DOANE COLLEGE
HISTORY 206: History of the U.S. 1865-1954 (3 credits)
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

A survey of the American colonial and U.S. national experience, this course is designed for the general student with emphasis on politics, society and culture. Students successfully completing this course will demonstrate knowledge of the major themes and chronological periods of American history. They will also demonstrate a deeper understanding of historical method, and the role of interpretation and perspective in constructing historical narratives. History 206 emphasizes America’s response to social change. This course satisfies the Doane Plan history requirement.

TEXT (recommended but not required)
Instructor will be providing copies of primary sources which will be required reading.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completing this course, the student should be able to demonstrate (through research, reports, and exams):
- a knowledge of the major events, individuals, and trends in the history of the United States from 1865-1954
- the ability to place past, as well as current, social, political, economic and cultural issues into an historical context and to recognize the interrelationship of such issues
- the ability to recognize primary and secondary sources and begin to discern and question accuracy in historical sources
- familiarity with the issues surrounding diversity in the United States and an ability to consider the question of values when analyzing major areas of history.

COURSE OUTLINE

CLASS I
Introduction
Instructor will address current issues in historiography and discuss the assignment of a report, the purpose of which is to introduce the student to primary and secondary sources, as well as accuracy and legitimacy in historical writing. As American experiences the post-industrial era the implications of that enormous social change will be examined in light of America’s historical response to past social transformation. Each lecture will call attention to differences of opinion and will consider diversity and change in historical thought. Illustrations will accompany lectures; questions will be welcomed.
LECTURE: Reconstruction and the Gilded Age
Southern social realities and the political policies of congressional Reconstruction; the parade of politicians (from Hayes to Cleveland); Film clips from “Birth of a Nation”
Text: Ch. 15;

CLASS II
LECTURE: The Social Response to Industrialism and Urbanism
The watershed era of industrialism; the prototypes of corporate power (Vanderbilt, Carnegie, Rockefeller); labor organization and confrontation (Haymarket, Homestead); urban growth and immigration patterns; racism and Social Darwinism; the “opening” of the West;
Possible reports: W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington (reform or accommodation?); the legend of Crazy Horse
Text: Ch. 16; Ch. 17, pp. 631-655

CLASS III
LECTURE: Theodore Roosevelt and Manifest Destiny
The U.S. becomes an imperial power; the Spanish-American War and the taking of the Philippines; the Cuban question and the Panama Canal; Progressive reform and the election of 1912
Possible reports: Theodore Roosevelt as “trust buster;” labor leaders and social confrontation
Text: Ch. 17, pp. 655-670; Ch. 18;

CLASS IV
EXAM
Possible reports: the journey of William Jennings Bryan---from Populist hero to fundamentalist

CLASS V
LECTURE: Woodrow Wilson and World War I
Wilson’s progressive legislation; the epochal struggle of WWI; the Creel Committee; the League of Nations treaty
Possible reports: Wilson’s legacy; “self-determination” and world order
Text: Ch. 19;

CLASS VI
LECTURE: Illusion and Reality in the ‘20s and ‘30s
The dichotomy of the 1920s; reaction (the Klan, Prohibition, Fundamentalism) vs. modernism (flappers, film, the Model T); mass production and advertising; the Great Depression and the New Deal
Possible reports: Franklin Roosevelt as seen by Schlesinger, Goodwin, and others; the role of Eleanor Roosevelt
Text: Chapters 20 & 21

CLASS VII
LECTURE: World War II and Its Aftermath
The “Good” War; industrial transformation of the U.S.; Beginnings of the Cold War; legacy of WWII and the unique anxiety of the 1950s
Possible reports: Major battles of WWII---Europe and Pacific
Text: Chapters 22

COURSE POLICIES

Students are responsible for the required text and any additional readings. Attendance is mandatory. Absences will affect the performances on exams, since extensive material is covered in the lectures. More than two absences will result in a failing grade. There will be a midterm and final which will include essay and objective questions. In case of emergency, make-up exams may be arranged, but no tests will be repeated and all results are final. Research for a report will be required and presentation of the report will be considered as a significant contribution to class discussion. An interpretation of primary sources from the text will be included in the overall report grade. Late reports will result in lowering of the student’s grade. Each exam will be worth 40% of the final grade, and the report (and discussion) will be worth 20%. The Doane College academic integrity policy will be adhered to in this class. All projects and tests will represent the student’s own work and any use of others’ ideas or words without proper citation of sources will result in loss of all points for an assignment or exam.

Because of the extensive information contained in the lectures, and the considerable time period covered by this course, it is not possible to include an adequately representative bibliography in this syllabus. The instructor, however, will be providing the names of sources and authors throughout the term, and will be happy to suggest further sources on any topic or individual.