that you were unable to attend on the exam date. No laptops, phones, or recording devices are allowed in class: Turn them OFF. You are expected to be more alert and focused than you would be while driving. If you have trouble taking notes with a pen and paper, see your professor or TA: they can give you useful tips on how to learn that vital skill.

Plagiarism: You are expected to understand and to heed OU’s ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT CODE. If you submit work from another class in this class, or if you plagiarize, cheat, or fabricate—or help someone else do those things—you will flunk this course and may suffer further penalties, including expulsion.

NB: If you have a disability that prevents you from fully demonstrating your abilities, you must contact the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible to discuss accommodations to ensure your full participation.

(over)
Schedule of Lecture Topics, Exams, and Due Dates

Week 1, Aug. 22 & 24: Reconstruction & its Aftermath in the New South: Read Chapter 15 + amendments 13-15.


   Sep. 5: Labor Day, no class. Give thanks to those who established the holiday in the 1880s.

Week 3, Sep. 7: Agrarian Revolt: Read the first 3 sections of Ch. 19 + sections of Ch. 16 on: Changing Western Economy, and on The Rise & Decline of the Western Farmer.

Week 4, Sep. 12 & 14: Gilded Age Politics, War, & Empire: Read the rest of Ch. 19; + sects of Ch. 16 on: Societies (“Tribes,” “Hispanic,” Chinese, anti-Chinese) + Dispersal/Wars.


   WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21: FIRST EXAM.

Week 6, Sep. 26 & 28: The Great War & New Era: Read Ch. 21 and START Reading Ch. 22, esp. 1st sec on New Econ. DUE Thurs., Sep. 29, noon: FIRST ESSAY (1250 words) (graded exams will be returned in sections).

Week 7, Oct. 3 & 5: The Roaring’20s, Associationalism*, & the Crash: Finish Reading Ch. 22 AND READ Ch. 23.

   (Texas Day is Friday, Oct. 7: NO DISCUSSION SECTIONS THIS WEEK.) *This is a key term that your textbook does NOT use.

Week 8, Oct. 10 & 12: The Great Depression and the New Deal: Read Ch. 24 + Amendment 21.

   DUE Thurs., Oct. 13, noon: Well written Proposal for your chosen argument & strategy in the 2nd ESSAY, i.e., an overview + outlines of 10 distinct sources. Explain how each source supports (or undermines) the thesis you plan to defend.

Week 9, Oct. 17 & 19: End of Depression; the Good War (Proposals will be returned in sections): Skim Ch. 25; Read Ch. 26.

Week 10, Oct. 24 & 26: End of War; the Cold War; Postwar Boom: Skim the first 3 sects. of Ch. 27, and carefully Read the last sect. of Ch. 27; AND Read Ch. 28 + Amendment 22.

   THURSDAY, OCT. 26: SECOND EXAM--50 minutes.

Week 11, Oct. 31 & Nov. 2: Civil Rights Movement & Second Reconstruction (graded exams will be returned in sections): Re-read “Rise of the Civil Rights Movement” frm Ch. 28, AND Read first two sections of Ch. 29 + Amendments 23-24.

   DUE THURS., Nov. 3: INTRODUCTION + first paragraph of body (500 words) of your SECOND ESSAY.

Week 12, Nov. 7 & 9: Great Society, Vietnam, Social Upheaval: Finish Reading ch. 29 and Start Reading ch. 30.

   (Graded Introductions + will be returned during Sections.) (Also read Amendment 26.)

Week 13, Nov. 14 & 16: Watergate, Economic Dislocation, Culture Wars, Rise of New “Conservatives”: Finish Reading Ch 30 and Start Reading Ch. 31.

Week 14, Nov. 21: Reagan Revolution and Aftermath, End of Cold War: Finish Reading Ch. 31.

   DUE MONDAY (Nov. 21): SECOND ESSAY (1600-1800 words).

   Nov. 23-25: Give Thanks for a Break. (No Discussion Sections this week.)

Week 15, Nov. 28-30: Clinton Years, Tech Boom, Budget Surplus: Start Reading Ch. 32.

Week 16 Dec. 5 & 7: Bush v. Gore, 9/11, War, Economic Collapse, Health Care, another “Jobless Recovery,” Drones: Finish Reading Ch. 32. (Dec. 9 = Last Day of Classes.)

FINAL EXAM is on FRIDAY, Dec. 16, 10:30-12:30.