

HISTORY 3760: US HISTORY, 1900-1945

Dr. Denise Conover

Eight-Week Summer Session, Monday-Friday, 9:50-10:50 am

Office Hrs. T,W, 11-noon or by appointment; email conoverd@hass.usu.edu

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Note: Hist. 3760 meets the University's requirement for a Communications Intensive (CI) course. It also is classified as a Depth Humanities and Creative Arts (DHA) course, according to the USU General Catalog, 2002-2004 (pp. 59, 61)

Course Objectives:

- 1. To expose students, in reading and library assignments, to a wide range of primary sources such as speeches, letters, laws, court decisions, journalistic accounts, oral histories, and photographs.**
- 2. To teach students how to analyze such sources in the context of the key questions of early twentieth-century American history.**
- 3. To improve student communication both written and oral.**
- 4. To familiarize students with the key names, events, laws, and trends in the United States from 1900 to 1945.**

Textbooks (will be used for reading assignments, short writing assignments, etc.; copy of each text is on reserve in USU Library Media Collection)

Kennedy, *American People in World War II*

Leuchtenburg, *Perils of Prosperity 1914-1932*

Macmillan, *Paris 1919*

Polenberg, *Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt 1933-45*

Course Description:

This course focuses on the transformation of the US into an urban, car-driven, consumer-oriented society, industrial giant, and military superpower.

Classroom Pedagogy: Fortunately, film was coming of age during our period of study, so we are blessed with an abundance of primary sources, in the form of visual documentaries.

Hence, every class (or almost every class) will consist of a mixture of the following:

a brief topical overview, video clips, class discussion or written response to material viewed or material assigned to read. Given the brevity of our time together, it is essential that you keep up with the work load. Attendance is not mandatory but essential for an A. The two main texts will be used for World War I and World War II discussions and a book review. Various handouts will provide the chronological, descriptive account of the entire period.

Of course, I expect everyone to behave properly (which means: no sleeping, no reading newspapers, no studying for another class, and—above all else—no talking to your class neighbor!!) I especially dislike students trying to socialize in class. Every student has the right to hear the professor, film, class discussion, etc. Those who cannot follow these simple rules of courtesy will be asked to leave. We must cooperate and be considerate of each other.

Requirements:

****One five-six page, typed research paper**, based on 7-8 primary sources and 6 or more secondary sources (**worth 100 points; due Fri. Aug. 4—in lieu of a final exam**). In writing your essay, focus on THREE of the following:

1. How did US involvement in the world wars (WWI & WWII) change its economy? Give specific examples.
2. How did US involvement in the world wars change its domestic migration patterns?
3. What role did film play for Americans on the home front in both wars?
4. Describe the changes in the US military which occurred during the years, 1900-45
5. What was the most significant societal change in the US, owing to WWII, in your view? In the views of scholars?
6. What lessons were learned (or not learned) from World War I by the Roosevelt Administration when the US joined the fighting of World War II?

****One four-five page, typed essay in which you choose to respond to ONE option** (due by last day of class)

Option A: on WWII, in terms of historiography and your position (as a historian), discuss two of the following FOUR:

1. the Pearl Harbor controversy
2. the treatment of Japanese-Americans
3. the leadership of FDR as president and commander in chief
4. the extent to which the US home front was threatened during WWII
5. the impact of both world wars on American civil rights or civil liberties
6. the role of Hollywood stars in both war efforts

Option B: on WWI: Select ONE

1. Did World War I promote or kill the Progressive reform movement? Explain your position.
2. Utilizing the Macmillan book on post-WWI, discuss the impact of the Great War on Americans

Option C: Select ONE:

1. Which more effectively changed American society from 1900 to 1945—world wars, immigration, presidential performances, technology? Explain your answer.
2. Which more effectively promoted women's rights—technology, the world wars, prohibition, Progressive reform movement? Explain your answer.
3. Utilizing Leuchtenberg's book, discuss American economy and society in the 1920s OR President Herbert Hoover's efforts to respond to the Great Depression.

****Class-designated assignments** (unspecified number of points)

1. These are assignments, given in class (hence, attendance is desirable/useful) which vary:
2. Some may be, simply, a brief, written response to what you observed in a video clip seen in class; others may be a written response to a textbook reading assignment; some may be an in-class written response asking for "feedback" (i.e., do you have questions, complaints, suggestions, etc.); occasionally, a brief "quiz" for 10 or 20 pts. on textbook material may be given (to encourage you to study, be attentive in class).

****Syllabus-designated assignments** (see below on Tentative Topic Class Schedule):

***Tentative Topic Class Schedule (Tentative=subject to change!!)**

First Week: Immigration, 1900-1921. Select a real "immigrant" of this period (1900-45); using 2 secondary and 2 primary sources, write a one-page summary of your individual. Be prepared to share in class. (20 pts) on Monday, June 18.

Second Week: Technology: 1900-45: Car, Automobile, Movies, Panama Canal, Boulder Dam, Grand Coulee Dam, Atomic Bomb. Every student should select one of the above and write a two-page essay explaining why you think your item was the most revolutionary of this time period. Due Mon. June 25 (25 pts)

Third Week: Presidents/Important Personalities of this period (Teddy Roosevelt to FDR/Francis Perkins to Frank Sinatra/Joe Louis and Charles Lindberg, etc.); write a two-page paper on one of these presidents (TR, Taft, Wilson, Harding, Coolidge, Hoover, FDR) in terms of their major weaknesses, contributions to American political life. (25 pts); write a two-page paper on one of these important personalities (no time limit)

Fourth Week: Military Conflicts (from Filipino Insurrection to WWII). Pick one of these many conflicts during this period (if you select World War I or World War II, select a particular battle or campaign). Write a 2-3 page account of this conflict. (30 pts) No time limit

Fifth Week: Entertainment/Natural Disasters : Sports Celebrities, Movie Stars, etc. or floods, hurricanes, Dust Bowl, etc. Select a “celebrity” from this period, 1900-1940 **or** a “natural disaster” of this period. Write a two-page synopsis and share with class. (20 pts) (Thurs. June 28)

Sixth Week: Constitutional Change, Civil Rights Issues, Threats to National Security, Racism (read two different articles discussing one of these issues during our time period, 1900-45; summarize the main points of each article; one page per article. (30 pts.) (July 3)

Seventh Week: Primary Source Exercise: Each student select a year between 1900 and 1945, and find one event which interests you. Then find 3-5 primary source documents concerning these events (e.g., “Scopes Trial” of the 1920s, Al Capone and Prohibition, Jesse Owens’s Olympic victories in Nazi Germany, Executive Order 9066 in 1942–newspaper article, journal article, film footage, government document account, popular magazine account, etc). Summarize your findings in two pages. (25 pts) due July 18

Eighth Week: Meaning of the World War II for the US & the World: Catch-up, review, etc.