History 114a: The United States Since the Civil War
Fall 2006, Moravian College

Dr. Francis Ryan
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Office: Comenius 301
Office Hours: Tuesday 10-12, Thursday 10-12, and by appointment.
Classroom: Comenius 305
Class Meets: Monday and Wednesday 12:50-2:00.

Course Overview:
This course is designed to provide a general introduction to the significant events that shaped United States history since the end of the Civil War to present times. Through readings, class discussions, lectures and films, the course will highlight such questions and themes as the period of Reconstruction, the settling of the Western states, the rise of cities and industry, Progressivism, the 1920s and the New Deal periods, the experience of the First and Second World Wars and the emergence of mass consumer society in the post-war period.

Required Texts:


Course Requirements:

Participation/Preparation: 20%
Each student is expected to read all assigned materials closely and critically, and to come to class prepared to discuss the readings thoughtfully. Each week, students will be provided with “Focus Questions.” It is expected that students will be able to respond to these questions in depth; however, it is also hoped that you will be able to go beyond these questions and be able to discuss connections to course material and related reading and presentations. The class may have periodic unannounced quizzes to test student knowledge, and these will be included as part of the overall participation grade. It is imperative that each student be present and on time so that they may contribute to discussions. Excessive absences (more than two) and/or lateness will necessarily affect your final grade. If you anticipate that you will be late or absent, please inform me via email or telephone. While such notification will be appreciated and understood as courtesy, it will not be viewed as excusing the absence or lateness. Cases of absence based on medical reasons will be excused, provided a doctor’s note is provided. Movies will be shown in this course, and will be arranged for viewing at a scheduled evening period. Although all efforts will be made to accommodate student schedules, each student
is responsible for viewing the movie on their own if they are unable to attend the scheduled viewing.

Please also observe common courtesy in class in regard to cell phones and eating in class.

Mid-term exams: 15% each
Students will take two in-class examinations based on assigned readings, lectures, films and discussions, the first on Oct 2 and another on Nov 6.

Short papers: 15% /10%
Students will write two essays (4 pages each) analyzing specific themes from the assigned primary readings. Further details will follow. Out of justice to the other students in this class, all late papers will be downgraded one letter grade for each day of lateness. Please be familiar with the Moravian College Code of Academic Conduct provided in the Student Handbook covering issues of academic integrity. The first paper due on Oct 25 is worth 15%, and the second on Nov 30 worth 10%.

Final in-class Examination: 25%
This final exam, to be scheduled by the Registrar during finals week, will focus primarily on topics raised in class since the previous mid-term exam. However, students can expect to address a final essay question that draws on the major cumulative themes raised in this class.

Note: All of the course requirements listed above must be successfully completed to pass the course.

Topics and Readings (tentative)

Week 1: Introductions
Reading: The American Story, Chapter 16, p. 387-403 Begin reading Laura Ingalls Wilder, Little House on the Prairie.

August 28: Introduction to the class.
August 30: Background on the Early American Republic, the Civil War and Reconstruction

Week 2: The Crisis of Reconstruction, 1865-1877
Reading: The American Story, Chapter 16, p. 403-414; Little House.

September 4: Labor Day
September 6: Reconstruction Continued.
Week 3: The Transformation of the Western United States
Reading: The American Story, Chapter 17; Little House.

September 11: The Western Myth in the American Imagination.
September 13: The West Continued.

Week 4: Urban and Industrial Society
Reading: The American Story, Chapter 18-19; Little House.

September 18: New Urban Communities.
September 20: Discussion on Little House on the Prairie.

Week 5: The 1890s and the Spanish-American War
Reading: The American Story, Chapter 21.
Begin reading Michael Gold, Jews Without Money.

September 25: The War of 1898
September 27: Social Changes of the 1890s

Week 6: Midterm Week

October 2: 1st mid-term exam.
October 4: Visit to Moravian College Archives. Details to follow.

Week 7: The Suffragette Movement in the United States
Reading: The American Story, Chapter 23.
Continue reading Jews Without Money

October 9: Introduction to Progressivism
October 11: Movie: Iron Jawed Angels (Time and Place to be Announced)

Week 8: Industrial Reform and Progressivism
Reading: The American Story, Chapter 22.
Have Michael Gold’s Jews Without Money completed by Monday.

October 16: Progressivism
October 18: Industrial reform
Week 9: World War One
Reading: The American Story, Chapter 24.

October 23: The Origins of the “Great War”
October 25: The First World War and Social Impacts.

1st short analysis paper due in class, October 25

Week 10: The 1920s
Reading: The American Story, Chapter 25

October 30: Babe Ruth, Flappers and the New Consumer Society
November 1: The 1920s Continued

Week 11: Midterm

November 6: 2nd Midterm
November 8: The Origins of the Great Depression

Week 12: The Great Depression, Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal.
Reading: The American Story, Chapter 26.

November 13: New Deal Reforms
November 15: Reforms Continued

Week 13: American and the Origins of World War II
Reading: The American Story, Chapter 27.

November 20: Background on the War
November 22: Thanksgiving break.
**Week 14: World War Two**  
Reading: *The American Story*, Chapter 27.

November 27: The Soldier’s Experience  
November 29: The War at Home and the Challenges of Victory

**2nd Short Analysis Paper Due in Class, November 29.**

**Week 15: The Post-War Experience**

December 4: The Rise of Consumer Society  
December 6: Challenges and Affirmations: The Contradictions of Post-War Society

**Final Meeting:**  
December 11: Post War America Continued

**Final Exam time and location to be announced by Registrar.**