

History 114: Introduction to Modern American History

Professor Michael Flamm
Elliott Hall: (740) 368-3634
Office Hours: M 9:30-10:50 / W 4-5 / F 2-4 (or by appt.)

Ohio Wesleyan University
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Fall 2009

Texts:

- Alan Brinkley, The Unfinished Nation (Vol. II; Fifth Edition)*
- David Von Drehle, Triangle: The Fire that Changed America*
- E.B. Sledge, With the Old Breed*
- John Ehrman and Michael Flamm, Debating the Reagan Presidency*

*All texts are available at the bookstore. The * indicates the text is also on reserve in the library.*

Grades:

- Participation 10 percent
- Preparation 45 percent
- Exams 45 percent

Participation will include regular attendance, informed discussion, in-class assignments, and a mandatory conference. The discussion questions serve as a general guide to particular topics. Preparation will include reading essays, memos, quizzes, and worksheets. Exams will include two hourlies and a final. I will drop the lowest earned preparation grade and reward improvement on exams over the course of the semester. Students should in turn expect to demonstrate a sense of responsibility by using the restroom in advance and arriving on time – lateness is disruptive and disrespectful. Please turn off cell phones and refrain from texting or eating during class.

Deadlines:

- September 2: Reading worksheet #1 (“Cross of Gold”)
- September 16: Reading worksheet #2 (von Drehle)
- September 23: Hourly exam #1
- October 21: Reading essay (Sledge)
- October 31: Hourly exam #2
- November 9: Reading rewrite (optional)
- December 9: Reading quiz (Ehrman/Flamm)
- December ??: Final exam

Late work – when accepted – will result in substantial penalties (one full letter grade per day). If you need an extension, contact me in advance – not the day the assignment is due. Academic misconduct such as plagiarism or cheating will lead to severe sanctions in full accordance with university policy. For changes or updates, please consult Blackboard.

Topics and Assignments (due in class that day unless otherwise announced):

Week One: August 24-28

Course Introduction

The Construction of the “New South”

Due: Brinkley, chapter 15

Discussion: 1) How “new” was the “New South”? 2) Who had the better approach to African-American advancement at the time, Du Bois or Washington? Why?

Industrialization and Immigration

Due: Brinkley, chapter 17

Discussion: 1) What was the main cause of American industrialization? 2) Why did the “New Immigrants” face greater hostility than the “Old Immigrants”?

Week Two: August 31-September 4

The Battle for Industrial America

Due: Begin Von Drehle, Triangle

Discussion: What was the main reason for the failure of labor unions in this period?

The American Farmer and the Populist Movement

Due: Brinkley, chapter 19; **reading worksheet** (see Blackboard) on “Cross of Gold” (packet)

Discussion: 1) What was the most important legacy of the election of 1896? Why? 2) Was the Populist Party a success or a failure? Why?

The American City and the Progressive Movement

Due: Brinkley, chapters 18 and 21

Discussion: 1) What was the main challenge faced by cities? 2) What was the main obstacle faced by the Progressives?

Week Three: September 7-11

The “Progressive” Presidents: Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson

Due: Brinkley, chapter 22

Discussion: Who was the most “progressive” president?

American Expansionism

Due: Brinkley, chapter 20; continue Von Drehle, Triangle

Discussion: 1) What was the most important cause and consequence of American expansionism? 2) Was the creation of the “American empire” a positive or negative development? Why?

The Road to World War I

Due: Brinkley, chapter 23

Discussion: What was the main reason for U.S. entry into World War I?

Week Four: September 14-18

The “Great War”: Over There and Over Here

Due: Finish Von Drehle, Triangle

Discussion: 1) Why was the “Great War” so devastating? 2) How was American society affected by the war?

The Struggle for Suffrage

Due: **Reading worksheet** (see Blackboard) on Von Drehle, Triangle

Discussion: 1) What were some of the causes of division and sources of tension within the women’s movement? 2) Who was the most important suffragette? Why? 3) What was the greatest tragedy of the Triangle Fire?

The “Lost Peace”: Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations

Due: Prepare for exam

Discussion: Was Wilson primarily responsible for the failure of the U.S. to ratify the Treaty of Versailles and join the League of Nations?

Week Five: September 21-25

The Search for Enemies

Due: Prepare for exam

Discussion: 1) Was the Red Scare an inevitable outgrowth of World War I? 2) Why was the Second Klan so popular for a time?

EXAM #1

The “New Negro” and the Harlem Renaissance

Due: Brinkley, chapter 24; “The Great Black Migration” (packet)

Discussion: 1) How did World War I affect black Americans? 2) Why according to “The Great Black Migration” were so many black Americans moving to the North?

Week Six: September 28-October 2

No Class

Due: Begin Sledge, With the Old Breed

The Clash of Cultures: Prohibition and Fundamentalism

Due: “The Menace of Darwinism” (packet); continue Sledge, With the Old Breed

Discussion: 1) Was Prohibition a dismal failure or “noble experiment”? 2) Why were the cultural clashes of the 1920s so intense?

The “New Era”: Women and Youth

Due: “Petting on Campus” and “Drinking on Campus” (packet)

Discussion: 1) To what extent did the image of the “New Woman” match reality? 2) What do the documents reveal about college life in the 1920s?

Week Seven: October 5-9

The Great Depression: Causes and Consequences

Due: Brinkley, chapter 25

Discussion: 1) What was the main cause of the Great Depression? 2) Which were worse, the physical or psychological consequences, and who suffered most?

Hoover, Roosevelt, and the Coming of the New Deal

Due: Brinkley, chapter 26; continue Sledge, With the Old Breed

Discussion: 1) To what extent are the popular or conventional images of Hoover and Roosevelt accurate? 2) Why do they remain so powerful and prevalent?

The New Deal: Achievements and Limits

Due: “The New Deal in History and Historiography” (packet)

Discussion: 1) Was the New Deal a success or a failure? In what sense? 2) With which interpretation of the New Deal in the packet do you agree? Why?

Week Eight: October 12-16

The Road to World War II

Due: Brinkley, chapter 27; continue Sledge, With the Old Breed

Discussion: 1) Did the U.S. practice appeasement during the 1930s? 2) Was FDR aware in advance of Japanese plans to attack Pearl Harbor?

Mid-Semester Break

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Week Nine: October 19-23

The World at War

Due: Brinkley, chapter 28; finish Sledge, With the Old Breed

Discussion: 1) Could Hitler have won? Why or why not? 2) Why were the Allies able to defeat Germany and Japan?

The War at Home

Due: **Reading essay** (Sledge)

Discussion: 1) How was the impact of World War II similar to and/or different from the impact of World War I? 2) Which developments had the greatest long-term significance?

The “Good War”: Security and Morality

Due: Begin Brinkley, chapter 29

Discussion: 1) Was the U.S. right to intern Americans of Japanese ancestry? 2) Was the U.S. right to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki? 3) How does With the Old Breed help explain the decision to use the atomic bomb against Hiroshima?

Week Ten: October 26-30

The Cold War: Causes and Controversies

Due: Brinkley, chapter 29

Discussion: Was the Cold War unavoidable? If not, who was primarily to blame?

The Cold War: Containment and Confrontation

Due: Prepare for exam

Discussion: 1) Was containment a successful policy for the U.S.? 2) How and why was containment in practice (Truman) different from containment in theory (Kennan)?

EXAM #2

Week Eleven: November 2-6

The Korean War: Lessons and Legacies

Due: Prepare reading rewrite (Sledge)

Discussion: 1) Was Truman right to fire MacArthur? 2) What was the most important legacy of the Korean War?

Joseph McCarthy and the Politics of Anti-Communism

Due: Prepare reading rewrite (Sledge)

Discussion: Why was McCarthy so successful with so many (for a time)?

Video: Memphis Dreams (Innocence and Rebellion)

Due: Brinkley; chapter 30

Week Twelve: November 9-13

The Culture of Consensus

Due: **Reading rewrite** (Sledge); “The Rise of Suburbia” (packet)

Discussion: 1) Was the rise of suburbia inevitable? 2) Was the rise of suburbia a positive or negative development? Why?

America Astir: Kennedy, Johnson, and the “Age of Activism”

Due: Brinkley, chapter 31; “The Other America” (packet)

Discussion: 1) Why according to “The Other America” was poverty invisible? 2) What movement or individual has had the most long-term impact – for better or worse? Why?

The Transformation of the Civil Rights Movement

Due: “Letter from Birmingham Jail” and “Study Questions” (packet)

Discussion: How and why did the movement evolve over time?

Week Thirteen: November 16-20

The Fragmentation of the Civil Rights Movement

Due: “On Revolution” and “Study Questions” (packet)

Discussion: How and why did the movement fragment over time?

Eisenhower, Kennedy, and the Cold War

Due: Begin Ehrman and Flamm, Debating the Reagan Presidency

Discussion: Who handled foreign affairs better, Eisenhower or Kennedy? Why?

The Origins of Vietnam

Due: Brinkley, chapter 32

Discussion: 1) Why was the U.S. in Vietnam? 2) Was U.S. military intervention inevitable?

Week Fourteen: November 16-20 (University Holiday)

Week Fifteen: November 30-December 4

The Ordeal of Vietnam

Due: Continue Ehrman and Flamm, Debating the Reagan Presidency

Discussion: 1) Why was Tet the turning point of the war? 2) Could the U.S. have won the war?

The Outcome of Vietnam

Due: “A Time to Break Silence” (packet)

Discussion: 1) Were Nixon and Kissinger able to achieve “Peace with Honor” in Vietnam?
2) In “A Time to Break Silence,” what is the most compelling argument that King makes against the war? Why?

The Politics of Scandal

Due: Continue Ehrman and Flamm, Debating the Reagan Presidency

Discussion: 1) What is the most plausible explanation for Watergate? 2) What was the most important legacy of Watergate?

Week Sixteen: December 7-11

America Adrift: Ford, Carter, and the “Age of Limits”

Due: Brinkley, chapter 33

Discussion: 1) Why were many Americans in the 1970s convinced that they now lived in an “age of limits”? 2) What was the most important consequence of this development?

America Ascendant: The “Reagan Revolution”

Due: **Reading quiz** (Ehrman and Flamm)

Discussion: 1) Was the “Reagan Revolution” of the 1980s a positive or negative development?
2) Why was Reagan so successful a politician?

The “American Century”

Due: Brinkley, chapter 34

Discussion: 1) Was Clinton a good president? 2) What is the most important legacy of 9/11?

Reading Essay

Professor Michael Flamm
History 114

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Fall 2009

Please read the questions carefully and follow the guidelines closely. See or contact me if you need assistance.

“It was primarily the nature of the war – not the nature of the American and Japanese soldiers – that made the fighting in the Pacific so brutal.” Do you agree or disagree? Why? Please discuss with specific reference to *With the Old Breed* and the personal experiences of Eugene Sledge.

Guidelines:

1. The **essay** is due on ____ (see syllabus).
2. Prepare an essay of **750-1000 words** (three to four typed, double-spaced pages with standard one-inch margins). The essay will constitute part of the class preparation and participation grade. Failure to submit it will lead to an “F” for that grade as a whole.
3. Employ the following **structure**: In the first paragraph, introduce the book and state the thesis, which should answer the question clearly and directly. In the following paragraphs, develop and defend the thesis with appropriate topic sentences and relevant supporting evidence. Offer a balanced argument that considers alternative viewpoints. In the final paragraph, restate the thesis (in modified form) and explain why the issue continues to matter. How does it influence U.S. policy today? Is the influence positive or negative? Why?
4. Use parenthetical **citations** (e.g. Sledge, p. 159) for all direct quotations or factual information that is not general knowledge. On the first page, include your name, History ____, my name, and the date. Number all subsequent pages.
5. Cite appropriately. **Plagiarism**, whether intentional or not, will lead to an “F” for the assignment and a report to the dean of academic affairs, with additional penalties possible. See the *OWU Catalog* and *The History Handbook* for guidance.
6. Edit carefully. **Style** counts. I will penalize sloppy papers harshly. Consult *The History Handbook* for tips on how to compose better prose.
7. Act punctually. **Deadlines** matter. I will penalize late papers harshly. I will grant extensions only in advance and for extraordinary circumstances.

GRADING RUBRIC FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

The “A” Category:

1. **Thesis:** Answers the question clearly with some creativity and/or originality.
2. **Structure:** Has strong transitions and topic sentences that always relate directly to the thesis.
3. **Evidence:** Includes appropriate and persuasive examples at all points.
4. **Analysis:** Always relates evidence directly to the thesis or topic sentence.
5. **Logic:** Presents a strong and balanced argument that refutes opposing viewpoints.
6. **Style:** Contains correct grammar, punctuation, and citation; has appropriate sentence variety and almost no errors.

The “B” Category:

1. **Thesis:** Answers the question clearly.
2. **Structure:** Has good transitions and topic sentences that usually relate directly to the thesis.
3. **Evidence:** Includes appropriate and persuasive examples at most points.
4. **Analysis:** Often relates evidence directly to the thesis or topic sentence.
5. **Logic:** Presents a good and balanced argument that addresses opposing viewpoints.
6. **Style:** Contains correct grammar, punctuation, and citation; lacks sentence variety and has minor errors.

The “C” Category:

1. **Thesis:** Answers the question somewhat clearly.
2. **Structure:** Has adequate transitions and topic sentences that sometimes relate to the thesis.
3. **Evidence:** Includes appropriate and persuasive examples at some points.
4. **Analysis:** Sometimes relates evidence directly to the thesis or topic sentence.
5. **Logic:** Presents a coherent but unbalanced argument.
6. **Style:** Contains either numerous minor errors or several major errors in grammar, punctuation, and citation.

The “D” Category:

1. **Thesis:** Fails to answer the question clearly.
2. **Structure:** Has weak transitions and few topic sentences that relate directly to the thesis.
3. **Evidence:** Includes few appropriate or persuasive examples.
4. **Analysis:** Rarely relates evidence directly to the thesis or topic sentence.
5. **Logic:** Presents an incoherent and unbalanced argument.
6. **Style:** Contains major and frequent errors in grammar, punctuation, and citation.

The “F” Category

The paper reflects minimal effort and/or minimal comprehension of the assignment.

Review Sheet (*Debating the Reagan Presidency*)

Professor Flamm

History 114

Matching: The following are names that you should know.

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| A. Jesse Jackson | B. Robert Bork |
| C. Mikhail Gorbachev | D. George W. Bush |
| E. George H.W. Bush | F. Lawrence Walsh |
| G. William Casey | H. George Shultz |
| I. Caspar Weinberger | J. Edward “Ted” Kennedy |
| K. Tip O’Neill | L. Muammar Qaddafi |
| M. Robert “Bud” McFarlane | N. Oliver North |
| O. Ayatollah Khomeini | P. Oscar Arias Sanchez |
| Q. Daniel Ortega | |

Chronology: Please know the relative order of these events.

1. Gorbachev becomes the leader of the Soviet Union.
2. More than 200 Marines in Lebanon are killed.
3. Reagan is reelected as president.
4. Reagan is almost assassinated.
5. Reagan meets with Gorbachev in Iceland.
6. Reagan and Gorbachev sign the INF Treaty in Washington.
7. The U.S. invades Grenada.
8. The Iran-Contra scandal erupts into public view.
9. Reagan calls the Soviet Union an “evil empire.”

Review Sheet (Exam #1)

Professor Michael Flamm
History 114

Ohio Wesleyan University
Fall 2009

The first exam will take place on _____ (see syllabus) at the usual time in the usual place with the usual suspects. I will supply the bluebooks. Students who do not explain their absence in advance or provide a legitimate medical excuse will not receive a make-up exam. The exam is divided as follows:

PART I: Identification (15 minutes):

This section will consist of six to eight names, terms, or events taken from the lectures. Choose **THREE** and for each write a substantial paragraph identifying the name or term (who, what, where, when) **AND** explaining why it was important. Please review “Exam Examples” in *The History Handbook* for guidance.

PART II: Analysis (15 minutes):

This section will consist of excerpts taken from **TWO** primary sources discussed in class. In a brief essay (five paragraphs), analyze **ONE**. First, place the source in historical context. Second, identify the author and explain his or her motives. Third, discuss the argument the source as a whole presents. Fourth, consider the audience (s) for the source. Finally, assess the historical significance of the source. Please review the “AAAAA” method and “Exam Examples” in *The History Handbook* for guidance.

PART III: Chronology (15 minutes):

This section will consist of **TWO** “clusters” of events taken from the lectures. In a brief essay (five paragraphs), discuss **ONE**. Place the events in chronological order **AND** explain their causal relationship. Please review “Exam Examples” in *The History Handbook* for guidance.

Review Sheet (Exam #2)

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History 114

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Fall 2009

The second exam will take place on _____ (see syllabus) at the usual time in the usual place with the usual suspects. I will supply the bluebooks. Students who do not explain their absence in advance or provide a legitimate medical excuse will not receive a make-up exam. The exam is divided as follows:

PART I: Identification (15 minutes):

This section will consist of six to eight names, terms, or events taken from the lectures **SINCE THE FIRST EXAM**. Choose **THREE** and for each write a substantial paragraph identifying the name or term (who, what, where, when) **AND** explaining why it was important. Please review “Exam Examples” in *The History Handbook* for guidance.

PART II: Analysis (15 minutes):

This section will consist of excerpts taken from **TWO** primary sources discussed in class **SINCE THE FIRST EXAM**. In a brief essay (five paragraphs), analyze **ONE**. First, place the source in historical context. Second, identify the author and explain his or her motives. Third, discuss the argument the source as a whole presents. Fourth, consider the audience (s) for the source. Finally, assess the historical significance of the source. Please review the “AAAAA” method and “Exam Examples” in *The History Handbook* for guidance.

PART III: Chronology (15 minutes):

This section will consist of **TWO** “clusters” of events taken from the lectures **SINCE THE FIRST EXAM**. In a brief essay (five paragraphs), discuss **ONE**. Place the events in chronological order **AND** explain their causal relationship. Please review “Exam Examples” in *The History Handbook* for guidance.

Review Sheet (Exam #3)

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History 114

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Fall 2009

The third exam will take place on _____ (see syllabus) in the usual place with the usual suspects. I will supply the bluebooks. Students who do not explain their absence in advance or provide a legitimate medical excuse will not receive a make-up exam. The exam is divided as follows:

PART I: Identification (15 minutes):

This section will consist of six to eight names, terms, or events taken from the lectures **SINCE THE SECOND EXAM**. Choose **THREE** and for each write a substantial paragraph identifying the name or term (who, what, where, when) **AND** explaining why it was important. Please review “Exam Examples” in *The History Handbook* for guidance.

PART II: Analysis (15 minutes):

This section will consist of excerpts taken from **TWO** primary sources discussed in class **SINCE THE SECOND EXAM**. In a brief essay (five paragraphs), analyze **ONE**. First, place the source in historical context. Second, identify the author and explain his or her motives. Third, discuss the argument the source as a whole presents. Fourth, consider the audience (s) for the source. Finally, assess the historical significance of the source. Please review the “AAAAA” method and “Exam Examples” in *The History Handbook* for guidance.

PART III: Chronology (15 minutes):

This section will consist of **TWO** “clusters” of events taken from the lectures **SINCE THE SECOND EXAM**. In a brief essay (five paragraphs), discuss **ONE**. Place the events in chronological order **AND** explain their causal relationship. Please review “Exam Examples” in *The History Handbook* for guidance.

PART IV: Essay (45 minutes):

ONE of the following questions will appear at random. Answer it with a well-organized and well-balanced essay which includes specific information from the readings, lectures, and discussions. Please review “Testing Tips” in *The History Handbook* for guidance.

1. “In the 20th century, the individual who had the most immediate and long-term impact was Martin Luther King, Jr.” Do you agree or disagree? Why? Please consider two other individuals who were **NOT** presidents, generals, or politicians.
2. “The most critical year in modern American history was 1968.” Do you agree or disagree? Why? Please discuss **TWO** other years (either 1896 or 1917 and either 1945 or 1954). Which year was most significant? Why?