COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is a survey class of the United States national experience in the wake of the Civil War from Reconstruction to the Atomic Age. This course is designed to give the student an understanding of the politics and society of this country as it is transformed into an international “Super Power”. To successfully complete this class the student must demonstrate knowledge of the major themes and chronological periods of American history during this exciting period. They will also demonstrate a deeper understanding of historical method and the role of interpretation and perspective in constructing historical narratives. This survey fulfills the Doane Plan history requirement.

TEXT:


Additional reading and articles will be provided or assigned as necessary to offer greater depth to our studies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completing this course the student should have acquired:

- A knowledge of the major events, individuals, and trends in the history of the United States from 1865-1954 as demonstrated in class reports and examinations,
- The ability to recognize the interrelationship of past and present events (historical context), as demonstrated in class reports and examinations,
- The ability to recognize primary and secondary sources and begin to discern and question accuracy in historical sources as demonstrated in class reports and examinations,
- Familiarity with the issues surrounding diversity in the United States, and an ability to consider the questions of values when analyzing major areas of history as demonstrated in class reports and examinations.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

It is expected that all work presented in this class with be the work of the student and that all appropriate citations will be provided when presenting the words or ideas of another. If you have questions about these issues please refer to the Doane Lincoln Student Handbook.
COURSE POLICIES:

In a survey course such as this it is vital that students attend classes and remain current with the assigned reading. Missing only one class will cause a student to miss nearly 20% of the lecture and discussion. Absences will have a negative effect on your performance on exams and limit your ability to contribute to the group experience.

There will be two exams; a midterm during our fourth meeting and a final during our eighth meeting. Each exam will constitute 40% of your final grade and will include both essay questions and objective questions. In the event of an emergency or serious illness you will be allowed to arrange a make-up exam, however tests will not be repeated and there will not be an opportunity for earning extra credit.

Each student will research and present a report using a minimum of one primary source and one secondary source in addition to our text. This report is your opportunity to experience history and share with the class why the person or event you are reporting on is relevant and important to the history of this country. Rather than a listing of events in a person’s life, or the presentation of a time line your report should bring to life an individual, movement or event. We should be able to see from your report how the subject impacted the development of the country and how he/she/it is relevant to today if it is. How did things change? What did you learn? How might things have been different? Did your research change the way you think?

In addition to presenting the material from your research you will be required to consider the academic relevance of your work and answer the following questions:

• How is this project useful and for what audience?
• Why have you chosen this approach?
• Why is the historical content of this project important and relevant?

Student presentations will begin with the third class meeting. Presentations will be timed to support and expand upon the material from that week’s assigned reading and lecture.

This is not an assignment of student “busy work” but rather, this exercise will provide you with the opportunity to:

• Find and recognize primary and secondary sources and begin to discern and question the accuracy of historical sources.
• Discuss major themes in the development of American politics, society and culture.
• Develop a depth of understanding of the people, institutions, and events that we discuss each week.
• Develop a better understanding of the American Experience and the ongoing coalescing of the American Identity.
• Construct well-written essays using basic academic writing conventions and citing sources.
Develop a thirst for more and greater understanding of the American Experience and its historical context.

Demonstrate an understanding of the global context of the American Experience and the formation and evolutions of foreign relations.

One of my goals for this class is to instill in the student an understanding of the importance and relevance of history as a vehicle for understanding who we are as a people. By taking the time to experience primary documents first hand it is the instructor’s hope that you will experience the players and events that have shaped our national identity.

It is only as we consider the people of history in the context of their time and begin to understand the standards and social expectations of their world that we can hope to view them as they were without imposing our understanding of the world and our modern expectations of behavior upon them.

By allowing history to take place in its historical context we draw closer to grasping the reality of the events that formed the American Experience and can begin to “do” history rather than simply reading history.

CLASS SCHEDULE/COURSE OUTLINE:

CLASS I
After introductions we will discuss current issues in historiography and review the report each student will present. Research expectations will be explained and potential sources will be identified. LECTURE: Reconstruction and the Gilded Age. Southern social realities and political policies of congressional Reconstruction: politicians from Hays to Cleveland. FILM. TEXT: Prior to class students should have read, Chapter 15; Chapter 16 pp. 579-586; Chapter 17, pp. 608-616.

CLASS II
LECTURE: The Social Response to Industrialism and Urbanization. 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: Student Reports. TEXT: Prior to class students should have read, Chapter 16, pp 556-579 and 586-596; Chapter 17, pp. 597-608 and 616-624

CLASS III
LECTURE: Theodore Roosevelt and Manifest Destiny. The United States becomes an imperial power; The Spanish-American War and the taking of the Philippines; the Cuban question and the Panama Canal. STUDENT REPORTS. TEXT: Prior to class students should have read, Chapter 17, pp. 624-636; Chapter 18; Chapter 19, pp. 678-684.

CLASS IV
EXAM. STUDENT REPORTS.
CLASS V
LECTURE: Woodrow Wilson and World War I. Wilson’s progressive legislation; the struggle of WWI; The Creel Committee; the League of Nations treaty. STUDENT REPORTS. TEXT: Prior to class students should have read, Chapter 19, pp. 684-718.

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. STUDENT REPORTS. TEXT; prior to class students should have read Chapters 20 and 21.

CLASS VII
LECTURE: World War II and its aftermath. The “Good War”; industrial transformation to the United States and the beginnings of the Cold War; the legacy of WW II and the unique anxiety of the 1950s. STUDENT REPORTS. TEXT, Prior to class students should have read Chapters 22 and 23.

CLASS VIII
EXAM. STUDENT REPORTS.

Additional films and news reeels will be inserted as available and appropriate should time be available.