



-- HIS 378 --

JEFF LITTLEJOHN SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY

HIS 378: Modern America, 1877-1945
Sam Houston State University
Fall 2007 | CID # 4559
Section 01: TTH 12:30-1:50 | AB4 202
<http://www.studythepast.com>

Instructor: Dr. Jeff Littlejohn
Office Location: AB4 472
Office Hours: TTH 11-12; or appt.
Office Phone: 936-294-4438
Email: littlejohn@shsu.edu

Course Description:

This course examines the chief cultural, political, economic, and diplomatic developments in America from 1877 to 1945. Students in the course will explore several key eras in American history, including the Gilded Age, the Progressive Era, the First World War, the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, and the Second World War.

Thematically, this course covers four topics: 1) the evolution of American cultural and social patterns; 2) the role of government in society; 3) the rights of individuals within a multicultural society; and 4) the role of America in the world.

Course Objectives:

1) Students will gain factual knowledge.

Students will gain a more in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the periods covered in this course, including the Gilded Age, the Progressive Era, the First World War, the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, and the Second World War.

2) Students will examine fundamental principles, generalizations, and theories.

Students will re-examine the fundamental principles of historical scholarship as they encounter traditional and more recent interpretations of the American past.

3) Students will analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

Students will evaluate primary documents and secondary sources as they consider conflicting historical interpretations.

Required Books (listed in order of consideration):

Les Standiford, *Meet You in Hell: Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clay Frick, and the Bitter Partnership That Transformed America* (Crown, 2005). Also available as [audio book or podcast](#).

Edward Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial And America's Continuing Debate over Science And Religion* (Basic Books, 2006).

Ronald Takaki, *Double Victory: A Multicultural History of America in World War II* (Back Bay Books, 2001). Also available as [audio book or podcast](#).

Attendance:

Regular attendance and punctuality are indicative of serious scholarship. You should be in class, awake and aware, and prepared for discussion. Role will be taken regularly, and any student who has more than six absences at the end of the term may receive a failing grade. Students who are regularly tardy will be denied entrance to class.

Attendance and Religious Holy Days:

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

SHSU policy 861001 provides the procedure to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to the instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). This request must be made in the first fifteen days of the semester in which the absence(s) will occur. The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

Assignments and Grading:

In this course, students will complete 3 exams, 2 book reviews and participation assignments.

- * Each exam will be worth 100 points.
- * Each book review will be worth 50 points.
- * Participation is worth 100 points.

The following grading scale -- based on 500 points -- will be used to calculate final grades:
A = 500-450 | B = 449-400 | C = 399-350 | D = 349-300 | F = 299-0 points.

Examinations:

Students will complete three exams during the term. Each of the exams will cover the section of the course immediately preceding it. The exams will be based on class notes and assigned readings. Review sheets will be posted on the course webpage before each exam.

Book Reviews:

Students will complete two book reviews during the term. You may review *Meet You in Hell*, *Summer for the Gods*, or *Double Victory*. Your reviews should examine the thesis and principal arguments of the text you are considering. Each of your reviews must fit on a flawlessly typewritten single sheet of paper with your name. Do not turn in cover sheets, binders, folders, or other paraphernalia.

Due Date

Meet You in Hell - September 20 | Summer for the Gods - October 25 | Double Victory - November 29

Assistance

[writing a book review](#) | [guidelines for clear writing](#) | [elements of style](#)

Participation:

Students should complete reading assignments, attend class, and participate in discussions. Periodically, a short pop-quiz, writing assignment, or movie review may be given to determine how well each member of the class has prepared. These participation assignments should be easy, but they will require that you be in class and be prepared.

Classroom Demeanor:

HIS 378 is a hybrid course -- part lecture and part discussion. Students are encouraged to ask questions and initiate discussion. The more engaged you are with the material, the better you will learn it, and the better you will do in the course. To facilitate an open classroom dialogue, students should not: 1) have cell phones turned on; 2) be reading the school paper or doing other homework; 3) leave early or disturb their fellows.

Visitors in the Classroom:

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted in the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

Study Tips:

I encourage you to contact me if you are feeling confused or out-of-step with the material we are covering. If you would like additional support, you may also contact the [SAM Center](#) (Student Advising & Mentoring Center), which helps students improve their note-taking, time management, and study skills. The [SAM Center](#) is located in room 210 of AB4. You may make an appointment at the Center by email (SAMCenter@shsu.edu) or phone (294-4444).

Academic Dishonesty:

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will

be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

Any violation of the University's Academic Honesty standard will result in a failing grade for the course and a recommendation for University discipline.

Americans with Disabilities Act:

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located next to the Counseling Center . They should then make arrangements with the instructor in order that accommodations can be made to assure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may adversely affect your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center.

Instructor's Right to Update Course Schedule

This syllabus is your contract for the course. The instructor will not change the nature of the course, the number of assignments, or the grading scheme. However, the instructor reserves the right to update the course schedule and reading assignments throughout the term.

Course Schedule

Unit I -- The United States, 1861-1900

August 21: Welcome and Course Overview

August 23: What Historians Do: The Case of Hal Bonney Jr. and James Gay

Hal Bonney, Jr: [newspaper biography](#) | [articles and editorials](#) | [video](#)

James Gay: [newspaper biography](#) | [articles and editorials](#)

August 28: Background: Re-envisioning the Mid-Nineteenth Century | [ppt slides](#)

Reading -- All Students

Elliott West, "Reconstructing Race," *WHQ*, Spring 2003, 34 (1) [[online pdf](#)]

Available Resources

Film Excerpt Shown in Class: *Race: The Power of an Illusion*, Vol. 2 [[online](#)]

Website: Chinese in California: 1850-1925 [[online](#)]

Website: Chinese Immigration, Origins and Opinions [[online](#)]

August 30: Race and the "New South," 1865-1900 | [ppt slides](#)

Reading -- All Students

Barbara Young Welke, "The Railway Journey: The Spatial Transformation" from *Recasting American Liberty* [[online pdf](#)]

Available Resources

Barbara Young Welke, *Recasting American Liberty*, [[Race and the Railroads](#)]

Without Sanctuary: Photographs and Postcards of Lynching in America [[online](#)]

The History of Jim Crow [[online](#)]

Civil Rights Cases (1883) [[online 1](#)] [[online 2](#)]

Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) [[online 1](#)] [[online 2](#)]

September 4: African American Leaders at the Turn of the Century

Reading -- Group 1

Booker T. Washington and his "Atlanta Compromise Address" (1895)

Reading: [[biography](#)] [[image](#)] [[speech](#)] [[audio](#)] [[analysis1](#)] [[analysis 2](#)]

Reading -- Group 2

W.E.B. Du Bois and His Vision for the Negro Rights Movement

Reading : [[biography](#)] [[image](#)] [[Souls of Black Folk](#)] [[Harper's Ferry Address](#)]

Available Resources

Film Excerpt in Class: *Rise and Fall of Jim Crow*, Vol. 1 [[video web site](#)]

September 6: The New West and the New Western History | [ppt slides](#)

Reading -- Group 1

"Frederick Jackson Turner" from Richard White's "Frederick Jackson Turner and Buffalo Bill," in *The Frontier in American Culture*. Exhibition at the Newberry Library [[online](#)]

Reading -- Group 2

"Buffalo Bill" from Richard White's "Frederick Jackson Turner and Buffalo Bill," in *The Frontier in American Culture*. Exhibition at the Newberry Library [[online](#)]

Reading -- Group 3

Reading: Walter Nugent, "Western History," *OAH Magazine* Fall 1994 [[online](#)]

Film Excerpt in Class: 500 Nations, episodes 7 and 8 [[video web site](#)]

September 11: The Rise of Corporations and the Fourteenth Amendment | [ppt slides](#)

Reading -- All Students

John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, "The Rise of Big Business in America, 1862-1913" from *The Company* [[online](#)]

Available Resources

Corporation: What is a Corporation [[online](#)]

Corporation Video: Birth of the Corporation [[online](#)]

Corporation Video: A Legal Person [[online](#)]

Website: The Corporation [[online](#)]

September 13: Labor in the Gilded Age

Reading -- All Students

Carl N. Degler, from *Out of Our Past: The Forces That shaped Modern America* [[online](#)]

Reading -- Group 1: Knights of Labor

Reading: Knights of Labor in Texas [[online](#)]

Reading: Drawing the Line on Black-White Equality at the annual meeting of the Knights of Labor [[online](#)]

Reading: Haymarket Square [[brief](#)] [[brief 2](#)] [[Chicago](#)] [[LOC](#)]

Reading -- Group 2: American Federation of Labor

Reading: Samuel Gompers and the AFL [[online](#)]

Reading: American Federation of Labor [[online](#)]

Reading: Samuel Gompers [[online](#)]

Reading -- Group 3: Eugene Debs, the American Railway Union, and the Pullman Strike

Reading: Eugene Debs [[online](#)]

Reading: Pullman Strike [[brief](#)] [[brief 2](#)] [[online](#)]

Reading: re Debs [[online](#)]

September 18: CONSTITUTION DAY ACTIVITIES

September 20: Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clay Frick, and the Homestead Strike

Reading -- All Students

Les Standiford, *Meet You in Hell: Andrew Carnegie, Henry Clay Frick, and the Bitter Partnership That Transformed America* (New York: Crown, 2005).

September 25: What a Funny Little Government: Politics and Empire, 1877-1900 | [ppt slides](#)

Reading -- Group 1

Thomas G. Paterson, "U.S. Intervention in Cuba, 1898: Interpreting the Spanish American Cuban-Filipino War" [[online](#)]

Reading -- Group 2

John Offner, "Why Did the United States Fight Spain in 1898?" [[online](#)]

Reading -- Group 3

Michael Hunt, "1898: Onset of America's Troubled Asian Century" [[online](#)]

Available Resources

Paul Kramer, "Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and United States Empires, 1880-1910" [[online project](#)]

September 27: EXAM ONE | [exam review sheet](#)

Unit II -- The United States, 1900-29

October 2: Progressive Era -Themes | [ppt slides](#)

Reading -- All Students

Excerpt from Alan Brinkley, "The Concept of New Deal Liberalism," in *The End of Reform* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995). [[online](#)]

Elisabeth I. Perry, "The Changing Meanings of 'The Progressive Era'" [[online](#)]

Reading -- Group 1

Herbert Croly, from *Promise of American Life* (1909) [[online](#)]

Reading -- Group 2

Frederick W. Taylor, *Principles of Scientific Management* (1911) [[online](#)]
Read the "Introduction" and "Fundamentals of Scientific Management"

October 4: Progressivism Continued | [ppt slides](#)

Reading -- Group 3

Ida Tarbell and the *History of Standard Oil* [[online pdf](#)] [[guide](#)]

Reading -- Group 4

Upton Sinclair, from *The Jungle*, Chapter 14 [[online](#)] [[discussion](#)]

Optional Available Resources

Jane Addams, "The Subjective Necessity for Social Settlements" [[online](#)]

October 9: Presidential Progressivism

Reading -- Group 1

Theodore Roosevelt [[online](#)]

Reading -- Group 2

Woodrow Wilson [[online](#)]

Optional Available Resources:

Did the Progressives Fail? YES: Richard M. Abrams, from 'The Failure of Progressivism' in *The Shaping of the Twentieth Century* [[online](#)]

Did the Progressives Fail? NO: Arthur S. Link and Richard L. McCormick [[online](#)]

October 11: The Origins of WWI and American Entrance Into World War I | [ppt slides](#)

How It Began: Read the Summaries [[online](#)]

General Information: Events leading to American Involvement

May 7, 1915: German U-boats sink the Lusitania

March 24, 1916: German U-boats sink the Sussex

Nov 1916: Wilson reelected, "He kept us out of war"

Jan 22, 1917: Wilson's "peace without victory" speech

Jan 31, 1917: Germany announced unlimited submarine warfare in war zone February 1

Feb 1917: Wilson breaks diplomatic ties with Germany

March 1917: Zimmerman Note

March 1917: Germany sinks 4 U.S. merchant vessels
March 1917: February Revolution in Russia
April 2, 1917, Wilson asked for Declaration of War

Optional Available Resources

Woodrow Wilson, Request for a Declaration of War, April 2, 1917 [[online](#)]

Randolph Bourne, "The War and the Intellectuals," *Seven Arts* 2 (June 1917) [[pdf](#)]

Randolph Bourne, "Twilight of Idols," *Seven Arts* 2 (Oct. 1917) [[pdf](#)]

John Dewey, "The Social Possibilities of War" [[pdf](#)]

James Livingston "War and the Intellectuals: Bourne, Dewey, and the Fate of Pragmatism" [[online](#)]

October 16: Fighting World War I: At Home and Abroad | [ppt slides](#)

Reading -- All Students

Ronald Schaffer, "The Home Front," *OAH Magazine of History*, October 2002 [[online](#)]

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 (March 2002), 1354-1382. [[online](#)]

Available Resources

Woodrow Wilson: American Experience [[link](#)]

October 18: Aftermath of World War I the Versailles Treaty, and the League Fight | [ppt slides](#)

Reading -- Group 1

Arthur S. Link, "Wilson's Higher Realism" [[online](#)]

Reading -- Group 2

Jan Schulte-Nordholt, "The Peace Advocate Out of Touch With Reality" [[online](#)]

October 23: American Society in the 1920s | [ppt slides](#)

Reading -- All Students

David Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, 10-29. Available online through library.

David Levering Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue* MPAH 1920-45 [soon]

October 25: The Scopes Trial

Reading -- All Students

Edward Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial And America's Continuing Debate over Science And Religion* (Basic Books, 2006).

October 30: American Politics in the 1920s | ppt slides

Reading -- All Students

David Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, 29-59. Available online through library.

November 1: The Great Depression and Herbert Hoover | ppt slides

Reading -- All Students

David Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, 59-111. Available online through library.

November 6: EXAM TWO | exam review sheet

Unit III -- The United States, 1930-45

November 8: The Election of 1932 and Franklin Roosevelt | ppt slides

Reading -- All Students

David Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, 112-159. Available online through library.

November 13: The New Deal | ppt slides

Reading -- All Students

David Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, 190-217, 249-287. Available online through library.

November 15: Criticism and the Court Fight

Reading -- All Students

David Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, 218-248, 323-362. Available online through library.

November 20: From the New Deal to World War II

Reading -- All Students

David Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, 363-380. Available online through library.

November 22: Thanksgiving Holiday

November 27: The Origins of World War II | [ppt slides](#)

Reading -- All Students

World War II: Domestic Affairs [[link](#)]

World War II: Foreign and Military Policy [[link](#)]

Available Resources

Film Excerpt Shown in Class: Prelude to War from Why We Fight

November 29: Fighting World War II

Reading -- All Students

Ronald Takaki, Double Victory: A Multicultural History of America in World War II (Back Bay Books, 2001). Also available as audio book or podcast.

December 4: Fighting World War II

Reading -- All Students

Ronald Takaki, Double Victory: A Multicultural History of America in World War II (Back Bay Books, 2001). Also available as audio book or podcast.

December 6: Three Shocks! Ending World War II | [ppt slides](#)

Film Excerpt Shown in Class: Enola Gay and the Atomic Bombing of Japan

Excerpts: John Hersey, Hiroshima

Hiroshima: Ground Zero, 1945 [[link](#)]

FINAL EXAM
