Florida A&M University  
College of Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities  
Department of History, Political Science,  
Geography and African American Studies  
AMH 2020 – 007 / U.S. History 1865-Present | 3 Credit Hours

Instructor: Kyle Harris, Ph.D.  
Class Location:  
Office Phone and Email:  


Course Description  
In AMH 2020, students study the political, cultural and social growth of the United States from the end of the Civil War to the present. The main focus of their study will be the forces that shaped the nature of American society. The main text for the course is American History: A Survey Since 1865, Vol. II by Alan Brinkley. The text will be supplemented by handouts and films during the semester. In addition, each chapter has WEB Resources, which will enhance some element of the material and be of significant help in gaining the extra information needed to excel. Reading assignments in the text are made in the syllabus and should be completed before class. Class sessions will often be devoted to discussion of the topics indicated in the syllabus as what should be learned from reading, but time will not permit discussion of every topic. It is, therefore, very important to read thoroughly and make notes. Keeping a notebook of responses to topics-combining information from reading and discussion is very important. Most identification and vocabulary items will be part of the responses to the more general topics. Those that are not should be included individually. Such a notebook can be the basis for exam preparation.

Attendance  
Attendance is important. According to the Institute for Higher Education at the University of Georgia, the loss in learning and skill building of students who miss more than two or three classes a term is exponential. That is the amount lost multiplies rather than just being added to with each additional absence. This effect occurs whether or not the missed work is made-up. Therefore, it is clear that absences are harmful and very likely to result in a reduction in grades earned. Since grades are a student's means of showing graduate and professional schools and potential employers her/his degree of success, the penalty for absences is obvious. In the spirit of positive reinforcement and rewarding desirable behavior, however, students in this class may earn extra
credit through exemplary attendance. Students with perfect attendance from the second day of class through the first exam will receive five points on that exam grade. Perfect attendance between any two subsequent exams will also earn five points. Perfect attendance is defined as being present and ready to start class when the role is taken—no excuses will be accepted. Those who arrive late should either not sign the role or indicate after their signatures that they were late. Failure to do so will result in the entire class losing credit for attendance on that day. This policy is to reward exemplary effort; it does not change the option of making up work missed on occasions when there is a reasonable cause for being away. If a make-up is needed, consult with the instructor.

Turn off and put away all telephones and other electronic devices before the beginning of class. Work done outside of class should be typed. Work done in class must be written in ink. Once an in-class project has begun, you may not leave the room until it is completed. Leaving is the equivalent of turning in the project at that point. Be sure to visit the restroom, have a tissue, etc. before beginning such work.

**Overarching Goals:**
- Analyze, synthesize, and evaluate historical data concerning the U. S. and Florida.
- Identify the consequences of major technological advances such as the impact of railroads on national growth and industrialization.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the U. S. Constitution.
- Establish by reading and research and defend logically positions on vital issues in the U. S. today.
- Demonstrate the ability to separate factual data from opinion, for instance by a discussion of the impact of Social Darwinism on social policy.
- Identify economic, political, and social forces which have influence movements and events, for example by examining the political elements in shaping Reconstruction after the Civil War.

**Learning Objectives:**

Students are expected to

a) analyze sources while conducting research and then write papers presenting their conclusions.

b) differentiate facts from opinion, for instance by analyzing claims that there was a conspiracy to kill John Kennedy to determine what is known and what is believed.

c) recognize inconsistencies in logic, for instance by seeing that the arguments of Social Darwinism can be perfectly logical but if based on a false premise lead to an incorrect conclusion.

d) understand and respect other values and cultures from a study of the confrontation between Indians and the U. S.

e) examine forces shaping and altering social institutions for instance by studying the impact of the New Deal on such institutions.
f) recognize the changing roles of men and women over time and understand the causes for those changes

g) gain a basic knowledge of U. S. history since the Civil War.

Grade scale: A=100%-90%; B=89%-80%; C=79%-70%; D=69%-60%; F=below 60%.

The course grade will be determined from the following:

1. Short quizzes and class participation--5%. Quizzes will cover the preceding and/or current day's reading assignment and will be electronically up-loaded onto Canvas no later than 24 hours before the next class period. The quiz will be timed and will consist of a few short answers, multiple choice questions or a short (paragraph) essay. If the Canvas quiz malfunctions, the student must email the professor within 12 hours of the next class period in order for it to be re-set. If the student does not notify the professor by 8:00PM via email the night before class, the quiz will not be reset and the student will receive a grade of zero. A similar quiz will be given during the first five minutes of each class period using clickers in order to take roll. Neither quiz can be made-up, but some (the number will depend on the number given during the semester) quiz grades will be dropped in the case of legitimate absences. Homework assignments will be submitted by the student via Canvas/TurnItIn no later than 5 minutes before the beginning of the current day’s lecture. If the student is not able to upload the homework assignment via Canvas/TurnItIn, he or she must physically submit it to the professor 5 minutes before the current class lecture. Any homework or quizzes submitted after the times in the above directives will not be considered for grading.

2. Examinations:
   - Examination I: 10%
   - Mid-Term Examination: 15%
   - Examination III: 10%
   - Examination IV: 10%
   - Final Examination: 20%

All examinations will be given via Canvas. Each on-line examination will be opened at 5PM on Friday and closed on Sunday at 5PM on the weekends specified below. You will have 45 minutes to answer an examination consisting of 85 multiple choice and/or true/false questions. If Canvas malfunctions and the examination needs to be reset, the student must inform the professor via email no later than 4PM on Sunday afternoon. If the request is made after the specified date and time, the test will not be reset and the student will receive a grade of zero for the examination. The final examination will be given online on July 28-29, 2022. Missed examinations will be considered for make-up only in the case of a student presented dean’s excuse. Once the excuse has been verified, the student will be asked to take the exam at professor’s upcoming office hours during the following week.
3. American Heroes--Two biographies @5% each=10%. Lists of contributors to the development of U.S. life and culture are listed in the “I & S” portions of each section of the syllabus. They are divided chronologically into two parts based on which half of the period covered by the course (1865-present) the major contributions of the individuals listed were made. Each student will pick a significant figure from the text prior to July 8th for the first biography and after July 8th for the second biography. On July 7, 2022 and July 14, 2022, a class session will be devoted to writing the biography of the individuals selected. The focus of the essays is to be the contributions made by the individual to the development of the African American life and history. Other information about his/her life should be presented ability, opportunity, or barrier to making his/her contributions, and not as main themes. Use of notes will be strictly limited. Careful planning and outlining is called for not only due to the limitation on notes but also because writing a paper in an hour and a fifteen minutes (4-5 pages) means that space is limited. Once a thorough knowledge of the individual's biography is gained, decisions have to be made about what is most important and how that information can be organized into a cohesive biographical sketch. Waiting until class period in which the paper is to be written to make plans will mean using time that will be needed to write and make it likely the essay will be incomplete.

Evaluation of Biographical Sketches:

Every essay has strengths and weaknesses and in may cases strengths will more than counterbalance weaknesses or vice versa. Papers will, therefore, be evaluated holistically i.e. considered in their entirety rather than on any one specific quality. This does not mean, however, that qualities characteristic of strong and week papers cannot be identified. Such characteristics are likely to be achieved in levels (done better in some cases that in others), and so they cannot be treated as a check list so that having five strengths and one weakness means the overall paper is good. The strengths may be limited while the weakness is overwhelming. The following lists, then, should be used simply as guidelines for what should be sought and/or avoided when writing.

Characteristics of a strong paper:

- Has a clear thesis
- Provides critical analysis, for instance presenting and evaluating several points-of-view about the subject
- Has a logical structure with evidence leading to a conclusion
- Shows how and why the subject changed over time
- Shows signs of being based on a variety of sources
- Has a clear conclusion that outlines connections between point(s) proven and evidence presented
- Is written in clear, precise, grammatical English
Characteristics of a weak paper:

- Is superficial, for instance shows no awareness of conflicting points-of-view about the subject or of change over time
- Lacks logical structure and/or logical connections between points of evidence or such connections may be implicit
- May include significant amounts of irrelevant material
- Conclusion may be superficial (e.g., "she was a good person") and or not supported by the evidence presented in the body of the paper
- Writing may be confused and/or so ungrammatical that ideas are poorly communicated if at all

4.) Reaction Paper to Dray, *At The Hands of Persons Unknown.* (20% total)

A reaction paper means a 500-700 word typewritten response to the reading (single-spaced; 12 pt. font; 1 inch margins; left-justified). The point of this exercise is to help you crystallize your critique of the book. Your essay must make at least one decisive argument about the book. In completing this exercise, you might want to consider how you would answer the following questions (these will form the basis of our discussions): What historical question is the author addressing? What is the author’s argument(s) about the historical question they are trying to answer? What types of sources did the author use to support her argument? Is his/her argument persuasive? Is the author entering into a historical debate with others and if so, who? Did the book change the way the history of this topic was written (look up sample book reviews using *Journal of Southern History* to answer) What would you say are the strengths of the book? The weaknesses?

**Disabilities**

Florida A&M University will grant reasonable accommodations and provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services to ensure all qualified students with documented disabilities achieve access to its programs and services. Students with disabilities should contact the Center for Disability Access and Resources (CDAR) at 850-599-3180 for assistance and advice. They should also inform the course instructor of their situation.

**Classroom Decorum:**

1. Attend all classes, arrive on time, and do not leave early. Tardiness will be treated as an absence and thus result in a zero for class participation for that day. It may also trigger a quiz.

2. Common courtesy must be observed: This includes wearing appropriate clothing, speaking in turn during discussions, being quiet during other class activities.
3. Electronic devices—cell phones, pagers, i-pods, computers, etc.—must be turned off and put away. Personal computers may be used if prior permission is obtained from the instructor. Other such devices should be out of sight during the class period. Answering a telephone during class will result in a zero for class participation for that day. It may also trigger a quiz.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

1. Cheating (i.e., the use of any outside source of information, unless such use is specifically allowed in the instructions) on any quiz or exam will result in a grade of zero
on the assignment.

2 Plagiarism (i.e., the use of another’s words or ideas without proper credit being given) will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. If you not clear about the nature of the various types of plagiarism, please request a copy of my handout on the subject.

**The Gordon Rule Requirement:**
This rule applies to all students prior to receipt of an Associate of Arts degree from a Florida public community college or university or prior to entry into upper division of a Florida public university. For the purpose of this rule, a grade of “C” or better shall be considered successful completion. All students entering FAMU are required to meet the Gordon Rule requirement. In order for this class to meet its portion of the Gordon Rule Requirement, at least 3,000 words must be written and submitted. For further information, visit the following websites:

http://www.firn.edu/doe/rules/6a-103.htm

**Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA):**
Federal law gives students two rights concerning their education records kept by the university. The federal law is called the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, also known as FERPA or the Buckley Amendment. First, it requires the university to keep those records private. There are exceptions for emergencies, court orders, university official who have a need to know etc. Second, it provides that students have the right to inspect records about themselves that are maintained by the university. Pursuant to FERPA, the U.S. Department of Education has enacted legally-binding regulations that set out in detail what are student’s rights with respect to their educational records. For further information, visit the following web site: [http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/reg/ferpa/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/reg/ferpa/index.html)

**The procedures above and the schedule below are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.**

Section 1: Reconstruction and The New South
Reading: Brinkley, Chapter 15 & 16

1. Compare and contrast Presidential (Lincoln/Johnson) and Congressional (Radical) Reconstruction policy and practice.

2. Discuss how and why Reconstruction resulted in changes in the U.S. Constitution.
3. Examine the reality of life in the Reconstruction era for freedmen. Typically, how did they earn a living, what political roles did they play, what economic power did they have, what was their relationship to their former masters, what sort of society did they create for themselves? How did all of these change over the period of Reconstruction? Would a freedman say Reconstruction was a success—or a failure? Why?

4. Evaluate Ulysses S. Grant as President of the U.S.

5. The Compromise of 1877 can be seen as either a pinnacle or nadir of U.S. politics. Argue one side or the other in this debate.


Chapter 16

1. Outline the political issues that dominated the 1870s and early 1880s. Would stronger Presidential authority have changed politics significantly in this period? Why or why not?

2. Many of the gains made by African Americans during Reconstruction were lost in the next twenty years with the rise of the Jim Crow system. Describe the change and explain why and how it happened.

3. Booker T. Washington emerged as the most prominent black leader of the later 19th and early 20th century. He is now sometimes attacked as an accommodationist or “Uncle Tom.” Describe his goals and methods and explain why he chose them. Was he really an “Uncle Tom”? 

4. Analyze the economic forces that drove Western expansion—agriculture, mining, railroads, etc.—and the cultural confrontations they produced.

5. Discuss the cultural impact of the “myth of the wild West.”

Section 2: Industrial Supremacy & The Age of the City

Reading: Brinkley, Chapters 17 & 18

1. Describe the conditions—economic, social, and political—that formed the basis for the growth of industrialization in post Civil War America.

2. Analyze the pros and cons of competitive versus monopolistic enterprise. Describe the struggle between the two in American industry and business, and be prepared to make a case for either side.

3. A variety of reform theories were propounded to deal with the problems of industrialization. Discuss those offered by Marx, George, Bellamy, and Lloyd. Were any of these practical?

4. Explain the causes for and assess the results of 19th century government efforts to control the excesses of Big Business.

5. Describe the rise of and assess the success of the American labor movement.


Brinkley, Chapter 18

1. Compare and contrast the lives of the middle and working classes. How are these different from today?

2. Discuss attitudes about immigration. Who supported it? Why? Who opposed it? Why?
3. Unprecedented urbanization was one of the major demographic shifts of the late 19th century. Describe the problems that were associated with this change, and explain how they were addressed and how cities became more desirable places to live.

4. By the late 19th century there were some efforts at social reform in the U.S. Identify and critique these.

5. Discuss the phenomenon the text calls the “knowledge revolution.” Explain how this was reflected in journalism and higher education.
6. The 19th century saw the greatest intellectual development in human history. Explain how this is reflected in the hard and social sciences and in law and the study of history.

7. Define realism. Show how it influenced literature and other arts in the latter half of the 19th century.

8. Define pragmatism. Explain why it is a nearly perfect fit in American culture.


Section 3: From Crisis to Empire; The Rise of Progressivism & The Battle for National Reform

Reading: Brinkley, Chapter 19 & 20

1. Describe urban political machines. Show how these political organizations had both negative and positive roles.

2. Describe the problems faced by farmers in the late 19th century.

3. Discuss the Populist Movement. Did it represent a practical effort to resolve the problems of farmers?
2. Explain how and why the U.S. got into the Spanish American War and evaluate the results of that conflict.

3. Compare and contrast the U.S. handling of relations with Cuba and the Philippines.

4. Explain the goals and outcomes of the Open Door Policy.

5. Discuss the concept of “Non-colonial Imperial Expansion.”

6. Explain how the Election of 1896 was a watershed in U.S. politics. What was different after it?


Reading: Brinkley, Chapter 20

1. Discuss the origins and themes of Progressivism.

2. Follow the path of Progressive political reform from city to state to national affairs. Identify major reforms in each stage and explain why the reforms continued to move to larger political arenas.

3. There was a women’s element within Progressivism. Explain why this was so and discuss the issues on which this part of the movement focused.
4. Compare and contrast Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft as Progressives. Show how their administrations had both Progressive and non-Progressive policies. Decide which was most Progressive and defend your choice.

5. Explain how Woodrow Wilson, a newcomer to the national political scene, won the election of 1912 over the better known Roosevelt and Taft.

6. Describe the policies of the Wilson Administration, compare them to those of Roosevelt and Taft. How Progressive was Wilson?

7. Identify African American leaders of the Progressive Era. What were the problems confronting African Americans in this era and how were their efforts to solve these changing?


Section 4: America and the Great War & “The New Era”
Reading: Brinkley, Chapter 21 and 22

1. Describe and critique the U.S. acquisition of the Panama Canal.

2. Consider the U.S. actions in the Caribbean in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and make a case for Latin American dislike of the U.S.

3. Describe the foreign policy of Woodrow Wilson and show how his policies were translated into the U.S. response to the outbreak of World War I in 1914.

4. Explain how the U.S. got actively involved in World War I.
5. Describe the impact of preparation for and the war itself on the American economy.

6. Critique the social impact of the war in the U.S.

7. Evaluate the American contribution to fighting the war.

8. Describe and critique the American involvement in making peace after World War I.

9. Describe post-war changes in the U.S. How much did the war have to do with shaping the next decade?


Reading: Brinkley, Chapter 22.

1. Describe the changes in the lives of women and children in the decade after World War I. What were the causes of these changes? How permanent were they?

2. Assess the impact of mass media on society and culture.

3. The post war era saw a growing split between modernism and tradition (often divided geographically into urban and rural conflicts). Discuss these attitudes and be prepared to argue the case for either side over fundamentalism, prohibition, race, and political radicalism.
4. Some literary intellectuals of the 1920s are called “the lost generation.” Identify writers and works in this group. Discuss the themes they addressed and explain why they were “lost.”

5. Alain Locke published *The New Negro* in 1925. Discuss the circumstances of African Americans in the 1920s and explain what this title meant.

6. Discuss technological change and economic growth in the 1920s.

7. Discuss the political and economic philosophies that dominated the U.S. during the 1920s. Are these being echoed in the contemporary era?

8. Critique U.S. foreign policy in the 1920s. How well did the nation respond to opportunities and challenges in international affairs?


*Watch Scottsboro: An American Tragedy*

**American Heroes II Assignment**

Section 5: The Great Depression & The New Deal
Reading: Brinkley, Chapter 23 & 24

1. Assess the Harding and Coolidge administrations. What were their successes and failures?

2. Analyze the economic situation of the U.S. in the 1920s and show how there were underlying problems that led to the Great Depression.
3. Critique the Hoover Administration’s handling of the first stages of the Great Depression.

4. Describe the impact of the Great Depression on Americans and on the country.

5. Evaluate the promise of Franklin Roosevelt in 1932.


Chapter 24:

1. The domestic program of the Roosevelt Administrations endeavors can be roughly broken down into the areas of Relief, Recovery, and Reform and into the first (1933-35) and second (1935-39) New Deals. Discuss each of these areas of activity, giving at least three examples of each, and compare and contrast the two New Deals. Explain why they differed.

2. Describe the social and psychological impact of the Depression and how the New Deal changed these.

3. Identify important literary achievements of the Depression era. Why would such a difficult, often desperate, time produce a flowering of literature?

4. Identify major opponents of FDR. Outline and assess the validity of their criticisms of the New Deal.

5. Explain why FDR tried to change the make up of the U. S. Supreme Court and why he failed.

6. Discuss the New Deal and minorities. Does the reality justify the great shift of African American votes to the Democratic Party during the 1930s? Did other minorities react the same?

7. Discuss U.S. foreign policy in the 1930s. Show how the country got, reluctantly, involved in the problems that became World War II.

Watch The African Americans Many Rivers to Cross

Section 6: The Global Crisis & America In A World at War
Reading: Brinkley: Chapter 25-26

1. Trace U.S.-Japanese relations and show the pattern that led to Pearl Harbor.

2. In regard to the home front, discuss:

   A. the war’s impact on the economy;
   B. the war’s impact on society, especially on women and minorities;
   C. the difference in treatment of German, Italian, and Japanese Americans.

3. Outline the events of the war in each theater (Europe and the Pacific) and explain why the Allies won in each.
4. Critique the decision to drop the Atomic-Bomb.

5. Discuss the deterioration of war time alliances and the emergence of the Cold War.


Section 7: The Cold War & The Affluent Society
Reading: Brinkley: Chapter 27 & 28

1. Describe the U.S. economy and society from the end of World War II through the early 1950s.

2. Discuss the emergence of the Cold War. Who was at fault? As a part of your discussion critique the Containment Policy, Truman Doctrine, and Marshall Plan.

3. Explain why Harry Truman was not supposed to but did win the election of 1948.

4. Explain how the U.S. got involved in the Korean war and why it did not win.

5. Describe McCarthyism in theory and practice. Explain how and why such a despicable policy was tolerated in the U.S.

6. Critique Dwight D. Eisenhower as President and his policies both domestic and foreign.


Watch The Untold Story of Emmet Till

Section 8: The Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam, and the Ordeal of Liberalism & The Crisis of Authority
Reading: Brinkley, Chapters 29 & 30

1. Discuss the emergence of the civil rights movement to 1960.

2. Movie Clips from PBS Eyes on the Prize Series
3. Elaborate on the Causes and Effects of the Vietnam War

I &S: White Citizens' Councils, NAACP (handouts will be distributed with the rest of the terms)

Reading: Brinkley, Chapter 30

Key Concepts and I&S Terms will be distributed by Instructor

Section 8: From the “Age of Limits” to the Age of Reagan The Age of Globalization Reading: Brinkley, Chapters 31&32

Key Concepts and I&S Terms will be distributed by Instructor

Reading: Brinkley, Chapter 32

Key Concepts and I&S Terms will be distributed by Instructor

Disclaimer: This syllabus is intended to provide student guidance on the type of content and activities that will be covered in this course throughout the semester. It will be followed to the extent possible. However, modifications may be made to supplement and/or enhance student learning