



Professor Katherine R. Jewell, Ph.D.

Office: Miller 302

Office Hours: T 1-3:30 and W 10:30-12 and by appointment

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Course Description

In this course that explores America's entrance into the "modern era," we will discuss, consider, and document several themes including the shift from welfare capitalism to the welfare state; the transition of the federal government from resistance to worker organizing to supporting it; the evolution of diverse social worlds to homogenous mass culture, consumption, unionization, politics; the maturation of modern corporations and its consequences for consumer culture and how corporations were regulated and supported by the state; the redefinition of America's role in the world (the American century); and ongoing racial, gender, and cultural conflicts that play out in politics and popular culture.

Required Books

Colin Gordon, ed., *Major Problems in American History, 1920-1945* 2nd ed. (FSU bookstore)

Linked articles from the electronic syllabus and on Blackboard

The assigned movies via your streaming service of choice. I have posted a link to YouTube where you can rent the titles that are not in the public domain, and two are available in the library on

reserve on DVD (I've tried to select films that are readily available), but you may use whatever method you prefer, including but not limited to Amazon, Netflix, iTunes, etc.

A free account at wordpress.com.

Policies

Attendance: it's mandatory. Please notify all bosses, family members, and friends that you have a capstone course on Tuesdays from 11-12:15 and will be unavailable and not answering texts, phone calls, or emails during that time. A hybrid schedule allows us to dig deeply into the course content individual and as a group, but the downside is that if you miss one class it is akin to missing two in another class. If you have an illness, please notify me as soon as possible that you will not be in class so that I can adjust our plans accordingly, and we will discuss how to make up the missed work.

Email: is the best way to reach me. Please be aware that it may take me up to 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends to respond. If you do not hear back from me, it is likely that the answer is available on the syllabus. If your email issue takes more than a paragraph to explain, please come see me in my office hours.

In-Class Behavior: this is a seminar. It will by-and-large be an informal space and we will be working in pairs or groups frequently. Do not mistake this informality and creative space as a license to be unprofessional. Your fellow students are your colleagues and I expect you to conduct yourself as you would in a place of business, as if they were your coworkers. Respectful behavior means: no eating, no roaming around without purpose (if you need to use the restroom, please do so quietly), arriving on time and staying for the duration of class, no texting or taking phone calls, no surfing the web/facebook/twitter/whatever. Use common sense.

Late Policy: Late papers and assignments will only be accepted by prior arrangement. Late work will receive a penalty of one-third grade deduction per day late (i.e. an A becomes an A- after one day, and so on).

Grading: All grading is done using FSU's 4.0 scale. If you receive a numerical/percentage grade (e.g. 88%), it will be calculated using the corresponding GPA (3.3).

Fitchburg State encourages the full participation of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of campus living and learning. To support access and inclusion, Fitchburg State offers reasonable accommodations to students who have documented disabilities (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, sensory, etc.). If you require accommodations for this class, please provide me with a copy of your Accommodation Agreement as soon as possible so that we can discuss

Grading Policy

Grades are awarded on a numerical scale as follows:

4.0	A	95 – 100
3.7	A-	92 – 94
3.5	A-/B+	89 – 91
3.3	B+	86 – 88
3.0	B	83 – 85
2.7	B-	80 – 82
2.5	B-/C+	77 – 79
2.3	C+	74 – 76
2.0	C	71 – 73
1.7	C-	69 – 70
1.5	C-/D+	67 – 68
1.3	D+	64 – 66
1.0	D	60 – 63
0.0	F	0 – 59
	IN	Incomplete

your specific needs. Any information that you share with me will be held in the strictest confidence, unless you give me permission to do otherwise. If you require academic accommodations but do not have an Accommodation Agreement, contact Disability Services a.s.a.p. to establish your eligibility: www.fitchburgstate.edu/disability or 978-665-4020.

Assignments

Weekly Memos - due each FRIDAY by 5pm (after that week's lecture/discussion)

(20%) 4 Movie Analyses (600-1000 words)

For each week I have added a “Watch” category that lists a movie to watch. In our online component of the course, students will examine the evolution of American cinema in relationship to the broader themes of the course. In these posts, read the film in context; consider its artistic merits, themes, story, and production in light of the culture of Hollywood at the time and what you think American audiences (of different types) were interested in seeing when it was released. How does the film reflect other events or developments that you have learned about in the course and readings? Be sure to make specific connections and use examples. You may select which films you wish to write about, as with the articles below, but you need to read/watch all the assignments (see later note).

(20%) 4 Article Annotations (600-1000 words)

Each week on the syllabus I have listed some supplemental articles. Your task each week you elect to fulfill this requirement, in addition to the assigned readings for class, is to read one of the assigned articles after lecture/discussion that week and explain:

- The article's argument
- What you found notable about the evidence used
- How it compares/contrasts or adds additional insight into the broad topic covered in class

When professors put courses together, they have to make a lot of decisions about what to include. This is your opportunity to explain an event, concept, development, controversy, etc., that you think should be included in course content, or to add a new perspective into what has been covered.

If you do the math, you will note that there are TWELVE topics that we cover, which means you can skip FOUR weeks of writing...but be strategic: look at all your courses and plan out which weeks you will skip in advance, perhaps saving one for an unexpected illness or event. Even for the weeks you do not produce a memo, you are still responsible for having done the reading(s) and watching the movies.

Grading: These posts will be graded on a simple 0-4 scale, like a GPA. If you do not perform as well as you wish, you may complete extra posts to raise your grade (i.e. post on the four weeks

Learning Outcomes: connecting primary sources to historical contexts and arguments; analyzing the features of art, media, and other primary sources; summarizing arguments and suggesting connections; deconstructing essays and uses of evidence; evaluating other students' work using set standards; recording conceptual information from lectures and synthesizing main points.

Wordpress Skills: tagging, categorization, image/media insertion, linking, writing for the web

Papers

(20%) Film Analysis: Each week I will have a suggested film to watch on your own time. Take one of the films you have watched for class (or another film from the time period of your choosing) and put it into context, analyzing its themes, production, artistic modes, styles, etc., to shed light on the cultural politics and values of America at the time it was produced. You may turn in this paper any time during the semester, but if you turn it in before Week 12, you will have a chance to rewrite it to receive a better grade. This analysis should be 1200-1500 words and make reference to the relevant readings, as well as to the supplemental readings about Hollywood in the era of our course.

I will hand out some guiding questions and ideas for the movie analysis papers in week 2.

(30%) Take Home Final: Guided Research Paper, New Deal Mapping Entry, Thematic Exploration, or Name this Course (more information to be handed out in class)

Learning Outcomes: organizing arguments and evidence into a convincing narrative; conducting detailed and nuanced reading of evidence (primary sources); incorporating expert testimony and research to support an argument;

In-Class Discussion (10%)

You must be present and sentient to receive credit, but to receive a good grade you must demonstrate your preparedness for class by speaking: this means responding to questions, asking questions, participating in small group work, being attentive (i.e. not texting on your phone, getting up and wandering off), and taking notes.

Learning Outcomes: articulation of ideas and opinions in public; listening to other points and formulating questions; sight reading of evidence and constructing intelligent responses and connections

Schedule and Readings

For background and to provide additional context to what you learn in class, I suggest you review chapters 20-24 in the online textbook, American Yawp (www.americanyawp.com).

9/8/15 - Introduction: The Modern Age

9/15/15 - Country and City and Race/Ethnicity in the 1920s

Reading Due for Class Discussion: Gordon, Ch. 6 documents 1-9. MacLean, "The Class Anxieties of the Ku Klux Klan" in Gordon, Ch. 6

Supplemental Reading for Wordpress Post: Ngai, "Nationalism and Immigration in the 1920s," or Montejano, "The Mexican Problem" essay in Gordon, Ch. 6

Watch: *Birth of a Nation* (1915) ([archive.org](#)); alternative, *Metropolis* (both are epic

9/22/15 - Politics in the New Era

Reading Due for Class Discussion: Gordon, Ch. 2 documents 7 and 8; Ch. 3 documents 3-9. Halpern, "Welfare Capitalism in Packinghouses" and Alice Kessler-Harris, "The Uneasy Relationship between Labor and Women" in Gordon, Ch. 3

Supplemental Reading for Wordpress Post: Hawley, "Herbert Hoover and the 'Associational State'" or Ladd-Taylor, "Maternalism, Feminism, and the Politics of Reform in the 1920s" essay in Gordon, Chapter 2

Watch: *The Immigrant* (1917) (YouTube); *The Kid* (1921) (YouTube)

9/29/15 - The New Economy and the Culture of Consumption

Reading Due for Class Discussion: Gordon, Ch. 4, documents 1-6, 8. Glickman, "The Politics of Consumption in the 1920s" and Marchand, "The Culture of Advertising" in Gordon, Ch. 4

Supplemental Reading for Wordpress Post: excerpt from Beth Bailey, *From Back Porch to Front Seat*

Watch: *I'm No Angel* (1933) ([online](#)) ([and this overview of pre-code Hollywood](#))

10/6/15 - Causes of the Great Depression

Reading Due for Class Discussion: Gordon, Ch. 7 documents, 1-6. Himmelberg, "Understanding the Depression" essay in Gordon, Ch. 7

Supplemental Reading for Wordpress Post: excerpt, Lisabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal*

Watch: *The Public Enemy* (1931) ([YouTube for \\$2.99](#))

10/13/15 - Americans in Economic Catastrophe

Reading Due for Class Discussion: Gordon, Ch. 9 documents 1-5; Ch. 10 documents 1-6. Milkman, Women's Work in Hard Times, Gordon Ch. 10; Chauncey, "The Campaign Against Homosexuality," Gordon Ch. 10

Supplemental Reading for Wordpress Post: Reagan, "Reproductive Practices and Politics" Gordon, Ch 10

Watch: *It Happened One Night* (1934) ([YouTube for \\$2.99](#)) and read [The Motion Picture Production Code \(1930\)](#) (*this code began to be regulated in 1934; after 1930 it was voluntary, see previously posted article [here](#)*)

10/20/15 - Dr. New Deal

Reading Due for Class Discussion: Gordon, Ch. 9, documents 6, 7; Ch. 10 documents, 1-4. Conkin, “A New Deal for Agriculture,” essay in Gordon, Ch. 9; Katznelson, “When Affirmative Action Was White,” essay in Gordon, Ch. 11

Supplemental Reading for Wordpress Post: Kennedy, “What the New Deal Did,” or Linda Gordon, “Men, Women, and Assumptions of American Social Provision” in Gordon, Ch. 11

Watch: *The Gold Diggers* (1933) ([YouTube for \\$2.99](#))

10/27/15 - Americans and Reforming Industrial Capitalism

Reading Due for Class Discussion: Gordon, Ch. 11 documents, 5-8; Ch. 12 documents 1-7. Faue, “Gender and Community in the Minneapolis Labor Movement” and Honey, “Race and Unionism: The CIO in the South” in Gordon, Ch. 12

Supplemental Reading for Wordpress Post: Horowitz, “Organizing the Packing Houses” in Gordon, Ch. 12

Watch: *Modern Times* (1936) ([YouTube](#))

11/3/15 - The Unraveling of Reform?

Reading Due for Class Discussion: Gordon, Ch. 13 documents, 1-9. Brinkley, “Dissidents and Demagogues,” and Gordon, “Business vs. the New Deal”

Supplemental Reading for Wordpress Post: Michael Denning, “Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Walt?: Disney's Radical Cartoonists,” in *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (London and New York: Verso, 1997), 403-422. ([link here](#))

Watch: *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939) ([archive.org](#))

11/10/15 - American Foreign Policy in the Interwar Years

Reading Due for Class Discussion: Gordon, Ch. 8 documents, 1-8. Costigola, “Foreign Policy and Cultural Expansion” and Rosenberg, “The Dilemmas of Interwar Foreign Policy”, and Cathal J. Nolan, “‘Bodyguard of Lies’: Franklin Roosevelt and Defensible Deception in World War II” in Nolan, ed., *Ethics and Statecraft*. (available [here](#)) —Nolan is also available for your Wordpress post, but I want to discuss it in class.

Watch: *The Great Dictator* (1940) ([YouTube](#))

11/17/15 - Dr. Win the War

Reading Due for Class Discussion: Gordon, Ch. 14 document 1, Ch. 15 documents, 1-3, 5, 6. Sherry, “Mobilization and Militarization” and Brinkley, “World War II and American Liberalism” in Gordon, Ch. 15

Supplemental Reading for Wordpress Post: excerpt from Paul Kennedy, *Engineers of Victory* (pdf)

Watch: *Casablanca* (1942) ([YouTube](#) and elsewhere for \$2.99 and on reserve in the library)

11/24/15 - Final Papers Workshop

12/1/15 - Americans at War

Reading Due for Class Discussion: Gordon, Ch. 14 documents 2-7. Westbrook, "Fighting for the Family," and Milkman, "Redefining Women's Work" in Gordon, Ch. 14

Supplemental Reading for Wordpress Post: Mark H. Leff, "The Politics of Sacrifice on the American Home Front in World War II," *Journal of American History* 77 (March 1991), 1296-1318. (find through the library's research databases, try JSTOR)

Watch: *The Best Years of Our Lives* (on reserve at the library or available on iTunes for rent and Amazon)

12/8/15 - Conclusion: The American Century

TBA

Final Exam Date - Final Papers Due. Roaring Twenties Costume Ball.