SYLLABUS: The United States in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, 1865–1918
(50:512:325)
Spring 2015

Class Times: TuTh 4:30 – 5:50 p.m.
Class Location: Armitage 225
Instructor: Prof. Kate Epstein
Email: kce17@camden.rutgers.edu
Office Location: 429 Cooper St. Room 204
Office Hours: TuTh 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

Course Description: This course covers the history of the United States from the end of the Civil War through World War I. These decades were a period of wrenching transition, when Americans had new—sometimes exciting, sometimes frightening—conversations about the changing distribution of wealth in society, the meanings of race and gender, and the role of the United States in the world. In many respects this half century is when the modern United States began, and its political, economic, and social legacies are still very much with us today.

The class will focus on the following events and themes: Reconstruction; the emergence of industrial capitalism; the labor movement; Populism; changes in the armed forces; the establishment of Jim Crow; gender relations; the transformation of the United States from a continental to a global power; Progressivism; and the experience of world war. Students will acquire a firmer understanding of U.S. history during this pivotal period and a foundation for more advanced study.

Office Hours and Advising: You are very welcome to come see me with questions and comments. My office hours will be Tuesday and Thursday from 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. at 429 Cooper St. If you wish to see me outside my office hours, please feel free to make an appointment.

Readings: The required readings for this course combine primary sources (those written by people living at the time being studied) and secondary sources (those written by historians). All readings are available on Sakai.

I have either scanned the primary sources from elsewhere or edited them myself. To assist you in reading them, most of them contain an introduction to the source providing context and questions (at either the beginning or end of the source) for you to consider. Please read the primary sources in the order they are listed on the syllabus: generally, I have ordered them chronologically, but occasionally I have put sources that speak directly to each other out of chronological order.

There is no assigned textbook, but if you wish to consult one, I recommend Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty! An American History*. You can save money by ordering the third rather than the fourth edition, and by getting the second volume, which begins with Reconstruction rather than the colonial era.

Assignments and Grading: All assignments in this class are mandatory. I take attendance.

The readings and lectures are intended mutually to reinforce each other. You should do the readings BEFORE the class for which they are listed on the course schedule, so that you can discuss them intelligently and do not encounter the information for the first time in my lecture.
In addition to the lectures and the readings, you will have three take-home papers. The first two will be 4–6 pages and the last one will be 8–10 pages. We will discuss the specifics of what I want to see in your papers as the due-dates approach, but in general, you need to state your arguments clearly and support them with evidence. The due dates of the papers are as follows:

- Paper 1: Feb 19 (Week 5)
- Paper 2: Apr 9 (Week 12)
- Paper 3: May 12 (Week 16)

The grading is weighted towards the end of the quarter, because I expect you to improve over the course of the quarter. Your grade will be distributed as follows:

- 10% for attendance and participation
- 20% for the first paper
- 30% for the second paper
- 40% for the third paper

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is not a minor offense prosecuted by teachers in order to torment you: it is a major offense prosecuted to give justice to the victims and to deter the same behavior in the future. (Imagine how you would feel if someone used your ideas without crediting you!) If I catch you plagiarizing—and there are tools to help me do so—I will report you. The consequences of plagiarism can include expulsion.

You can see the University’s policy on plagiarism here: [http://www.camden.rutgers.edu/RUCAM/info/Academic-Integrity-Policy.html.](http://www.camden.rutgers.edu/RUCAM/info/Academic-Integrity-Policy.html)

If you are ever in doubt whether or not you are plagiarizing, it is best to err on the side of caution and cite your source. You should also feel free to ask me.

**Other Polices:**

You probably know most of these rules already, but not every student does, so I include them here for your information.

1) **Challenging a Grade:** You have every right to challenge a grade I give you if you believe I have given it in error. If you wish to challenge a grade, you must let me know in writing why you are challenging it before I will discuss the matter with you. I set this requirement both so that we have a shared record to work from and so that I have a chance to re-think the grade before I meet with you to discuss it. Be advised that if you challenge a grade, you are re-opening the grading process. I therefore reserve the right to lower as well as to raise your grade.

2) **Emailing me:** Emails to professors are semi-formal documents. They are not as formal as papers, but they are much more formal than the text messages you write to your friends inviting them to that wicked awesome party you heard about. So, in contrast to formal papers, it’s okay to use contractions; but in contrast to text messages, it’s not okay to dispense with capitalization and punctuation, and it is a capital offense to use emoticons or text-speak. Never start an email to a professor with “Hey, Prof. X…” “hey” is too informal. Don’t forget to sign your name at the end of the email. I strongly suggest that you proofread your emails to professors before sending them. Your grade won’t suffer if you make spelling or grammatical errors in emails, but such errors will create an impression of carelessness, sloppiness, and laziness in the minds of your readers.
CLASS SCHEDULE

***THIS SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE***
***READINGS ARE TO BE DONE BEFORE, NOT AFTER, THE CLASSES FOR WHICH THEY ARE LISTED***

Week 1
1) Jan 20 → Introduction

2) Jan 22 → To 1865
   Readings
   - Excerpts from Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia
   - James Madison, “Republican Distribution of Citizens” and “Fashion,” National Gazette, 1792
   - Preamble of the Mechanics’ Union of Trade Associations, 1828
   - Excerpts from Abraham Lincoln’s speeches of 15 October 1858 and 6 March 1860

Week 2
3) Jan 27 → The Political Economy of the United States
   Readings

4) Jan 29 → From Wartime to Presidential Reconstruction
   Readings
   - “Virginia Blacks Petition for Equal Suffrage,” 1865
   - Jourdon Anderson, “A Freedman Writes His Former Master,” 1865
   - Andrew Johnson’s veto message for the Civil Rights Bill, 1866 [me]

Week 3
5) Feb 3 → Radicals and Redemption
   - “Elizabeth Cady Stanton Appeals for Universal Suffrage,” 1869

6) Feb 5 → Resumption and Retreat
   Readings
   - Excerpts from Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner, The Gilded Age, 1873
   - “This is Socialism,” The Nation, 1874
   - “South Carolina Black Leaders Defend the State Government’s Fiscal Record,” 1874
     Excerpts from United States v. Cruikshank, 1876
• “Frederick Douglass Assesses the Mistakes of Reconstruction,” 1880

**Week 4**

7) Feb 10→ Discussion of Reconstruction

8) Feb 12→ The Railroads and Big Business

Readings

- Herbert Spencer, “The Coming Slavery,” 1884
- Henry Demarest Lloyd, “The Lords of Industry,” 1884
- Andrew Carnegie, “Wealth,” 1889

**Week 5**

9) Feb 17→ Labor

Readings

- “Preamble to the Constitution of the Knights of Labor,” 1878
- Excerpts from John W. Hinton, “Workingmen and the Tariff,” 1880
- Excerpts from George Frederic Parsons, “The Labor Question,” 1886
- Workingmen’s Party, “An Address from the Workingmen of San Francisco to Their Brothers throughout the Pacific Coast,” 1878
- Samuel Gompers, “The American Federation of Labor,” 1883
- Edward O’Donnell, “Women as Bread Winners—The Error of the Age,” 1887
- Stephen Crane, “In the Depths of a Coal Mine,” 1894

10) Feb 19→ The Agrarian Insurgency / FIRST PAPER DUE

Readings

- Texas state Farmers’ Alliance, The Cleburne Platform, 1886
- “Report of the Committee on the Monetary System,” St. Louis Convention of the Southern [Farmers’] Alliance, 1889
- Excerpts from J. H. Turner, “The Race Problem,” 1891

**Week 6**

11) Feb 24→ The West

Readings

- Chief Joseph, Selected Statements and Speeches by the Nez Percé chief, 1877–1879
• Excerpts from President Arthur’s First Annual Message to Congress (on “Indian” policy), 1881
• Excerpts from the Dawes Act, 1887
• Excerpts from Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” 1893
• Zitkala-Sa, “Native Americans and White Attempts to Assimilate,” from “The School Days of an Indian Girl,” 1900

12) Feb 26 → The Old Diplomacy
Readings

Week 7
13) Mar 3 → The Tariff and the Naval-Industrial Complex

14) Mar 5 → Urbanization and Immigration
Readings
• “The Emergence of Reform Judaism,” 1885
• Excerpts from Jacob Riis, How the Other Half Lives, 1890
• Excerpts from Adna Ferrin Weber, The Growth of Cities in the Nineteenth Century, 1899
• Excerpts from Thorstein Veblen, The Theory of the Leisure Class, 1899
• Theodore Dreiser, “The Lure of the City,” 1900
• Excerpts from Upton Sinclair, The Jungle, 1906

Week 8
15) Mar 10 → The Legal Construction of the Market
Readings
• Excerpts from Munn v. Illinois, 1877
• Excerpts from the Civil Rights Cases, 1883
• Excerpts from Wabash, St. Louis & Pacific Railway Co. v. Illinois, 1886
• Excerpts from United States v. E. C. Knight and Co., 1895
• Excerpts from Lochner v. New York, 1905

16) Mar 12 → Populism
Readings
• Lawrence Goodwyn, “Populism: Democratic Promise,” in ibid., 140–49
• The Omaha Platform, People’s Party, 1892
• Excerpts from Tom Watson, “The Negro Question in the South,” 1892
Week 9—NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK

Week 10
17) Mar 24→ The Panic of 1893 and Election of 1896
Readings
- Excerpts from Grover Cleveland, Message on the Repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act, 1893
- Excerpts from the Republican Party Platform of 1896

18) Mar 26→ Jim Crow
Readings
- Henry W. Grady, “The New South,” 1886
- Booker T. Washington, The Atlanta Compromise, 1895
- Excerpts from Plessy v. Ferguson, 1896
- Excerpts from Rebecca Latimer Felton, “Southern Women and Farm Life,” c. 1897 (read the Word document before the PDF with the same title!)
- Ida B. Wells, “Lynch Law in America,” 1900
- Benjamin R. Tillman, “The Use of Violence against Southern Blacks,” 1900

Week 11
19) Mar 31→ Discussion of the Gilded Age

20) Apr 2→ The Political Economy of Imperialism
Readings
- President McKinley’s war message of 11 April 1898
- Excerpts from Theodore Roosevelt, “The Strenuous Life,” 1899
- Secretary of State John Hay, Open Door Notes, 1899–1900

Week 12
21) Apr 7→ Carrying a Small Stick
Readings
- Platform of the American Anti-Imperialist League, 1899
- Platt Amendment, 1901
• Excerpts from Theodore Roosevelt, Fourth Annual Message to Congress, 6 December 1904
• Excerpts from President William Taft, Fourth Annual Message to Congress, 3 December 1912

22) Apr 9 → Discussion of Empire / SECOND PAPER DUE

Week 13
23) Apr 14 → The Domestication of Politics
Readings
• Excerpts from National Woman Suffrage Association, “Declaration of Rights of the Women of the United States,” 4 July 1876
• Excerpts from Frances E. Willard, *Women and Temperance*, 1883
• Royal Melendy, “Saloon Culture,” 1900
• Excerpts from *Muller v. Oregon*, 1908
• Excerpts from Illinois Association Opposed to the Extension of Suffrage to Women, “Woman’s Protest against Woman Suffrage,” 190
• Rose Schneiderman, “Working Women and the Vote,” 1912

24) Apr 16 → Progressivism I
Readings
• Robert M. La Follette, “Peril in the Machine,” 1897
• Chicago Vice Commission, “The Social Evil in Chicago,” 1911
• Isaac F. Marcosson, “The Dayton Plan,” 1914

Week 14
25) Apr 21 → Progressivism II
Readings
• Excerpts from Eugene Debs, 1900 and 1905
• David M. Parry, “The Necessity of Organization among Employers,” 1903
• Excerpts from Theodore Roosevelt, Address to the New York State Agricultural Association, 1903
• David Wilcox, Testimony on Railroad Reform, 1905
• William Hepburn, Speech on Railroad Reform, 1906
• Excerpts from William Jennings Bryan, Speech at Madison Square Garden, 1906

26) Apr 23 → The New Freedom
Readings
• Theodore Roosevelt, “Acceptance Speech,” 1912
• Woodrow Wilson, “The New Freedom,” 1913
• Woodrow Wilson, Statement on “dollar diplomacy,” 19 March 1913
Week 15
27) Apr 28 → World War I
Readings
- Excerpts from Woodrow Wilson, “Declaration of War against Germany,” 1917
- Excerpts from George Norris, “Speech against Declaration of War,” 1917
- Excerpts from Woodrow Wilson, “The Fourteen Points Address,” 1918

28) Apr 30 → Conclusion

Week 16—NO CLASS, CLASSES OVER
May 5 → FINAL PAPERS DUE