This course is a chronological survey of the history of the United States from the end of Reconstruction to the current day. Our study of modern American history will include such overall themes as:

1. industrialization and the economic and political emergence of the American nation-state as a world power
2. labor and management from Pinkertons to Taylorization to matters of globalization
3. the disparity of rich and poor and the politics of class
4. the struggle for civil rights- and defining the meaning of a “right”
5. the end of the frontier and the myth of the “vanishing” Native American
6. the role of law and the courts in maintaining stability and making “change” in America
7. immigration and exclusion- who can come, who cannot- and why
8. culture wars and identity politics-from temperance to other matters of personal liberty
9. personality, performance and the rise of the tastemakers- the rise of a consumer culture
10. determining the role of government in the lives of Americans
11. the social construction of masculinity, femininity and sex roles- men. women, children and the family
12. the interaction of science, technology and religious faith in American culture
13. conservatism, neo-conservatism and the crisis of liberalism- ongoing debates about the boundaries of the American Dream
14. terrorism, wartime conduct, perceptions of national security and civil liberties- matters of America and the world- from the Spanish-American War to Afghanistan

We will explore the impact of events and choices in our history through the prism of race, gender, class, faith and law as we attempt to understand what motivated key moments in our collective history from the era of Jim Crow and the Progressives to 9/11 and the current era of high anxiety about the future of the nation.

Class time on Saturdays will typically include a mix of lecture, discussion and
analysis of readings and cultural images as portrayed in film, music, art, theater, poetry and literature.

The central text for the course is Eric Foner’s *Give Me Liberty, Vol. 2* (Seagull edition). Other texts (subject to change) may include E.L. Doctorow’s *Ragtime*, Peter Irons’ *The Courage of Their Convictions*, Karal Marling’s *As Seen On TV* and Tim O’Brien’s *The Things They Carried*. 