

HTS 6101-A: The United States in the Twentieth Century

School of History and Sociology

Georgia Institute of Technology

Fall 2020

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Office: Old Civil Engineering Building, G18 (and virtual via BlueJeans or phone)

Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Overview:

Through intensive readings and rigorous discussions, this graduate-level seminar examines major developments in U.S. history in the twentieth century and how historians have written about them. It pays particularly close attention to the development of American government, its relationship to the economy and society, and to major social movements, including progressive reform in the early twentieth century, the labor movement, the women's movement, the African American civil rights and Black Power movements, and the rise of modern conservatism.

Assigned readings will also explore how historians have recently explored the United States' relationship to the wider world, issues related to gender and sexuality, the development of mass incarceration, and the rise of the contemporary deportation regime.

Required Readings:

See the course schedule below for the list of readings. *Unless otherwise noted below, e-books of the assigned versions are available through the GT library.*

Assignments and Grading:

Class Participation (25%)

This course is a collective enterprise. Its success hinges on each student completing all of the readings on time and participating regularly, constructively, and respectfully in class discussions during each and every class meeting while also providing the rest of the class with ample opportunity to participate. You may miss one class meeting during the term, no questions asked. Thereafter, you will lose a full letter grade in this category for each absence except in cases of documented illness or a family emergency.

Weekly Reading Questionnaires (20%)

*On the final page of the syllabus, you will find a questionnaire that you must submit each Wednesday **by 4 pm**. The main purpose of this exercise is to show me that you have done the reading well and to alert me to any questions about the reading that you might have. See the last page of the syllabus for additional instructions.*

Formal Book Review Exercise (15%)

Each student will write a professional-grade review of one of the books that we read as a class. After receiving feedback on their review from the instructor, they will re-write it and resubmit it for additional evaluation. The goal of this exercise is to give students the experience of writing a professional-style review and to clarify the instructor's expectations for the quality of writing in students' final papers. Students will be assigned the book that they will review soon after the start of the semester. Students do not need to hand in a weekly reading questionnaire for the book that they are assigned to review.

Final Paper (25%)

*This assignment is designed to allow students to explore a topic of interest in greater depth. Students will read two additional books, pair them with a book that we have read as a class, and write a 12-15-page, argument-driven paper that evaluates all three books and their contributions to historical scholarship. Specific requirements related to this assignment will be distributed at an appropriate moment in the semester. Papers must be double-spaced in a twelve-point font with one-inch margins on each page. Students must choose their additional books in consultation with the instructor by **Nov. 4** as noted below. The paper itself is due on **Monday, December 7 at 9 am.** It must be uploaded to the "Assignments" page on Canvas in MS Word (.doc or .docx) format.*

Final Presentation (15%)

*Students will give a 10-15-minute oral presentation to the rest of the class based on their final paper. Specific requirements for this assignment will be distributed at an appropriate moment in the semester. The final presentations will be held on **Wednesday, December 9th** beginning at 5 pm.*

Learning Accommodations:

Students with documented disabilities are potentially eligible for accommodations in this course. These accommodations must be agreed upon in advance and in cooperation with the Office of Disability Services (<https://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>)

Academic Integrity:

Collaborative discussion of the material in this course is encouraged, including outside the classroom, but each student must submit her/his own work written in her/his own words. Quotations or other data drawn from work published by others must be properly cited. Students suspected of violating the Georgia Tech Honor Code will be brought to the attention of the Office of Student Integrity. The Georgia Tech Honor Code is posted on this website. (<http://www.osi.gatech.edu>).

Course Schedule:

Aug. 19 – Course Overview

Aug. 26 – Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*, Prologue, Chapters 1-6.

Sept. 2 – Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* *****No E-book Available*****

Sept. 9 – Tyina L. Steptoe, *Houston Bound: Culture and Color in a Jim Crow City*

Sept. 16 – Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* *****No E-book Available*****

Sept. 23 – Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America*

Sept. 30 – Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*

Oct. 7 – Hasan Kwame Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Blackbelt*

Oct. 14 – Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*, Updated Edition.

Oct. 21 – Rhonda Williams, *The Politics of Public Housing: Black Women's Struggles Against Urban Inequality* –

Oct. 28 – Sara Evans, *Tidal Wave: How Women Changed America at Century's End* *****E-book available through GT Library but limited to three users at a time*****

Nov. 4 – Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Businessmen's Crusade against the New Deal* – *****No E-book Available*****

*****Students must have the instructor's approval for the two additional books they plan to read for their final paper by Nov. 4 as well.*****

Nov. 11 – Julilly Kohler-Hausman, *Getting Tough: Welfare and Imprisonment in 1970s America*

Nov. 18 – Adam Goodman, *The Deportation Machine: America's Long History of Expelling Immigrants*

*****Final Papers Due December 7th at 9 am. Papers must be uploaded in MS Word (.doc or .docx) to the "Assignments" page on Canvas*****

December 9 – Final Presentations beginning at 5 pm.

Weekly Reading Questionnaire

Your answers to the following questions should show me indisputably that you have done the reading well. Your responses *to all of the questions combined* should take up no more than two single-spaced pages. You must submit your responses **by 4 pm** each Wednesday. Responses must be submitted to the Canvas Assignments page as an MS Word document (i.e., in .doc or .docx format).

1) What are the main arguments of this week's book?

2) What are the main scholarly contributions that the author is attempting to make?

3) What do you see as the main strengths of the book? What do you view as its main weaknesses from a scholarly perspective?

4) What questions do you have about the book?