

University of Florida  
Department of History  
Spring 2023

## **AMH2020: U.S. History Since 1877**

Lectures in Pugh Hall, Tuesdays and Thursdays, Period 6 (12:50-1:40)  
Discussion Sections on Fridays

Professor Sean Adams ([spadams@ufl.edu](mailto:spadams@ufl.edu))

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Teaching Assistants (TAs):

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## **Course Introduction and Objectives**

This course is a survey of American history from 1877 to the present. Over the course of the semester, we will be dealing with various aspects of the political, social, economic, and cultural history of the United States. Although the readings, lectures and discussions cover a wide range of issues, this class will deal with three major themes. First, we will examine the changes in American society triggered by urbanization, industrialization, and immigration. Second, this course will cover America's rise to global power over the twentieth century. Finally, we will look at the struggle to expand the "American Dream" of political, economic and social opportunity to include all Americans.

This class will adhere to the National Research Council's classification of history as a social science and provide you with an introduction to the social and behavioral sciences. Consequently, we will employ paradigms, terminology, and methodologies used by social scientists—including both quantitative and qualitative methods. In lecture and discussion section we will focus on American politics and society and the relationships among individuals within our political and social systems. The required textbooks in this class will demonstrate the techniques by which historians in particular research and write about society. Through the required weekly reading and in discussion sections, you will learn to question and evaluate historical sources and evidence and, in the process, become informed thinkers and critical readers.

Your successful completion of AMH2020 with a grade of "C" or higher will count towards UF's General Education State Core in Diversity and Social Science (D and S). It will also count towards the State of Florida's Civic Literacy requirement.

After completing this course, students should have a familiarity with the broad scope of American history from the Reconstruction Era through the present. In addition to gaining this historical knowledge, students will engage in an analysis of primary and secondary source material in order to gain a firsthand perspective on the historian's craft. Finally, this course will allow students to hone their writing, speaking, and critical thinking skills in ways that should help them regardless of their major or chosen career.

In addition, successful completion of this course will empower students to:

1. Understand the influence of diverse historical forces – technological, social, political, cultural, economic – on human behavior, achievement, and ideas.
2. Analyze qualitative and quantitative evidence, synthesize conflicting points of view, and evaluate assumptions and biases to attain a balanced historical perspective.
3. Develop the ability to effectively communicate critical thinking, both orally and in writing.
4. Learn key themes, principles, terminology, and methodology within the discipline of history.

There are lecture and discussion components for this class, and each student will be expected to attend both components. Attendance in both lecture and discussion is **mandatory**. Check with your Teaching Assistant (TA) for more details regarding your discussion section's requirements. In the lecture period, please be respectful to your fellow students by turning off all cell phones, arriving on time, and avoid making excessive noise. Students who do not abide by these simple rules of courtesy will be asked to leave. You may use personal computers or tablets to take notes, but please also bring some paper and a writing instrument of choice to class.

### **Required Texts**

The readings of this class are designed to complement lecture material and will provide the primary topics of discussion sections. It is therefore of great importance that you complete the assigned readings by the discussion section of the designated week. Otherwise, you run the risk of getting lost as you try to catch up with the rest of the class. Knowledge of the readings will be important for your performance on papers and exams. The readings will come from the texts listed below, as well as some online primary source documents. All of the following three (3) textbooks are available for purchase at the UF Bookstore in paperback form or online from various vendors.

James West Davidson and Mark Lytle, *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection, Volume II*. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition (New York: McGraw Hill, 2010), ISBN 0077292693

Brett Flehinger, ed., *The 1912 Election and the Power of Progressivism* (Boston: Bedford Books, 2003), ISBN 9780312260293

Meg Jacobs and Julian Zelizer, eds., *Conservatives in Power: The Reagan Years, 1981-1989* (Boston: Bedford Books, 2011), ISBN 9780312488314

The online readings are free and the URL listed on the syllabus.

## Assignments and Grading

This class will have one in-class midterm examination and an in-class final examination that will consist of both objective and essay components. These essays will be assessed on their demonstration of understanding the content of the course and the student's ability to answer a broad question using evidence from the lecture and reading material. You will need to provide your own blue book for these exams, so please secure them in advance of the exam day. The midterm will be held during the class period on **2 March 2023** and the final examination will be held during the final exam period on **2 May 2023**. Make-up exams will only be offered in extraordinary circumstances if accompanied by official documentation and a 250-word personal statement. Please note that since notice of all exams and paper deadlines are given well in advance, there will be no make-ups given for travel reservations or non-emergency situations.

There will be two brief essays based on the primary source readers in this class, due on **15 February 2023** and **19 April 2023**. These essays will allow you to work on your analytical and critical thinking skills and will be uploaded on the Canvas website and will be assessed on their ability to make an argument, employ primary source evidence, and present their case in clear and concise prose. More details as to the specific questions and requirements of these assignments will be provided in class.

In addition to the scheduled exams and essays, a significant portion of your grade will be determined by your performance in discussion section. Since the lecture component of this class is in a large classroom setting, discussion sections offer you the opportunity to interact with a Teaching Assistant in a less crowded environment. Every discussion section has the same reading requirements and workload. Your TA will give you more specific information regarding the section grades.

Expectations for grades will be discussed in more detail in both lecture and discussion section, and both the instructor and TAs will be available for assistance during office hours. Please note that the grades are weighted towards the end of the semester; this is designed to reward improvement over the course of the semester. Determination of the final grade in the course, the scale, and the value of grades will all be subject to the following formula:

Grade Calculation	Grading Scale	Grade Value
First Brief Essay: 15%	100-93=A	A=4.0
Mid-Term Exam: 20%	92-90=A-	A-=3.67
Second Brief Essay 20%	89-87=B+	B+=3.33
Discussion Section Grade 25%	86-82=B	B=3.00
Final Exam 20%	82-80=B-	B-=2.67
	79-76=C+	C+=2.33
	75-72=C	C=2.00
	71-69=C-	C-=1.67
	68-66=D+	D+=1.33
	65-62=D	D=1.00

	61-60=D-	D-=0.67
	59-0=E	E=0.00

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/>). The DSO will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class, as it constitutes intellectual theft and academic dishonesty. If you turn in the work of others and try to pass it off as your own, you will fail that assignment and risk expulsion from the University of Florida. I will give you the guidelines, expectations, and other information regarding the written work in this course, so you really have no reason to cheat. I take these matters very seriously and will prosecute vigorously if provoked. Any possible rewards derived from plagiarism simply don't justify the risk! All students must conform to UF's honesty policy regarding cheating, plagiarism, and the use of copyrighted materials. Your major essays will be monitored with the Turnitin Anti-Plagiarism Service, so please keep in mind that cheating on the assignments in this course will be much more difficult than actually doing the work. All students must conform to UF's honesty policy regarding cheating, plagiarism, and the use of copyrighted materials, which you can find at the following address:

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

No late work can be accepted for full academic credit. Any make-up exams or essays must be approved by the instructor after the submission of appropriate documented evidence that supports why a make-up exam or essay is appropriate. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

### **Contacts, Confidentiality and Recording Policies**

It's always a good idea to meet with an instructor to track your progress in a college course. I am happy to meet with you in person during office hours—keep in mind that you can schedule a meeting with me outside of the scheduled hours—to discuss grades, assignments, or other course-related concerns during my regular office hours or appointments. If you have a brief question about the course, feel free to drop me an e-mail. However, I cannot accept assignments as e-mail attachments in this course without prior arrangement. I also cannot discuss grades over e-mail or the phone, as student records are confidential. UF views each student, not their parent(s), as the primary contact for all communication. For more information, see:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/ferpa.html>

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

I may keep a personal recording of class sessions, but am bound by the same restrictions on publication and distribution. These audio recordings are for my own use only.

### **Course Assistance and Student Resources**

U Matter, We Care Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

UF’s Writing Studio is a great resource, if you are concerned with your writing skills both in this class and beyond. They will help you meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in person in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

## Lecture and Readings Schedule (Subject to Change)

This schedule of readings and the due dates are subject to revision as the semester progresses. Please make use of the outlines provided in lecture to help you organize your notes and your reading of the texts.

### Week One: Introduction

January 10 What is History and Why Should You Care?

January 12 America in 1877

**Readings:** Davidson and Lytle, "Prologue" and "The View from the Bottom Rail," from *After the Fact*; Patrick Rael, "How to Read a Secondary Source," and "How to Read a Primary Source," from *Reading, Writing, and Researching for History*. This text is available for free at:

<https://courses.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/>

### Week Two: East and West

January 17 "Print the Legend": The American West in the Gilded Age

January 19 How Steam and Steel Reshaped the United States

**Readings:** "[The West](#)," and "[Capital and Labor](#)," in *The American Yawp*; "Interview with Lee D. Leverett," (1941) from the Library of Congress at: <https://www.loc.gov/item/wpalh002394>; "The Life of a Coal Miner," (1902) from The Ohio State University eHistory Site at:

<https://ehistory.osu.edu/exhibitions/gildedage/content/LifeofaCoalMiner>

### Week Three: North and South

January 24 "New Souths?": Race Relations in a Troubled Region

January 26 The American City

**Readings:** "[Life in Industrial America](#)," in *The American Yawp*; Davidson and Lytle, "The Mirror With a Memory," from *After the Fact*; Booker T. Washington's Atlanta Compromise Speech (1895) from the Library of Congress: <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aaohhtml/exhibit/aopart6.html#0605>; Ida B. Wells-Barnett, "Lynch Law in America" (1900) from The American Yawp Reader:

<https://www.americanyawp.com/reader/18-industrial-america/ida-b-wells-barnett-lynch-law-in-america-1900/>

### Week Four: Growing Pains

January 31 America's Empire: The War with Spain

February 2 The Progressives and Their World

**Readings:** [“American Empire”](#) and [“The Progressive Era,”](#) in *The American Yawp*; Davidson and Lytle, “USDA Inspected” in *After the Fact*; Start Reading Brett Flehinger, ed., *The 1912 Election and the Power of Progressivism*.

**Week Five: Battles Both Here and Abroad**

February 7 Bull Moose: Teddy Roosevelt’s America

February 9 Over There: Americans Confront the Great War

**Readings:** [“World War I& Its Aftermath,”](#) in *The American Yawp*; Brett Flehinger, ed., *The 1912 Election and the Power of Progressivism*.

**Week Six: Turning Inward**

February 14 A Sportin’ Life: Culture and Consumption in the Jazz Age

FIRST ESSAY DUE ON FEBRUARY 15

February 16 Red Scares and Rural Backlashes

**Readings:** [“The New Era,”](#) in *The American Yawp*; Davidson and Lytle, “Sacco and Vanzetti,” in *After the Fact*.

**Week Seven: Industrial America in Crisis**

February 21 Busted! How the Great Depression Unfolded

February 23 Nothing to Fear? The New Deal in American Life

**Readings:** [“The Great Depression,”](#) in *The American Yawp*; Davidson and Lytle, “Dust Bowl Odyssey,” in *After the Fact*.

**Week Eight : Mid-Term Week**

February 28 America in 1940

March 2 MID-TERM EXAMINATION

**Week Nine: Global Convulsions**

March 7 World War II and the American Moment

March 9 Linking the Front Line to the Home Front

**Readings:** [“World War II”](#) in *The American Yawp*; Davidson and Lytle, “The Decision to Drop the Bomb,” in *After the Fact*.

SPRING BREAK—HAVE A GOOD AND SAFE HOLIDAY

**Week Ten: The American Century**

March 21 The Cold War

March 23 Happy Days? America in the 1950s

**Readings:** [“The Cold War”](#) and [“The Affluent Society,”](#) in *The American Yawp*; Davidson and Lytle, “From Rosie to Lucy” in *After the Fact*.

**Week Eleven: A Great Society?**

March 28 Remaking a Democracy: The Civil Rights Movement

March 30 Vietnam and the Crisis in American Confidence

**Readings:** [“The Sixties,”](#) in *The American Yawp*; Davidson and Lytle, “Sitting In,” in *After the Fact*.

**Week Twelve: The Collapse of the Postwar Order**

April 4 Stagflation, Depression, Disco: America in the 1970s

April 6 From Mourning to Morning? The Election of 1980

**Readings:** [“The Unraveling”](#) and [“The Triumph of the Right”](#) in *The American Yawp*; Davidson and Lytle, “Breaking into Watergate,” in *After the Fact*; Begin Reading Meg Jacobs and Julian Zelizer, eds., *Conservatives in Power*.

**Week Thirteen: Conservatives Ascendant**

April 11 Reagan’s America

April 13 Red Dawn? The Cold War Matures



**Reading:** Meg Jacobs and Julian Zelizer, eds., *Conservatives in Power*

**Week Fourteen: A New World Order**

April 18      The End of History?

SECOND ESSAY DUE ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19

April 20      History Strikes Back: The Gulf Wars and Their Legacy

Reading: ["The Recent Past,"](#) in *The American Yawp*.

**Week Sixteen: What the New Century Brings**

April 25      America in 2077?

**Final Exam:** Tuesday, 2 May 2023 @ 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM, Turlington Hall 2353