

The Forging of Modern America, 1880-1920 | 512:304

Fall 2015

Monday(Frelinghuysen Hall B2)/Wednesday (Campbell Hall A5) 1:10-2:30 pm

Prof. Jamie Pietruska

pietrusk@rci.rutgers.edu (The best way to contact me is by email.)

Van Dyck 311

Office hours: Mondays 12-12:45, 2:45-4, Wednesdays 12-12:45, 2:45-4, or by appointment

Office phone: 848.932.8544

This syllabus and all course materials will be posted on our course Sakai site:

<https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>

Course Description

This is a lecture/discussion course that examines how American politics, economy, society, and culture were transformed in the four decades between 1880 and 1920. We will investigate the major changes resulting from the transition from a predominantly rural agrarian society to a primarily urban industrial society, and the responses to such a dramatic shift from politicians, reformers, and social critics as they came to terms with a modern America shaped by corporate capitalism, urbanization, and patterns of migration that brought over twenty million people to the United States between 1880 to 1920. We will pay particular attention to these major themes: the centrality of scientific and technological innovation to a new industrial society; critiques of political economy and consolidated corporate capitalism; the relative strength of the state in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; an increasingly expansionist and interventionist American foreign policy, the production of new kinds of scientific and social-scientific knowledge; changing discourses and power relations pertaining to race, class, and gender; and continuities and discontinuities between what historians have traditionally called the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era.

Course Objectives

This course meets the SAS Core Curriculum requirement for WCD (Writing and Communication in a Discipline) learning goals.

1. Develop a grasp of the basic chronology of United States history from 1880 to 1920, with a focus on major events and turning points
2. Understand the development of the following aspects of American society from 1880 to 1920: the emergence of political reform movements, the shift from a rural agrarian society to an urban industrial society, the role of scientific and technological innovation in the new industrial society, changing patterns of migration and labor, the emergence of the United States as a global economic and military power, the development of new kinds of professional expertise, changing power relations pertaining to race, class, and gender
3. Analyze a range of primary sources, including speeches, essays, political cartoons, paintings, photographs, propaganda posters, advertisements, and film
4. Analyze and evaluate historical arguments in secondary sources
5. Understand recent historiographical trends in the scholarship on the Gilded Age and Progressive Era
6. Write two essays, based on primary sources, that analyze late-nineteenth-century ideas about political economy

7. **Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights (SAS Core Curriculum Goal V)**
8. **Evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly (SAS Core Curriculum Goal U)**
9. Write one essay that analyzes secondary sources on the Progressive Era
10. **Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry (SAS Core Curriculum Goal T)**

Course Requirements

Attendance Policy

Each of you is a valuable member of our intellectual community this semester, and I trust that you will conduct yourselves accordingly. Students are expected to attend all sessions and to be active and thoughtful participants in class discussion. **More than three (3) unexcused absences (i.e., other than a documented illness, documented emergency, religious observance, or university-approved absence) will have an adverse effect on your grade. For each unexcused absence beyond the 3 allowed, your final course grade will be lowered by 2 percentage points.** For example, if you accumulate 5 unexcused absences during the semester and have a grade of 83%, your grade will be lowered to 79%. Please note that an excused absence means that you provide me with a note from a doctor, dean, or coach that explains your absence. **All absences, whether excused or unexcused, should be entered into the Rutgers University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>, where you will indicate the date and reason for your absence.** I will receive an automatic email from this system, so there is no need to send me a separate email regarding your attendance.

Attendance involves not only physical presence, but also mental presence. This means that cell phone use is not permitted in class for any reason. **If I see you using your cell phone during class, you will be marked "absent" for that day.** Laptops should be used for note-taking only.

Assignments

Students will be required to write three papers (two 5-page formal analytical essays and an 8-page formal analytical essay) and to take a midterm exam and a final exam. The reading assignments should be completed for the date on which they are listed. **Please bring your books and copies of any additional readings to class each week as we will often refer to specific passages during discussion.**

Required books (available at the Rutgers Bookstore and on reserve at Alexander Library):

Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing at Armageddon: A Grassroots History of the Progressive Era* (W. W. Norton, 2008) ISBN: 039333192X

Rebecca Edwards, *New Spirits: Americans in the "Gilded Age": 1865-1905* (Oxford University Press, 3rd ed., 2015) ISBN: 9780190217174

Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward, 2000-1887* (Signet Classics, 2009 [1888]) ISBN: 0451531167

Eric Rauchway, *Murdering McKinley: The Making of Theodore Roosevelt's America* (Hill & Wang, 2004) ISBN: 0809016389

Additional course readings will be available on Sakai.

Academic Integrity

The foundation of this course and any scholarly endeavor is academic integrity. I fully expect that all students will adhere to principles of academic integrity in their work. All written work must be a student's own original work. (Collaboration on essay assignments is not permitted.) Any and all references to other sources within your own paper must be properly documented according to the guidelines in the Chicago Manual of Style, which is available at the Alexander Library.

You are responsible for understanding the Rutgers policies regarding academic integrity, as outlined here: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>

Ignorance of these policies or the consequences for violations is not an acceptable excuse.

The Rutgers Writing Program has an excellent webpage that explains the nuances of plagiarism, which I urge you to read carefully:

<http://wp.rutgers.edu/courses/plagiarism>

The Rutgers Libraries have produced an interactive online tutorial, which I also urge you to consult, that provides concrete examples of what is and what is not plagiarism:

<http://library.camden.rutgers.edu/EducationalModule/Plagiarism/>

If you have any questions about quoting, paraphrasing, or referring to the work of others, please ask! It is better to be safe than sorry, better to have too many citations than not enough and thus run the risk of unintentional plagiarism.

Any and all violations of academic integrity in this course will result in the formal consequences and disciplinary action that are outlined in the Rutgers policy on academic integrity. I have a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism and refer all violations directly to the Office of Student Conduct.

Grading

15% Paper #1 (5 pages): Analytical essay on ideas about the Gilded Age economy (A detailed assignment description will be distributed as the course gets underway.)

20% Paper #2 (5 pages): Analytical essay on the reception of *Looking Backward* (A detailed assignment description will be distributed as the course gets underway.)

15% Midterm exam: 10 short-answer identifications (A study guide will be distributed well in advance of the midterm exam.)

25% Paper #3 (8 pages): Analytical essay on *Murdering McKinley* and progressivism (A detailed assignment description will be distributed as the course gets underway.)

15% Final exam: 10 short-answer identifications (A study guide will be distributed well in advance of the final exam.)

10% Class participation

Please note that late paper submissions will be penalized by half a letter grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day they are late, unless you have obtained a letter from a doctor or a dean explaining why you were unable to complete your work on time.

Please come to office hours or email me with any question, big or small. I am always happy to help students with the course material and with their writing.

Students with Disabilities

Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey abides by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments (ADAA) of 2008, and Sections 504 and 508 which mandate reasonable accommodations be provided for qualified students with disabilities and accessibility of online information. If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodation, please contact me during the first week of the semester so that we can arrange the necessary accommodations. If you have not already done so, please register with the Office of Disability Services, Lucy Stone Hall, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Ave., Suite A145. Phone: 848.445.6800 Online: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

Schedule

Introduction

Wed 2 Sept Course overview
Introductory lecture: Progress and Poverty
Edwards, Introduction (“A ‘Gilded Age?’”)

Week 1: A Search for Order in the “Economic Chance-World”

***Tues 8 Sept** Large-scale Technological Systems and Consolidated Corporate Capitalism
Painter, Afterword, Introduction, chap. 1 (“The Tocsin Sounds”)
Edwards, chap. 2 (“Reach: Energy, Corporations, and People in the Global Economy”)
Richard White, “Information, Markets and Corruption: Transcontinental Railroads in the Gilded Age,” *Journal of American History* 90, no. 1 (2003): 19-43 [Sakai]

Wed 9 Sept Industrialization and its Discontents
Richard R. John, “Robber Barons Redux: Antimonopoly Reconsidered,” *Enterprise and Society* 31, no. 1 (2012): 1-38.
George Miller Beard, “Causes of American Nervousness,” chapter 3 in *American Nervousness, its Causes and Consequences* Putnam, 1881), pp. 96-138 [Sakai]
Molly McGarry, “Spectral Sexualities: Nineteenth-Century Spiritualism, Moral Panics, and the Making of U.S. Obscenity Law,” *Journal of Women’s History* 12, no. 2 (2000): 8-29 [Sakai]
Edwards, chap. 7 (“Sex”)

Week 2: A New Infrastructural Society

Mon 14 Sept Weather and Crop Information Networks

James Rodger Fleming, "Storms, Strikes, and Surveillance: The U.S. Army Signal Office, 1861-1891," *Historical Studies in the Physical and Biological Sciences* 30, no. 2 (2000): 315-32 [Sakai]

Wed 16 Sept A Wired Landscape

Paul B. Israel, "Inventing Industrial Research: Thomas Edison and the Menlo Park Laboratory," *Endeavour* 26, no. 2 (2002): 48-54. [Sakai]

David Nye, "What Was Electricity?" in *Electrifying America: Social Meanings of a New Technology* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995 [1990]), pp. 138-184 [Sakai]

Robert MacDougall, "The Wire Devils: Pulp Thrillers, the Telephone, and Action at a Distance in the Wiring of a Nation," *American Quarterly* 58, no. 3 (2006): 715-741 [Sakai]

Week 3: Capitalism in the Countryside

Mon 21 Sept The Origins of Industrial Agriculture

PAPER #1 DUE

Wed 23 Sept Commodity Speculation, Markets, and Meanings

William Cronon, "Pricing the Future: Grain" in *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (W. W. Norton, 1991), pp. 97-147 [Sakai]

Jonathan Ira Levy, "Contemplating Delivery: Futures Trading and the Problem of Commodity Exchange in the United States, 1875-1905," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 2 (2006): 307-335 [Sakai]

Recommended: David Hochfelder, "'Where the Common People Could Speculate': The Ticker, Bucket Shops, and the Origins of Popular Participation in Financial Markets, 1880-1920," *Journal of American History* 93, no. 2 (2006): 335-358 [Sakai]

Week 4: The "Labor Question" and Laborers

Mon 28 Sept Strikes, Violence, and the Wedge between Labor and Capital

Painter, chap. 2 ("The Great Upheaval")

Edwards, chap. 3 ("Work: Moving Up or Getting By")

Wed 30 Sept Patterns of Migration and Immigration Restriction

Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad* (Hill & Wang, 2001), chapter 2 ("Labor Markets: The World's Peoples as American Workers"), pp. 59-97. [Sakai]

Document 19-2 "Domestic Servants on Household Work" [Sakai]

Document 149 "An Italian Immigrant's Experience in America" (1902)[Sakai]

Document 150 "The Story of a Sweatshop Girl" (1902)

Erika Lee, "The Example of Chinese Exclusion: Race, Immigration, and American Gatekeeping, 1882-1924," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 21, no. 3 (2002) [Sakai]

Browse through Immigration Restriction League circular letters, digitized at
“Immigration to the United States, 1789-1930,” Harvard University
Library Open Collections Program:
<http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/5398778?n=1&printThumbnails=no>

Week 5: Imagining Alternative Americas

- Mon 5 Oct Cooperative Commonwealths and Edward Bellamy’s Industrial Utopia
Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (first half)
- Wed 7 Oct Bellamyite Politics in the Populist Moment
Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (second half)

Week 6: Radicalism and Race

- Mon 12 Oct Populist Politics
Painter, chap. 4 (“The Depression of the 1890s”)
Edwards, chap. 10 (“Cooperative Dreams: Populists and Progressives”)
The Omaha Platform (1892), available online:
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5361/>
Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (Oxford UP, 2007), “Introduction:
Modern Times,” pp. 3-22 [Sakai]
- Wed 14 Oct Race, Gender, and Violence in the Jim Crow South
Edwards, chap. 11 (“Executive Powers: Empire at Home and Abroad”), pp.
214-219
Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horrors: Lynch Law in All Its Phases* (1892), available
online:
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14975/14975-h/14975-h.htm>
PAPER #2 DUE

Week 7: Frontiers at Home and Abroad

- Mon 19 Oct Possession and Dispossession in the American West
Painter, chap. 5 (“The White Man’s Burden”)
Edwards, chap. 4 (“A State of War: The Violence of Incorporation”)
Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American
History” (1893) [Sakai]
- Wed 21 Oct Race and American Imperialist Expansion
Edwards, chap. 11 (“Executive Powers: Empire at Home and Abroad”), pp.
219-234
Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race
in the United States, 1880-1917* (University of Chicago Press, 1995),
pp. 178-206 [Sakai]
Allison L. Sneider, *Suffragists in an Imperial Age: U.S. Expansion and the
Woman Question, 1870-1929* (Oxford UP, 2008), chap. 4 (“Imperial
Expansion and the Problem of Hawaii, 1898-1902”), pp. 87-116
[Sakai]
Paul Kramer, “The Water Cure: Debating torture and counterinsurgency—a
century ago,” *New Yorker*, February 25, 2008 [Sakai]

Week 8: New Forms of Knowledge

- Mon 26 Oct Frederick Winslow Taylor, *Industrial Reform, and the Origins of Scientific Management*
Painter, chap. 3 (“Remedies”)
“F. W. Taylor Recruits the Ideal Worker with the Principles of Scientific Management, 1910” in *Major Problems in the GAPE*, pp. 237-239 [Sakai]
Thomas Hughes, “The System Must Be First,” in *Major Problems in the History of American Technology*, pp. 292-299 [Sakai]
- Wed 28 Oct The Taming of Chance?
Edwards, chap. 8 (“Faith”), chap. 9 (“Science”)
William James, “The Dilemma of Determinism,” in *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (Dover Publications, 1956 [1897]), pp. 145-183 [Sakai]
Jackson Lears, *Something for Nothing: Luck in America* (Penguin, 2003), pp. 147-186 (chap. 4: “The Waning of Providence”) [Sakai]

Week 9: Consumer Culture

- Mon 2 Nov Advertising, Shopping, and the World of the Department Store
Edwards, chap. 5 (“Money”)
“Theodore Dreiser’s Carrie Discovers the Department Store, 1900,” in *Major Problems in the GAPE*, pp. 326-27 [Sakai]
Elaine Abelson, “Shoplifting Ladies,” in Jennifer Scanlon, ed., *The Gender and Consumer Culture Reader* (NYU Press, 2000), pp. 309-28 [Sakai]
Recommended: William Leach, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (Vintage, 1994), introduction, chap. 2 (“Facades of Color, Glass, and Light”) and chap. 3 (“Interiors”), pp. 3-14, 39-90 [Sakai]

Wed 4 Nov **IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM**

Week 10: Progressivism and Natural Environments

- Mon 9 Nov Conservation and the Scientific Management of Nature
Rauchway, *Murdering McKinley*, pp. ix-111
Recommended: Greg Bankoff, “Conservation and Colonialism: Gifford Pinchot and the Birth of Tropical Forestry in the Philippines,” in Alfred W. McCoy and Francisco A. Scarano, ed., *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2009), 479-488. [Sakai]
- Wed 11 Nov Film: *The Last Refuge*, from Ken Burns, *The National Parks: America’s Best Idea*
Rauchway, *Murdering McKinley*, pp. 113-150
Recommended: Karl Jacoby, “Ken Burns Gone Wild: Naturalizing the Nation in The National Parks: America’s Best Idea,” *The Public Historian* 33, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 19-23 [Sakai]

Recommended: Edward T. Linenthal, "Ken Burns's The National Parks: America's Best Idea: Compelling Stories and Missed Opportunities," *The Public Historian* 33, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 13-18.[Sakai]

Week 11: Progressivism and Social Environments

- Mon 16 Nov Investigating Human Nature
Rauchway, *Murdering McKinley*, pp. 150-218
- Wed 18 Nov Investigating and Improving the City
Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House* (1910), chapters VII ("Some Early Undertakings at Hull House"), XIII ("Public Activities and Investigations"), available online:
<http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/addams/hullhouse/hullhouse.html>
Linda Gordon, "If the Progressives Were Advising Us Today, Should We Listen?" *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 1, no. 2 (2002): 109-121 [Sakai]
Maureen Flanagan, *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms, 1890s-1920s* (Oxford UP, 2006), chap. 1 ("The City: The Crossroads of Social Justice"), pp. 13-31.

Week 12: Progressivism and State-building

- Mon 23 Nov Gender, Race, and a New Regulatory State
Painter, chap. 8 ("Woman Suffrage and Women Workers"), chap. 9 ("The Progressive Era")
"The Supreme Court Accepts Limits on Working Women's Hours: *Muller v. Oregon*, 1908" in *Major Problems in the GAPE*, pp. 388-389 [Sakai]
Gregory Michael Dorr, "Defective or Disabled?: Race, Medicine, and Eugenics in Progressive Era Virginia and Alabama," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 5, no. 4 (2006): 359-392 [Sakai]

Wed 25 Nov **NO CLASS [Friday classes meet on Wednesday of this week.]**

Week 13: World War I and the State

- Mon 30 Nov The Great War and Wilsonian Democracy
Painter, chap. 10 ("Wars"), chap. 11 ("The European War Takes Over")
Erez Manela, "'Peoples of Many Races': The World Beyond Europe in the Wilsonian Imagination," in John Milton Cooper and Thomas J. Knock, eds., *Jefferson, Lincoln, and Wilson: The Dilemma of Race and Democracy* (University of Virginia Press, 2010), pp. 184-208, available online:
<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic48666.files//Manela-Peoples%20of%20Many%20Races.pdf>

- Wed 2 Dec Propaganda and Wartime Political Obligation
George Creel, *How We Advertised America* (1920), chapters I, II, XIV, available online: <https://archive.org/details/howweadvertameri00creerich>
Christopher Capozzola, "The Only Badge Needed is Your Patriotic Fervor: Vigilance, Coercion, and the Law in World War I America," *Journal of American History* 88, no. 4 (2002): 1354-1382 [Sakai]

Week 14: A Return to Normalcy?

Mon 7 Dec Film: *One Woman, One Vote* (PBS American Experience, 1995)
PAPER #3 DUE

Wed 9 Dec Red Scare, the Wall Street Explosion, and Anti-Radicalism
Painter, chap. 12 (“The Great Unrest”), epilogue
Edwards, epilogue (“The Partridges and the Hippopotamus”)
Warren G. Harding, “Return to Normalcy,” May 14, 1920 [Sakai]

FINAL EXAM: Fri 18 Dec, 9-11 AM