

History 315L
The History of the United States since the Civil War

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Spring 2024
Lectures: T TH 9:30 – 10:45 AM
Online and Mezes Studio (MEZ 2.200)

Prof. Suri's office hours:
Wednesdays, 1:30-3:00pm, GAR 2.122

Teaching Assistants:

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Course Aims

This course is designed to provide students with a grounding in some of the most controversial, enduring, and relevant topics in the history of the United States, broadly defined. Students will read a wide range of monographs and primary source materials. Lectures and discussions will encourage students to compare and contrast various points of view, and interrogate broad historical transformations since the Civil War. The course will emphasize **intensive reading, analytical writing, and critical thinking**. The instructor and teaching assistants will, at all times, encourage students to articulate different points of view. Our central purpose is to stimulate informed, thoughtful, and intelligent perspectives on the American experience. This includes close attention to politics, society, culture, economy, diplomacy, and military affairs. It also includes an international and transnational understanding of how Americans have interacted historically with those defined as non-Americans. Instead of comprehensiveness and textbook detail, this will be a course about big ideas, big transformations, and big debates – that continue into the twenty-first century. We will not strive for consensus or agreement in this course; we will nurture learned discussion and collective engagement with the complexities of our society's history.

Academic Accommodations and Academic Integrity

Upon request, the University of Texas at Austin provides appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities (<https://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>).

Academic integrity is central to the mission of the university. Each student is expected to turn in work completed independently, except when assignments specifically authorize collaborative effort. It is not acceptable to use the words or ideas of another person or artificial intelligence without proper acknowledgement of that source. This means that you must use footnotes and quotation marks to indicate the source of any phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or ideas found in published volumes on the Internet, or created by another student or artificial intelligence. For more information about the university's expectations for academic integrity, see:

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/>.

Core Curriculum Student Competencies

As required by the Undergraduate Studies Advisory Committee, with the guidance of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, this course fulfills the Coordinating Board's Exemplary Educational Objectives and Core Objectives, Core Component 60 for U.S. History. Following the Core Objectives, this course examines past events and ideas relative to the United States. This course analyzes the interaction among individuals, communities, states, the nation, and the world, considering how these interactions have contributed to the development of the United States and its global role. Lectures, readings, written assignments, and discussions in this course will address four Core Objectives: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility.

Flag CD

This course carries the flag for Cultural Diversity in the United States. Cultural Diversity courses are designed to increase your familiarity with the variety and richness of the American cultural experience.

Description of Online Format

This is the Synchronous Massive Online Course (SMOC) version of the HIS 315L course. Unlike almost all other courses offered at the University of Texas, you will be viewing this class online (from the comfort of your own home, library, or coffee joint) rather than in-person (except as required.) Though delivered as a live stream through Canvas, this course takes place at the official times described in the course schedule: 9:30 am – 10:45 am Tuesdays and Thursdays. **You are required to attend class by logging into the course site before 9:30 am on Tuesday and Thursday to watch the live, real-time video stream of our lectures and participate in**

class activities. It is *very important* that you treat logging into the course website the way you would treat attending a traditional course held in a classroom; attendance is required. You will have the opportunity to pose questions online in real-time just as if you were raising your hand in class. The lectures will have a small (18-20 person) studio audience. Requirements to attend the class in-person as well as your assigned days will be provided in Canvas.

Specific information about the online course format follows.

Canvas class website: To get to everything associated with the class, go to:

<https://utexas.instructure.com/courses/1388270>. You can enter directly at this URL or through Canvas (<https://utexas.instructure.com/>). To log into Canvas and the class website, you will need your UTEID and password. Once you reach the class website, you can navigate your way to other areas.

Some of the most important features include:

1. **Homepage** – The homepage will have links to the Course Syllabus, the technical requirements and test stream webpage, the live video stream of the lectures, information regarding technical questions and other important information. On the left-hand side of each page of the Canvas course site are navigation tabs to all parts of the website, including the Syllabus.
2. **Video Stream** – The Video Stream is the page on which you will find the live lecture for the course. The Video Stream will also display the outline for the current lecture and links to other participation activities.
3. **Modules** – The Modules page includes links to the Assignments, Readings, Lecture video archives and other course documents.

Most of your activity on Canvas will take place in the **Video Stream** and **Modules** tabs.

Technical Requirements: All students are required to have access to a **laptop** or **desktop computer**, running either Windows or macOS operating systems. Tablets, smartphones, and Microsoft Surface devices are not supported. Your computer should meet the following requirements:

- Modern and up-to-date operating system (macOS or Windows)
- Browser: Chrome (highly recommended), Safari or Firefox. If using Safari or Firefox, be prepared to [download Chrome](#) and use it.
- Internet connection speed: 5 Mbps download speed. [Check your speed here.](#)
- Functional webcam and microphone
- Zoom installed and configured

Confirm that your computer is able to stream video by visiting <https://www.laits.utexas.edu/tower/tech.php>

For the best experience:

- Close all unnecessary browser windows and tabs and programs
 - Streaming music (Pandora, Spotify, etc.)
 - Social media sites
 - YouTube or other video sites
 - Online/Offline Gaming
- Check your computer is free of viruses, malware, and spyware ([UT recommendations](#))
- Clear the browser's cache before class ([here's how.](#))

Technical Support: If you experience a technical problem, click on the "**Online Course Tech Support**" item in the [left-side navigation bar](#). The Online Course Tech Support chatbot, called "LAITS Bot", will assist with technical problems and can escalate your question to a human if it cannot readily answer your question.

Course communication: Most of the communication in the course will happen through the course Canvas website.

During Class

Class Chat feature, which is monitored by a teaching assistant. It will be used for group responses to discussion questions from the professor posed during class.

Ask a Question in Class feature on the Video Stream. This is the forum where students should ask questions for clarification or further elaboration.

We expect that you will treat online discussions as though you are having a civil, respectful discussion with your fellow classmates in the same classroom. Please refrain from using profanity or any euphemisms for profanity. Please do not bait other commenters or personally attack them. Please do not use sarcasm in a way that can be misinterpreted negatively. And please do not make the same point over and over again. In short, please just respect the right of your colleagues to ask questions and discuss their opinions about the subject matter of our course on the discussion board. Violators of these discussion rules will simply be shut out of the online discussion board and will be asked to see the professor in person.

Outside of Class: The TAs and professor will often post Announcements in Canvas.

Click on the "Settings" link in the upper-right corner of your Canvas page, to adjust your email address and notification preferences. This will allow you to receive email updates whenever course Announcements are made, or when assignments and grades are posted. If you have a specific, personal, or grade-related question, please email your TA.

Please do not use the Inbox feature within Canvas for course-related email. Even though this is an online course, you are encouraged to communicate with the professors and TAs. Come to our posted online office hours, or send an email to set up an appointment if none of the weekly office hours fit your schedule.

Honor system for quizzes and writing assignments: By taking this class, you agree to abide by the University of Texas regulations concerning cheating. During the quizzes you cannot receive help from others or discuss your writing assignments with other students. If you observe others cheating, you are honor bound to contact the TAs or instructors.

Information and data security: All quizzes and online interactions in Canvas will be saved and stored. All information will be kept for educational and general academic research. Any research or data sharing with other researchers will involve de-identifying the data, including the removal of names, UTEIDs, email addresses, or other information. To further ensure that your information is secure, please do not include identifying information in your online interactions with others. Remember that in online interactions, the instructors and TAs will have access to all information. Please communicate in a respectful manner.

Checks for plagiarism and collaboration via TurnItIn: All assignments in this course may be processed by TurnItIn, a tool that compares submitted material to an archived database of published work and other submitted papers in this course to check for potential plagiarism. Other methods may also be used to determine if the text submitted is the student's original work.

Required In-Person Studio Attendance

Although this is an online class, you will be required to attend class in person in the studio classroom on assigned dates. We will select groups of students to attend each day. Although the actual class broadcast starts at 9:30 a.m., please be at the building by 9:00 a.m. The doors will close shortly after 9:20 a.m. so we can talk to you about studio rules. You will also get a chance to talk with the instructors, TAs, and the other students who will be part of this. Please note that food and drinks are not allowed in the studio. Make sure to go to the restroom before you enter. When the live broadcast is in session you will only be able to leave in the case of an emergency.

The studio classroom is in Mezes (MEZ) 2.206. Enter the building from the west main entrance and walk up the stairs. Walk straight through the hallway and there will be an area for you to wait near the end of the hallway. A TA will be there to greet you and let you into the classroom. Be sure to bring a laptop with you.

TA Online and In-Person Office Hours

Your assigned TA will have two office hours per week, during which you are encouraged to contact them with questions about class content or structure. These office hours will be held online, through Zoom, or in-person. These formats allow the TAs to adjust hours to maximize student availability, and students will be able to connect to TAs from anywhere that is convenient for them. There will be a weekly announcement regarding office hour times and links, and you are encouraged to make outside appointments should those times not fit in with your schedule.

Weekly Response Essays – Required

Each week, by **8:00 PM on Thursday**, all students must post a short response essay on the course Canvas website.

This response essay should include 3 basic paragraphs. The first paragraph should summarize the key arguments in each week’s assigned readings. The second paragraph should analyze how the week’s readings relate to the materials presented by Professor Suri in lecture. The third paragraph should offer the student’s critical assessment of the week’s readings: What was most persuasive? What was least persuasive? Which are the issues and questions that need more attention and explanation?

There is a model weekly response essay posted on the Canvas course website.

The teaching assistants will read and grade the weekly response essays. Students are expected to write clear and well-informed essays each week, based on a close reading of assigned books and careful listening to all lectures. Students are also expected to write in a professional manner, with topic sentences, appropriate evidence, persuasive language, and coherent arguments. Avoid passive voice and split infinitives. Proof-read your essays for correct grammar, syntax, and spelling. We will grade the essays based on content and writing style!

Citations

For all written assignments – weekly response essays, the document analysis, and examinations – students are expected to indicate when they take information from a written, digital, or oral source, or from artificial intelligence. When in doubt, cite your source! This applies to quotations, paraphrases, and specific information in a source. For citations, students should follow the Chicago Manual of Style:

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

Weekly Podcast

Students are required to listen to recorded episodes of the podcast, “This is Democracy,” and new episodes posted every other week:

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/this-is-democracy/id1420520464?mt=2>.

This is a fun opportunity to explore the connections between the history we study in this course and contemporary experiences in our democracy. Please listen to the podcasts and suggest topics and guests for future weeks. We want you to feel like this is *your* podcast.

Archived episodes of the podcast are listed for various lectures. They provide additional background on the historical topic, and they connect the history to contemporary concerns.

Document Analysis

All students will write a 3-page analysis of a document from the primary materials included with each lecture. (See the Canvas course site for each lecture.) Students should choose a document assigned for the lectures before February 15. Students will write an analytical essay that follows this format:

Page 1: Describe the argument of the document and the purpose of its writer(s). Quote the most compelling phrases in the document, and explain their importance.

Page 2: Contextualize the document. Explain what the document tells us about the time during which it was written. What do we learn about American society, politics, and culture from the chosen document? What do we learn about the hopes, fears, visions, and frustrations of the era during which the document appeared?

Page 3: Critique the document. Describe inaccuracies, prejudices, exaggerations, and misleading statements in the document. Analyze how the document could have offered a more compelling account of the historical period. How could it tell us more about society, politics, and culture in the United States at that time?

Document analysis essays are due at **9:30 am on Thursday, February 15.**

Video Assignment

Based on the document analysis papers, and the comments received from the teaching assistants, each student will video record a formal 2-minute presentation (120 seconds) on their chosen document. The presentation should have the following format:

First 30 seconds: Introduce the document – title, author(s), when was it written, who read it.

Second 30 seconds: Summarize the document – what are the key arguments and purposes of the document.

Third 30 seconds: Contextualize the document – explain what the document tells us about its time, place, and the larger history of the period.

Fourth 30 seconds: Critique the document – assess the accuracy, prejudices, exaggerations, and impact of the document. Tell us what made the document effective or ineffective in achieving its purpose.

The goal of this assignment is to give students experience with delivering a formal presentation.

The TAs will grade the presentations based on:

1. Organization;
2. Clarity of presentation;
3. Fulfillment of all four substantive components described above;
4. Fluency of presentation.

Guidelines for recording the video include:

- If you record your video using a phone, please turn the phone sideways to record in landscape mode.
- Review the video for sound and picture quality before submitting.
- Submit only one 120-second video per student

Detailed instructions for submitting the video through Canvas will be provided.

The video presentations are due at **9:30am on Thursday, April 4.**

Map Videos

Approximately once every two weeks we will post a short (5-7 minute) video which includes a discussion of key maps related to that part of the course. The goal of these map videos is to help students understand the relevant geography better. While they are not required, they provide important context for the class discussions. It is recommended that you view them even though they do not have a graded component.

Examination #1

On Tuesday, March 5 the professor will distribute one mid-term essay question at the end of class. Students should write a 1200-word (4-5 double-spaced pages, 12-point font) answer to this question. The essay should make use of material from assigned readings, class lectures, and discussions. Students may consult books and discuss their answers with one another. Each essay, however, should reflect **the original writing of each student**. Students should proofread their essays for clarity, substance, and style (grammatical mistakes, passive voice, and sloppy writing will incur grade deductions.) **The mid-term examination essay is due at 9:30am on Thursday, March 7. We will not accept late submissions.**

Examination #2

The course will conclude with a second take-home examination. It will cover material from the entire semester. The professor will distribute two examination questions at the end of class on **April 25**. Students should write a 1000-word (4 double-spaced pages, 12-point font) answer to each of the two questions. Each essay should make use of material from assigned readings, class lectures, and weekly discussions. Students may consult books and discuss their answers with one another. Each essay, however, should reflect the **original writing of each student**. Students should proofread their essays for clarity, substance, and style (grammatical mistakes, passive voice, and sloppy writing will incur grade deductions.) **Students must submit their final examination answers by Noon on Wednesday, May 1. We will not accept late submissions.**

Grades

Weekly Response Essays	15%
Document Analysis	15%
Video Assignment	15%
Examination #1	15%
Examination #2	20%
Lecture Attendance	15%
<i>(answering pings during lectures and attending in-person studio sessions)</i>	
Online Chat Participation in lectures	5%

Final grades will be based on +/- letter grade system.

A = 94-100

A- = 90-93

B+ = 87-89

B = 84-86

B- = 80-83

C+ = 77-79

C = 74-76

C- = 70-73

D+ = 67-69

D = 64-66

D- = 60-63

F = 0-60

Required Readings

Each lecture, listed below, has specific required readings in the assigned books and primary documents. The primary documents are available online, linked to each lecture through Canvas.

All of the assigned books are available online through the UT Library. Please see the links below each book in the following list. You must sign-in to UT with your EID to gain access to the readings through the UT Library.

You are required to complete the assigned readings before each lecture. You must do all of the assigned readings.

Assigned Books (Links for Free Access at UT Library)

Hahn, Steven. *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U Press, 2005).
https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU_INST/be14ds/alma991040445779706011

May, Elaine Tyler. *Fortress America: How We Embraced Fear and Abandoned Democracy* (New York: Basic Books, 2017).
https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU_INST/be14ds/alma991058186349606011

McGerr, Michael. *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU_INST/be14ds/alma991044208499706011

McPherson, James M. *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU_INST/be14ds/alma991057940782306011

Ngai, Mae. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).
https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU_INST/be14ds/alma991057971177106011

Suri, Jeremi. *Civil War By Other Means: America's Long and Unfinished Fight for Democracy* (New York: Public Affairs, 2022).
https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU_INST/be14ds/alma991058435583506011

Suri, Jeremi. *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Détente* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005).
https://search.lib.utexas.edu/permalink/01UTAU_INST/be14ds/alma991058225310806011

Course Schedule

Week 1

- 1/16 Introduction
- 1/18 The Civil War and the Second American Revolution
McPherson, 3-64, 131-152 (chapters 1-3 and 7);
Primary Documents on Canvas;
“This is Democracy,” Episode 143.

Weekly Response Essay 1 due by 8:00 PM.

Week 2:

- 1/23 Reconstruction and its Achievements
Suri, *Civil War By Other Means*, 10-131 (chapters 1-5);
Primary Documents on Canvas;
“This is Democracy,” Episode 213.
- 1/25 Politics and Society in the Shadow of Reconstruction
Hahn, 163-215, 265-313 (chapters 4 and 6);
Primary Documents on Canvas;
“This is Democracy,” Episode 214.

Weekly Response Essay 2 due by 8:00 PM.

Week 3:

- 1/30 New Divisions
Suri, *Civil War By Other Means*, 132-236 (chapters 6-9);
Primary Documents on Canvas;
“This is Democracy,” Episode 208.
- 2/1 Gilded Age Society and Global Capitalism
Hahn, 317-411(chapters 7-8);
Primary Documents on Canvas;
“This is Democracy,” Episode 99.

Weekly Response Essay 3 due by 8:00 PM.

Week 4:

2/6 Imperialism
 Primary Documents on Canvas;
 “This is Democracy,” Episode 157.

2/8 Populism
 Hahn, 412-476 (chapter 9 and epilogue);
 Primary Documents on Canvas.

Weekly Response Essay 4 due by 8:00 PM.

Week 5:

2/13 Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and the Progressives
 McGerr, xiii-xvi, 3-74 (preface and part 1);
 Primary Documents on Canvas;
 “This is Democracy,” Episode 15.

2/15 The Great War and the Progressives
 McGerr, 77-218 (part 2);
 Primary Documents on Canvas

Document analysis essay due at the start of lecture (9:30am).

Week 6:

2/20 Herbert Hoover and the Associative State
 McGerr, 221-319 (part 3 and conclusion);
 Primary Documents on Canvas.
 “This is Democracy,” Episode 111.

2/22 The Global Influenza Pandemic
 Ngai, 127-201 (chapters 4-5);
 Primary Documents on Canvas;
 “This is Democracy,” Episode 158.

Weekly Response Essay 5 due by 8:00 PM.

Week 7:

2/27 The Great Depression
 Ngai, 17-90 (chapters 1-2);
 Primary Documents on Canvas;
 “This is Democracy,” Episode 145.

2/29 Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal
 Primary Documents on Canvas;
 “This is Democracy,” Episode 142.

Weekly Response Essay 6 due by 8:00 PM.

Week 8:

3/5 The New Deal and the Coming of World War II
 Primary Documents on Canvas;
 “This is Democracy,” Episode 95.

Examination #1 question distributed at the end of lecture.

3/7 Fighting World War II
 Primary Documents on Canvas;
 “This is Democracy,” Episode 244.

Examination #1 essay due at the start of lecture (9:30am).

Week 9:

3/12 Spring Break
 3/14 Spring Break

Week 10:

3/19 The Origins of the Cold War
 May, 1-56 (Introduction and Chapter 1)
 Primary Documents on Canvas;
 “This is Democracy,” Episode 110.

3/21 Cold War Society and Culture
 Ngai, 202-224 (chapter 6);
 Primary Documents on Canvas;
 “This is Democracy,” Episode 140.

Weekly Response Essay 7 due by 8:00 PM.

Week 11:

3/26 Nuclear Stalemate and the American Economic Miracle
Suri, *Power and Protest*, 7-43, 88-130 (chapters 1-3);
Primary Documents on Canvas;
“This is Democracy,” Episode 166.

3/28 The Second Reconstruction
Re-read Hahn, 465-76 (epilogue);
Primary Documents on Canvas;
“This is Democracy,” Episode 249.

Weekly Response Essay 8 due by 8:00 PM.

Week 12:

4/2 The Vietnam War
Suri, *Power and Protest*, 131-163 (chapter 4);
Primary Documents on Canvas;
“This is Democracy,” Episode 169.

4/4 The Global Disruption of 1968
Suri, *Power and Protest*, 164-259 (chapters 5-6);
Primary Documents on Canvas;
“This is Democracy,” Episode 236.

Video presentations due at the start of lecture (9:30am).

Week 13:

4/9 Suburban Politics
May, 57-96 (chapter 2);
Primary Documents on Canvas
“This is Democracy,” Episode 135.

4/11 The Reagan Revolution and the End of the Cold War
May, 97-159 (chapters 3-4);
Primary Documents on Canvas.
“This is Democracy,” Episode 207.

Weekly Response Essay 9 due by 8:00 PM.

Week 14:

- 4/16 Ethnic Cleansing and Genocide After the Cold War
Primary Documents on Canvas;
“This is Democracy,” Episode 59.
- 4/18 Terrorism – Abroad and At Home
May, 161-194 (chapter 5 and epilogue);
Primary Documents on Canvas;
“This is Democracy,” Episode 251.

Weekly Response Essay 10 due by 8:00 PM.

Week 15:

- 4/23 The Wars of the Early 21st Century
Primary Documents on Canvas;
“This is Democracy,” Episode 185.
- 4/25 Learning from the Past and the Future of Democracy
Suri, *Civil War By Other Means*, 258-270 (chapter 11);
“This is Democracy,” Episode 210.

Examination #2 questions distributed at the end of lecture.

Take-home examinations are due on Canvas by 12:00pm on Wednesday, May 1. We will not accept late exams, no exceptions!