



History of the United States since 1877

William G. Thomas III
University of Nebraska
Spring 2016

HIST 111H (Honors)
History of the U.S. since 1877
Spring 2016
William G. Thomas III

Morrill 141
9:30-10:20 MWF

(Note: this syllabus is subject to change and adjustment during the semester as necessary to meet the goals and objectives of the course. Substantive changes will be made in consultation with the students and communicated in a timely and clear manner.)

William G. Thomas

Office Hours: W and F 2:30-4:00
Office Phone: 472-2414
Home Phone: 421-0918
Email: wgt@unl.edu
History Office: 612 Oldfather Hall

Teaching Assistants

Course Description:

This course covers the history of the United States from 1877 to present. We will examine social, political, and economic changes in American history and focus on several major themes—the struggle to fulfill the nation’s commitment to equality and justice after the Civil War, the development of large-scale industrial capitalism, and the rise of the United States as a world power and its responsibility in global affairs. We will explore the history of some of the most significant challenges in modern American society: social justice, immigration, equal rights, urban and suburban expansion, environmental conservation, international engagement, demographic change, and political realignment. We will use the vast new online resources available in American history, from YouTube to Proquest, and we will develop skills for critically evaluating, using, and understanding these digital sources and databases.

You will have the opportunity to work with the original materials of the past-- letters, speeches, diaries, newspaper articles, photographs, and films--and to form your understanding of history from them. Readings in this course will mainly consist of primary source documents. The textbook, American Passages, provides a chronological framework of American history. Weekly readings will feature a primary source approach and cover the key people, events, and concepts. We will also read two landmark books in American history: Anne Moody's Coming of Age in Mississippi and Philip Caputo's A Rumor of War. In addition, we will read Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*.

The course will use several documentary film collections in class--including *Rising Up: Virginia's Civil Rights Movement* and *Berkeley in the Sixties*. We will show two Academy award-winning films each of which in different ways addresses broader cultural themes since World War II: *The Graduate* (1967), and *Wall Street* (1987). We will also take a class period to visit the Sheldon Museum of Art at UNL, one of finest collections of American art in the U.S., and where we will study realist and modernist painters.

Course Objectives:

- to give students the experience and opportunity to do history for themselves and participate in it through gathering evidence, analyzing sources, communicating ideas, and engaging with historical scholarship.
- to improve fluency and proficiency in historical analysis, historical thinking, and written and oral communication.
- to develop substantial content knowledge of American history from 1877 to the present--the events, structures, ideas, and people that shaped the United States--and provide a deep understanding of of the United States.

Office Hours:

Students are welcome to come by regular office hours W and F 2:30-4:00 p.m. to discuss the course, the history major, assignments, or other academic issues. Students are also welcome to schedule a meeting outside of office hours. The best way to reach me is always by email and I encourage all students to communicate questions directly.

Academic Policies:

Attendance: Attendance at all lectures and class periods is required. Note taking in class is strongly encouraged.

Timely Completion of Work: Essays will not be accepted in email format or as attachments, only as hard copy handed in at the class session they are due. Assignments will not be accepted after the due dates except in cases where students can document an illness, family emergency, or university-related responsibility that prevented them from completing the assignment on time.

Communication: Students are expected to use Blackboard in this course and to follow their email correspondence regularly during the semester to stay informed on any changes in the course syllabus.

Academic Resources: The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Writing Center can provide you with meaningful support as you write for this class as well as for every course in which you enroll. Trained peer consultants are available to talk with you as you plan,

draft, and revise your writing. Please check the Writing Center website for locations, hours, and information about scheduling appointments. (<http://www.unl.edu/writing/>)

Academic Accommodation: Students with disabilities or in need of academic accommodation are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

Academic Integrity: All students are expected to adhere to the University policies regarding academic honesty set forth in the Undergraduate Bulletin. Cases of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation) will be handled in strict accordance with the guidelines of the University.

Academic Freedom: Academic freedom of expression is essential to reasoned discourse, learning, and scholarship. Students will be expected at all times to engage in analysis and discussion in an atmosphere of cordiality, respect, honor, and dignity. Students will be expected to consider complex issues and controversial topics with respect for views that may differ from their own. Students should be familiar with and consult the following important resources in the Office of Student Affairs at the University of Nebraska, describing the rights and responsibilities of both students and faculty in the classroom:

1. The Student Code of Conduct-- <http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/code/>
2. The Student in the Academic Community--Classroom Rights and Responsibilities
<http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/community/two.shtml>

Required Texts:

1. Edward L. Ayers, et al., *American Passages*
2. selected online readings from *History Matters* and other selected web sites
3. Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*
4. Philip Caputo, *A Rumor of War*
5. Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*

Web Sites:

History Matters--<http://historymatters.gmu.edu>
Railroads and the Making of Modern America--<http://railroads.unl.edu>
Internet Archive--<http://www.internetarchive.org>
Voting America--<http://www.americanpast.org/voting/>
Civil Rights Television News--<http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/civilrightstv>
Gilder-Lehrman Institute--<http://www.gilderlehrman.org>

Five-page Essays:

1. Newspaper Analysis:

Consult with a TA or me at each step if you would like. Consult your textbook or class notes and choose a major event between 1877 and 1914 you are interested in. Focus on a single week or month/year for that event. For example, the Rock Springs, Wyoming race riot in September 1885, the vote on women's suffrage in Colorado in November 1893, the sinking of the U.S.S. Maine in February 1898, or the Munn v. Illinois Supreme Court decision in March 1877.

Choose a major city newspaper from Proquest (New York Times, Chicago Daily Tribune, L.A. Times, Wall Street Journal, Chicago Defender) or a Nebraska newspaper (Omaha Dailey Bee, Alliance Herald, Valentine Democrat, for full list see <http://nebnewspapers.unl.edu/newspapers/>). Using the search tools and date restriction, focus your investigation on the week or two after the event. Concentrate on editorial opinion and assess what political positions the editors are taking (is the paper Republican-oriented, Democratic-oriented, or other, Populist . . . , African American?)

Question: How and in what ways did newspapers portray your event? Assess what rhetorical strategies they adopted, what themes they emphasized, and in what ways they attempted to shape how the American public may have understood the event?

Sources:

Proquest Historical Newspapers (search in iris "proquest historical newspapers")
<http://iris.unl.edu>

Nebraska Newspapers
<http://nebnewspapers.unl.edu>

Use only Proquest Historical newspapers databases available through the UNL Libraries (iris.unl.edu), and Nebraska Newspapers (<http://nebnewspapers.unl.edu>). Limit your search to a single event and if necessary a single week, month, or year. Read and compare the coverage and address the question. Please be sure to cite at least 5 newspaper articles in your paper.

Due February 15: 3-5 pages, double-spaced, 1" margins, standard font (Times New Roman 12pt or Calibri 11pt).

2. Mapping the Electorate: Your assignment is to write an essay describing the changes in the American electorate in the late 20th century, with particular attention paid to shifts in geography and demography during this period. Begin by studying the maps of voting results in the presidential elections compiled by the University of Richmond's Digital Scholars Lab for 1960, 1968, and 1980 (links provided below). Make sure to think about and compare not only the States Won maps (which reflect the Electoral College), but also

the counties won, density maps, and “heat maps” of each party. It may also be helpful to review the relevant portions of the videos of State-Level Popular Voting and Counties Won in Popular Voting to help visualize these changes over time.

After reviewing these maps and considering connections you see between the election results and significant events described in your course textbook and lecture, write a short essay (3-5 pages) that advances an argument in response to the following questions:

How did the American political landscape change during this period? What do these maps tell us about changing political alliances or ideologies at this time? Are there significant changes you see in voting patterns linked to regional differences or urban (densely populated) vs. rural (sparsely populated) voters? If so, how do you account for these changes over this time?

Sources:

1960: <http://dsl.richmond.edu/voting/indelections.php?year=1960>

1968: <http://dsl.richmond.edu/voting/indelections.php?year=1968>

1980: <http://dsl.richmond.edu/voting/indelections.php?year=1980>

State-Level Voting over time: <http://dsl.richmond.edu/voting/statelevel.html>

Counties Won in Popular Voting: <http://dsl.richmond.edu/voting/countypopular.html>

Due April 22: 3-5 pages, double-spaced, 1" margins, standard font (Times New Roman 12pt or Calibri 11pt).

Grading for both essays will be based on the following criteria:

- 1) Mechanics (spelling, grammar, etc.)
- 2) Ability to follow instructions
- 3) Effective use of sources
- 4) Clearly presented and well-defended argument
- 5) Organization (essay flows in a smooth, logical format)

Grading:

Maple TA quizzes/assignments (10 @ 10 each)	100 points
Five-page Essay (Newspaper Analysis)	150 points
Mid Term Exam	250 points
Five-page Essay (Mapping the Electorate)	200 points
Final Exam	300 points
	=====
	1000 points

Grading Scale

A+	97-100	C+	77-79
A	94-96	C	74-76
A-	90-93	C-	70-73
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	84-86	D	64-66
B-	80-83	D-	60-63
		F	below 60

Weekly MapleTA quizzes:

Short multiple-choice quizzes (10-12 questions) will be posted weekly on the textbook and primary source readings. These will be self-paced and cumulative. Students will be allowed to improve to 100 % proficiency on re-takes for the week that they are posted. This structure is intended to provide students with consistent opportunity to gain historical knowledge in the course and master the material in preparation for unit exams and final examinations.

ACE Statement:

This course addresses the following ACE outcomes:

Ace Outcome 5: Use knowledge, historical perspectives, analysis, interpretation, critical evaluation, and the standards of evidence appropriate to the humanities to address problems and issues.

Course Pedagogy and Format:

This course uses several approaches to teaching and learning. First, lectures will comprise the main delivery of course material, including specific terms and detailed analysis of the primary source readings. Lectures will be accompanied by a brief outline of terms for students to use in taking notes. Students should take extensive notes during lectures to prepare for the mid-term and final examinations.

Second, smaller group discussion meetings will analyze the primary source readings. At these sessions students will write in class to sharpen their analysis and will be expected to have read the assigned readings prior to class. These writing and discussion sessions will also prepare students for the two essays in this course.

Third, the professor and the teaching assistants will conduct a weekly podcast (18 min.) analyzing the readings and exploring the ways they connect to the major themes in the course. These will be made available on Blackboard and students are encouraged to listen to these sessions to refresh and deepen their understanding of the readings.

Fourth, the professor and the teaching assistants will hold office hours for working individually with students. These sessions are strongly encouraged for students to discuss the course material or gain individual support in writing and historical analysis.

Primary Source Documents:

["To This We Dissented:" The Rock Springs Riot \(1885\)](#)

[Chicago, Burlington & Quincy post-strike report \(1888\)](#)

[Captain Richard H. Pratt on the Education of Native Americans \(1892\)](#)

[The Omaha Platform, Populist Party \(1892\)](#)

[Paul Picotte, Yankton Sioux Remembers Life on the Plains, \(1968\)](#)

Data Visualizations:

[U. S. Labor Force, 1850-2000](#)

[African American Mobility After Emancipation](#)

[The Rise of the American Railway Union](#)



Cotton-Mill Worker, North Carolina, 1908. Lewis W. Hine. George Eastman House Still Photographs Archive.

Week Three: *American Passages*, Chapter 19

1/25/16	Corruption, Politics, and Reform	
1/27/16	1894 and 1896	
1/29/16	Discussion Section Meeting:	
	Group 1	Morrill 141
	Group 2	TBA
	Group 3	TBA

Primary Source Documents:

["Democracy and the Trusts," Omaha Daily Bee, August 28, 1894](#)
["Consecrated Perfidy," Omaha Daily Bee, September 3, 1894](#)
[Letters on the Pullman Strike, 1894](#)
[William Jennings Bryan, Speech, Richmond, Va., September 18, 1896](#)
[Ida B. Wells, letter of protest against lynching \(1898\)](#)
[Booker T. Washington, 1895 Atlanta Compromise Speech \(1895\)](#)
[W. E. B. DuBois, "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others" \(1903\)](#)

Data Visualizations:

[African American Population Density, 1840-2008](#)

Week Four: *American Passages*, Chapters 20 and 21

2/1/16	Who Were the Progressives?
2/3/16	Immigration
2/5/16	Theodore Roosevelt, President

Primary Source Documents:

[Albert Parsons on Anarchist Socialism \(1887\)](#)
[Florence Kelley, Speech on Women's Suffrage \(1898\)](#)
[Rudyard Kipling, "Take up the White Man's burden," \(1899\)](#)
[American Soldiers Write Home about the War \(1900\)](#)
[American Federation of Labor, Some Reasons for Chinese Exclusion \(1902\)](#)
[Lincoln Steffens, The Shame of the Cities \(1904\)](#)
[Upton Sinclair, The Jungle \(1904\)](#)
[Theodore Roosevelt, "The Liberty of the People" \(1912\)](#)

Data Visualizations:

[Total Immigration by Year, 1800-2000](#)
[New York Times, Immigration Explorer](#)



Theodore Roosevelt, 1903. Rockwood Photo. Library of Congress.

Week Five: *American Passages*, Chapter 22

2/8/16 World War I Causes and Changes
2/10/16 Great Migration and Harlem Renaissance
2/12/16 Sheldon Art Museum Visit

Primary Source Documents:

[North American Review, Why We Must Fight \(1917\)](#)

[Woodrow Wilson, Request for Declaration of War against Germany, 1917](#)

[Jane Addams Critiques The Birth of a Nation \(1915\)](#)

[Claude McKay, "If We Must Die" \(1919\)](#)

["Declaration of the Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World," \(1920\)](#)

[Conclusions and Recommendations by the Committee of Six Disinterested Americans \(1926\)](#)

[The Crisis \(1929\)](#)

1st Five-page Essay Due Monday February 15, 2016

Week Six: *American Passages*, Chapter 23 and 24

2/15/16 The 1920s Culture
2/17/16 The New Woman
2/19/16 The Great Depression – Causes and Consequences

Primary Source Documents:

[Marie Jenney Howe, "Anti suffrage monologue" parody of opposition \(1913\)](#)

[Charles Stelzle, Why Prohibition! \(1918\)](#)

[H. L. Mencken, "The Hills of Zion," Baltimore Sun, July 1925](#)

[Floyd Dell, Outline of Modern Marriage \(American Birth Control League, 1926\)](#)

[Margaret Sanger, "The Civilizing Force of Birth Control" \(1929\)](#)

[Edward S. Martin, "New Freedom and the Girls," Harper's \(August 1926\)](#)



Flapper Girls, Washington, D.C., October 8, 1923. Library of Congress.

Week Seven: *American Passages*, Chapters 25 and 26

2/22/16

The New Deal

2/24/16

World War II Battlefield and Homefront

2/26/16

Discussion Section Meeting:

Group 1

Morrill 141

Group 2

TBA

Group 3

TBA

Primary Source Documents:

[Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1st Inaugural Address \(March 4, 1933\)](#)
["The Farmer Learns Direct Action," Nation, March 8, 1933](#)
[Textile Workers write Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, excerpts](#)
[United Steelworkers of America, Declaration, 1936](#)
[Franklin D. Roosevelt, Request for Declaration of War, December 8, 1941](#)
[Executive Order No. 9066: Japanese American Relocation, February 19, 1942](#)
[Korematsu v. U.S., 1944](#)
["A Letter from Bataan," Paramount Pictures \(film\), 1944](#)
["Naval Operations off Okinawa," U.S. Navy Combat Bulletin #61 \(film\), 1945](#)
[President Harry Truman announces the Atom Bomb, August 6, 1945](#)

Week Eight: *American Passages*, Chapter 27
Philip Caputo, *A Rumor of War* pp. xiii-150

2/29/16 The Making of The Cold War
3/2/16 Korea and Cold War Strategy
3/4/16 Discussion Section Meeting:
 Group 1 Morrill 141
 Group 2 TBA
 Group 3 TBA

Primary Source Documents:

[Declaration of Independence, Democratic Republic of Vietnam, 1945](#)
["Duck and Cover," \(film\) 1951](#)
["I'm Not Afraid of the A-Bomb," Collier's, January 26, 1952](#)
[Redbook Magazine, "In the Suburbs" \(film\) 1957](#)



Helicopters of the 170th and the 189th Helicopter Assault Companies at Polei Kleng, Republic of South Vietnam, April 10, 1969. National Archives and Records Administration

Week Nine: *American Passages*, Chapter 28
Philip Caputo, *A Rumor of War* pp. 150-356

3/7/16 U.S. Involvement in Vietnam
3/9/16 Escalation of U.S. Involvement in Vietnam
3/11/16 Discussion of Caputo, *A Rumor of War*
Group 1 Morrill 141
Group 2 TBA
Group 3 TBA

Primary Source Documents:

[Universal Newsreels, Showdown in Vietnam, Plieku, \(film\) 1965](#)
[President Lyndon Johnson on Vietnam, Universal Newsreels, \(film\) May 1965](#)
[Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara on Vietnam, Universal Newsreels, 1965](#)

Week Ten: *American Passages*, Chapter 29

3/14/16 **MID TERM EXAM**
3/16/16 Brown v. Board of Education
3/18/16 The New Left

Primary Source Documents:

[WDBJ interview with Vivian Carter Mason, \(film\) 1959](#)

[WDBJ interview with Norview High School students, \(film\) 1959](#)

[Richard M. Nixon, stump speech, Richmond, Va. \(film\) 1960](#)

[John F. Kennedy, stump speech, Roanoke, Va. \(film\) 1960](#)

[Mario Savio, University of California, Berkeley, \(film\) 1964](#)

[Cathy Wilkerson, on women and SDS and the New Left](#)

The Graduate (1967) -- on reserve in Love Library

SPRING BREAK March 19-27

Week Eleven: *Anne Moody, Coming of Age in Mississippi*

3/28/16 Civil Rights Movement

3/30/16 Civil Rights Movement

4/1/16 Discussion of Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*

 Group 1 Morrill 141

 Group 2 TBA

 Group 3 TBA



Martin Luther King and James J. Kilpatrick, NBC "The Nation's Future," November 26, 1960, debate "Are the Sit-In Strikes Justifiable?"

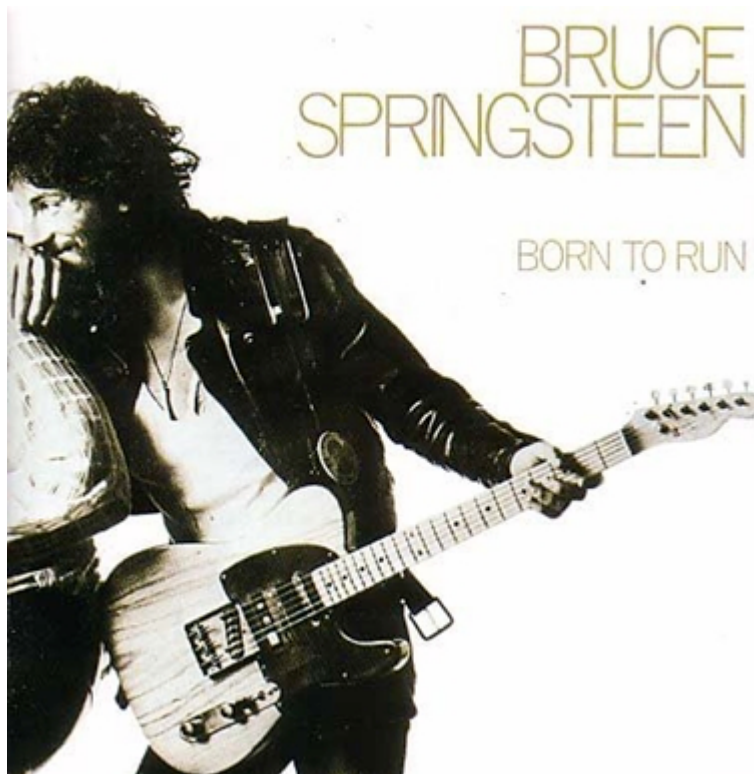
Week Twelve: *American Passages, Chapter 30*

4/4/16 Women's Rights and Feminism in the 70s

4//6/16 The Crisis of Watergate
4/8/16 Discussion Section Meeting:
 Group 1 Morrill 141
 Group 2 TBA
 Group 3 TBA

Primary Source Documents:

[Gloria Steinem, Testimony, ERA Hearings, May 1970](#)
[Leslie Gelb, Testimony to U.S. Senate Comm. on Foreign Relations, May 1972](#)
[Rep. Margaret M. Heckler, speech for the ERA, 1970](#)
[Richard Nixon, White House Tapes, July 1, 1971](#)
[William F. Buckley, Jr. "Firing Line" episode on ERA, April 15, 1973 \(film\)](#)
[1976 Jimmy Carter for President ad](#)
[Jimmy Carter, Crisis of Confidence speech, July 15, 1979](#) or [view here](#)



Bruce Springsteen, Born to Run, album cover, September 11, 1973

Week Thirteen: *American Passages*, Chapter 31
 Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*
 [James Baldwin, "The American Dream and the American Negro"](#)

4/11/16 New Conservatism
4/13/16 Reagan as President

4/15/16 Honors Discussion Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*
[James Baldwin, "The American Dream and the American Negro"](#)

Primary Source Documents:

[Gov. George Wallace, on the March on Washington film \(1963\)](#)
[James J. Kilpatrick on the 1965 Voting Rights Act film \(March 31, 1966\)](#)
[Roy Wilkins on the 1965 Voting Rights Act film \(March 31, 1966\)](#)
[Testimony in Federal Response to AIDS hearings, U.S. Congress, 1983](#)
[Bruce Springsteen, "Born in the U.S.A." \(1984\)](#)
[Ronald Reagan, on Iran-Contra, March 4, 1987](#)

2nd Five-page Essay Due Friday April 22nd

Week Fourteen: *American Passages*, Chapter 32

4/18/16 The PC Revolution and Digital Age
4/20/16 End of the Cold War
4/22/16 Your Lifetime

[Vannevar Bush, "As We May Think," Atlantic Magazine, July 1945](#)
[Apple, Macintosh Super Bowl ad \(1984\)](#)
[First World Wide Web page \(1992\)](#)
[Ronald Reagan, speech at the Berlin Wall, 1987](#)
[PBS on George H. W. Bush, "The New World Order"](#)
[Jaron Lanier, "Fixing the Digital Economy," The New York Times, June 8, 2013](#)

Data Visualizations:

[Counties Won in Popular Voting](#)
[BBC News Visualizing the Internet](#)
[Charts Bin--Number of Internet Users by Country](#)
[ITU Digital Opportunity Index](#)

Historians on the Record--Gilder-Lehrman Institute:

[Thomas Blanton, "The End of the Cold War"](#)

Week Fifteen:

4/25/16 Review and Discussion of Document Readings and Terms
4/27/16 Review and Discussion of Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* and
Caputo, *A Rumor of War*
4/29/16 REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM

FINAL EXAM Wednesday May 4, 2016 10:00 a.m. Morrill 141

