Syllabus

DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNITED STATES since 1865 512:104 Fall 2008

James Reed

Van Dyck 118  Office Hours: T&Th. 6:00-7:00, or by appointment: e-mail: reed@history.rutgers.edu

Assigned Texts (available in Ferren Mall University Bookstore):


Schedule of Classes:

Sept.  What is History?

   Read: Start on Black Boy and finish as soon as possible. Visit website to see materials in Modules.

   Reconstruction and Jim Crow

   Read ch.15; finish Black Boy in time for Sept. 13 recitation; visit website.

   The Closing Frontier

   Read ch. 16; visit website

   Voluntary Recitation Section

   The Rise of Big Business

   Read ch. 17; visit website

   Populism

   Read ch. 18; visit website

   The New Folk

   Read chs. 19 & 20; visit website

   Progressives

   Read ch. 22

Oct.  Examination

   The United States as World Power
Read ch. 21; visit website

World War I

Read ch. 23; visit website

Margaret Sanger

Read ch. 24.

The 1920s

Visit website

The Great Depression

Read ch. 25; visit website

The New Deal

World War II

Read ch. 26; visit website

Harry Truman and The Cold War

Read ch. 27; visit website

Nov. Examination

The Eisenhower Administration

The Liberal Moment: JFK & LBJ

Read ch. 28; visit website

Civil Rights: Blacks

Read: ch. 29; visit website

Civil Rights: Women and Sexual Minorities

Read: Martin Duberman, Cures

Bad Times with Nixon & Carter

Thanksgiving

The Reagan Era

Read ch. 30; visit website

The Clinton Era
Read ch. 31; visit website

Essay on "Wright, Duberman and I" due December (See Writing Guide in Sakai modules).

Dec. 9/11/01 & Bush 2

Looking Forward & Backward from 2007

Review for Final Exam

Final Examination

Grading Policy

Grades will be based upon the essay due December 7 and three exams (All four of your efforts will be weighed equally at 25%). You are expected to attend all classes (except for religious holidays cleared with instructor) and to read and to review the text and web pages as suggested in the syllabus.

Appeals of exam grades must be made to the instructor who graded your examination. Do not petition Prof. Reed to review your exam unless you have had a conference with the original grader. If you cannot reach an accommodation with the grader, ask the grader to arrange a conference which all three parties involved (student, grader, Prof. Reed) will attend. Prof. Reed will administer and grade all make-up exams. If you miss an exam, contact Prof. Reed (e-mail recommended) to schedule a make-up.

Make-Up Exams

If you cannot take a scheduled exam, arrange with Prof. Reed for a make-up.

Attendance Policy

Please do not enter the class after 7:45. Please do not leave the class until the instructor announces that it is finished. If you must leave class early, please consult Prof. Reed before class begins.

Goals of the Course

In this course you need to construct a narrative for yourself of the significant events in U.S. history. Conscientious use of the textbook and website will aid you in this task. The lectures cannot be a substitute for the factual account provided by the textbook. We assume that you have read the assigned chapters in the textbook as scheduled. The lectures will review some of the materials; they may provide additional interpretations or perspective, but they cannot serve as a substitute for mastery of the textbook.

By participating in this course, you should acquire the basic vocabulary of U.S. history and be able to explain the major events in U.S. history with some sophistication. Thus, if a friend or relative asked, "Who was Jim Crow?" or "What do you think about the Robber Barons?" or "How did the federal government get to be so strong?" or "Who caused the Cold War?" or "Who were the Populists?" or "Why did the U.S. drop The Bomb on Japan?" or "What is a Second Wave Feminist?" or "Was there a Reagan Revolution?"--you should be able to give them a robust answer. Finally, in constructing your narrative of U.S. history, you should acquire knowledge and ways of thinking that help you to participate more effectively in public discussions of major social issues. What role has the state played in the economy? What is the basis of American nationality? What are the sources of equality and inequality? Why can't we all just get along with one another?

Examination Format

The three examinations will have a common format: there will be an essay question and 5 identification questions:
Examples of essay questions

* Describe and evaluate the federal effort to reconstruct southern society between 1865 and 1880.

* Explain the rise of the giant corporation as the dominant institution in the U.S. economy. Then discuss the consequences of the rise of Big Business.

* Compare and contrast the Populist and Progressive movements.

* Describe the increase in the power and authority of the federal government between 1914 and 1960. What accounted for these dramatic changes?

* Describe the events that led to the Cold War.

* Evaluate the presidency of Lyndon Johnson.

* How do you account for the "rebirth" of feminism in the 1960s?

* What happened during the "Reagan Revolution"?

Examples of Identification Questions

Identify and explain the significance of:

- Platt Amendment
- Emilio Aguinaldo
- War Industries Board
- Alice Paul
- Alfred E. Smith
- Truman Doctrine
- Manhattan Project
- The Contract with America

The Required Paper Due December

You must write an essay in which you compare your experience as a participant in American society with Richard Wright (Black Boy) and Martin Duberman (Cures). The essay should be about seven pages or 1750 words (type-written with one inch margins). The purpose is to show that you have read the books and can use them in assessing your situation as a participant in U.S. society. What do these biographies tell us about "identity politics" in modern America? What do you have in common with Richard Wright and Christina Jorgensen? In what ways does your biography differ from their stories? How are their struggles to construct authentic selves typical or atypical of most Americans in the twentieth century?

Both of these works will be discussed in class, but you should begin reading them as soon as possible. Material from Black Boy may be included on the first exam and the same holds for the Duberman autobiography on the final.
In evaluating your essays, much credit will be given for your authentic voice. We want your response to the works. Perspectives drawn from secondary works will not be highly valued. The penalty for a late paper is one letter grade.