**Cultural History of the United States 1877 to the Present**

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**Course Description**
This course surveys American history from the era of Reconstruction to the present from a cultural perspective. The most important challenge of the semester is to help you understand historical development from a cultural perspective. For too long students have learned to think of the United States as a self-contained entity with an exceptional history and culture. This course will demonstrate how important transnational exchanges, cultural encounters, and cultural transfers from one place to another are for historical development, and how the cultural fabric of the United States is made up of various strands. As a result, students will be expected to broaden their minds and look at our history from a different perspective than most traditional survey courses.

We teach history not as a record of facts that you need to memorize and regurgitate on an exam, but as an on-going, developmental process open to argumentation and debate through evidential interpretation; although facts are important, they are not the only goal of this course. Not only will you gain a firm grasp of some important concepts and events, but your cognitive and critical thinking skills will be dramatically improved at the end of this course. Learning to think, read, and write analytically about American history, then, should be your primary goals. Class discussions, readings, and examinations will provide opportunities to hone your skills in these areas.

**Learning Objectives Relating to Cultural History**
- Students will be able to define culture
- Students will be able to explain the importance of history and cultures to group identity and the construction of identities
- Students will understand the importance of ritual/material culture to identity
- Students will be able to explain why cultures are not static
- Students will be able to explain why and how culture and economic power intersect
- Students will be able to explain what it means to bridge a culture
- Students will be able to identify and explain the significance of important “cultural brokers”
- Students will understand the concepts of “assimilation” and “authenticity”
- Students will be able to explain American cultural expansionism

**Cultural History Book Review Assignment**
First, choose a book that interests you. It does not matter if you choose a biography, a monograph (a book about a particular subject based on primary sources and original research), or a synthesis (a book about a broad subject that is based more on secondary sources). Pick any interesting book relating to cultural history from the bibliography below.

Now, as you read through the book, make sure that you are in a comfortable place that will allow you to read and take notes. Take notes as you proceed through the entire book. Remember, introductions are usually the most important part of any book. Authors usually lay out their major arguments and their method of investigating evidence in their intros, so do NOT just flip through it quickly. Spend some time with the introduction and make sure you are comfortable with where the argument is going and what kind of evidence the author will be using.
Once you are done reading the book, you are ready to begin the writing process. Don’t just quickly jump to the keyboard yet. It helps if you sit down and think about what you just read for a moment. You should try to distill what the author’s major objective was in writing this work, and try your best to determine whether he/she made a convincing argument. By doing this beforehand, you will have a good idea of where you want your review to go.

When it comes to writing you should follow a set formula. In your first paragraph you should mention what the book plans to cover and the sources it will use to do so. Here is an example:

*Joan Jacobs Brumberg’s book* The Body Project (1997) *examines how women have experienced their transition into womanhood from the 1830s to the present. Investigating girls’ and women’s diaries, Brumberg attempts to reconstruct the way women experienced menarche (their first menstruation) and how they thought about their own bodies.*

Next, summarize the author’s argument throughout the body of the book. You may choose to break it down chapter by chapter, or simply pick out key themes or arguments that run throughout the book. When writing this section, make sure that you keep the author as the focus of this review. This means that you should be calling the reader’s attention to the fact that the author is constructing an argument throughout this work. Remember, books are not written “naturally” and evidence does not simply order itself organically for someone to “uncover.” An historian must assemble the evidence in a way that makes sense. To remind the reader of this you should sprinkle in phrases such as “[the author] asserts that,” or “[the author] notes that” or “[the author] details,” etc.

In your conclusion, try your best to evaluate the work **and discuss how the work relates to the cultural phenomena and themes that we have been exploring throughout the semester.** Obviously you are not an expert in the field of cultural history, but that does not mean you can’t assess whether the author’s argument(s) was/were convincing. Do your best! Have fun.

**COURSE UNITS (IN ORDER OF DISCUSSION)**

Each course unit includes possible heading topics and a list of primary and secondary material for each individual professor to choose from to create a course with a cultural emphasis.

**Unit 1: The Postbellum South: Society and Culture**

“Race Relations 1865 to 1910”
“The Blues”
“WEB DuBois vs. Booker T. Washington”
“Ida B. Wells-Barnett”
“Martin Dulaney and Pan-Africanism”
“Black Communism”


**Secondary Sources:**

**Primary Sources:**
- Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery: An Autobiography* (1907). Available Online: [http://books.google.com/books?id=xN45ZsUMgKEC&printsec=frontcover&dq=up+from+slavery&source=bl&ots=KpKKEkXS1r&sig=epAp16BI3DMGPlIoPS2y8CSi9Is&hl=en&sa=X&ei=QAkkUpOPNYPN2AWz1DoAw&ved=0CEAQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=xN45ZsUMgKEC&printsec=frontcover&dq=up+from+slavery&source=bl&ots=KpKKEkXS1r&sig=epAp16BI3DMGPlIoPS2y8CSi9Is&hl=en&sa=X&ei=QAkkUpOPNYPN2AWz1DoAw&ved=0CEAQ6AEwAg#v=onepage&q&f=false)
- Martin Dulaney Speech, “Political Destiny of the Colored Race on the American Continent,” August 24, 1854 in Greensberg

**Unit 2: Industrialization & Its Cultural Impact**

“Massive Eastern European/Asian Immigration & Assimilation Process”

“Urban Encounters”
- Chinatown
- Settlement Houses
- Vaudeville

“The American Dream”
- Social Darwinism and High Culture
- Horatio Alger and Popular Culture

“Antimodernism”
- Arts & Crafts Movement (self sufficiency and taste for authenticity)
- Orientalism in Painting (Revulsion & Attraction)
- “Old West” Dime Novels
- Hunting and Fishing
- Boy Scouts and the frontiersman ethic
- Environmental Movement
“Wizard of Oz and Populism”
“Transatlantic Elite”
“Crisis of Masculinity”
- Rise of Competitive Individual and Team Sports

*Cultural Brokers: Jane Addams, Edwin Weeks, Henry James, John Singer Sargent, Theodore Roosevelt*

**Secondary Sources:**

**Primary Sources:**
- Wizard of Oz
- Paintings of American Orientalists
Unit 3: Transforming the American West

“Cultural Clash over land”
“Indian Boarding Schools”
“Ghost Dance Movement”
“Hardening Perceptions of Natives (Assimilation to Exclusion)”
“Victory of the Reservation System”
“Global Migrations to the West”

Cultural Brokers: Sitting Bull, Charles Eastman, Zitkala-Sa

Secondary Sources:
- Film: Geronimo: An American Legend (1993)
- Film: The Only Good Indian (2009)
- Documentary Film: Our Spirits Don’t Speak English (2008)
-Documentary Film: *We Were Children* (2011) Canadian boarding school experiences
-Film: *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (2007)

**Primary Sources:**

-Colin G. Calloway (ed.), *Our Hearts Fell to the Ground: Plains Indian Views of How the West Was Lost* (Boston: Bedford St. Martin’s Press, 1996), Ch 8 “Talking to the Peace Commissioners: The Treaty of Medicine Lodge, 1867” and Ch 12 “Attending the White Man’s Schools.”

**Unit 4: Gilded Age Politics**

“Populist Party”

- Intellectual Roots from Europe: concept of Nationalization emanates from Karl Marx
- Interracial Cooperation in the South

*Culture Brokers: Tom Watson, James Weaver, Frances Willard, William Jennings Bryan*

**Secondary Sources:**


**Primary Sources:**

Unit 5: The Progressive Era
“Understanding Endemic Poverty”
“Social Reform Modeled Upon British & German Ideas”
“Eugenics Movement”
“Native American voices”
“Changing Landscape for Women: legally, socially, politically, and culturally”
“The Great Migration (1910-1930)”

Cultural Brokers: Alice Paul, Lucy Stone, Charles Eastman, Narcissa Owen, Jacob Riis

Secondary Sources:

Primary Sources:
-Narcissa Owen, *Memoirs of Narcissa Owen, 1831-1907*

Unit 6: American Imperialism
“Spanish American War”
- African-American Perspectives & Experience
- Filipino & Cuban Views
- American Orientalism & the Philippines
“Pacific Entanglements and the Boxer Rebellion”
“Hemispheric Domination”
“Mexican Revolution and American Intervention”
“Filipino and Mexican/Latin American Immigration & Identity”
“American Businesses & Mass Culture Go Global”
“American Female Imperialism”
“American Anthropologists Go Global”

Cultural Brokers: Emilio Aguinaldo, William Howard Taft, the Thomasites (i.e. - American teachers in the Philippines), May French-Sheldon, Menelik, the Japanese Navy

Secondary Sources:
- Thomas Bender, Nation Among Nations: America’s Place in World History (Hill & Wang, 2006), Ch 4.
- Allan Punzalan Isaac, American Tropics: Articulating Filipino America (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).
- Emily S. Rosenberg, Spreading the American Dream: American Economic & Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945 (Hill & Wang, 1982).
**Primary Sources:**
- Rudyard Kipling, “White Man’s Burden”
- George Harvey Ralphson, *Boy Scouts in the Philippines; or, The Key to the Treaty Box* (1911). Available Online: http://books.google.com/books?id=6hZk2GGK348C&printsec=frontcover&dq=boy+scouts+in+the+philippines&source=bl&ots=oCD2K6ZVx7&sig=qggZ6GbRKZpgZcDGKV0osyxzTW8&hl=en&sa=X&ei=g3koUKbBJefe2AXd64DYCA&ved=0CDMQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=&f=false
- George Harvey Ralphson, *Boy Scouts in Mexico; or, On Guard with Uncle Sam* (1911). Available Online: http://books.google.com/books?id=K2wvuu4BYHgC&printsec=frontcover&dq=boy+scouts+%2B+mexico&source=bl&ots=Dwrcv3iOa7&sig=2Y0ScT0osVmTqnLIfOWlsllib4&hl=en&sa=X&ei=an0oUIvADl6rAGN34CIDA&ved=0CDsQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=&f=false
- Carlos Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart* (1946)

**Unit 7: World War I**

“Committee on Public Information”
“African Americans’ Experience”
“German American Ambivalence”
“Colonial Forces on the Western Front”
“Chinese Workers on the Western Front”
“Women and War”


**Secondary Sources:**
- Santanu Das (ed.), *Race, Empire and First World War Writing* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).
- Film: *Emma Goldman: American Experience*
Unit 8: The 1920s
“Rise of Professional Sports”
“Hollywood: Flappers & Sheiks”
“Global Fashion and Coco Chanel”
“Advertising hits its stride”
“Harlem Renaissance”
“Jazz Culture”
“Dada”
“The Lost Generation”
“Americanization efforts: at home & abroad”
- Immigration Crackdown
“Scopes Trial”

Cultural Brokers: Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, James Johnson, Zora Neale Hurston, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong

Secondary Sources:
-William A. Shack, Harlem in Montmartre: A Paris Jazz Story Between the Great Wars (University of California Press, 2001).
-Jackson Lears, Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America (Basic Books, 1995), Parts I & II.
-Jeffrey E. Mirel, Patriot Pluralism: Americanization Education and European Immigrants (Harvard University Press, 2010).

Primary Sources:
Unit 9: Transatlantic Connections and the Great Depression

“Causes of the Depression”
- Atlantic Phenomenon
- Environmental Factors (Dust Bowl)
“Art, Film, Music, Literature of the Depression”
“New Deal and the Arts (Federal Theatre Project & WPA supporting artists)”
“Hobo Culture”
“Bridging Class/Race Divides”
- Perceptions of the Poor
- Migrant Agricultural Workers Experiencing Jim Crow
- Deportation of Mexican Workers
“Children’s Culture”
“Hollywood Reacts to European Extremism”
“Transatlantic Influences”
- Americans in France
- American Travellers in Russia

Cultural Brokers: Huey Long, Charles Lindbergh, Gertrude Stein

Secondary Sources:
- Karen Kuo, East is West Is East: Gender, Culture, and Interwar Encounters between Asia and
- Paul Hollander, Political Pilgrims: Western Intellectuals in Search of the Good Society (1990 or 1998)
- Donald Worster, Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s (Oxford University Press, 2004).
- Film: Wild Boys of the Road (1933)

**Primary Sources:**
- Film: Wild Boys of the Road (1933)

**Unit 10: World War II**
“Japanese-American experience at Home”
“Orientalism in Anti-Japanese Propaganda”
“Increase in Female Participation in Economy”
“Double V Campaign”
“Bracero Program”
“Zoot Suit Riots”
“Haile Selassie”

*Cultural Brokers: A. Philip Randolph, Bayard Rustin, The Big Three, Haile Selassie I*

**Secondary Sources:**
- Cornelius L. Bynum, A. Philip Randolph and the Struggle for Civil Rights (University of Illinois Press, 2010), Part IV.
- Theodore M. Vestal, The Lion of Judah in the New World: Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia
and the Shaping of Americans’ Attitudes toward Africa (Praeger, 2011).


Primary Sources:
- Dr. Seuss Went to War.
  http://libraries.ucsd.edu/specoll/dswenttowar/
- Ansel Adams’s Photographs of Japanese-American Internment at Manzanar.
  http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/manz/
- Pro-Soviet Films: The North Star (1943), Mission to Moscow (1943), Song of Russia (1944).

Unit 11: The Cold War
“Cold War Culture: U.S. and Soviet Perspectives”
- U.S. focus on standard of living and consumption (embrace of rebelliousness within certain parameters)
- S.U. focus on collectivism (conformity and Gulags)
- Property
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Sport & Olympics
- Cultural Competitions: Van Cliburn
- Radio Free Europe
- Rock n’ Roll
- Information Flows and the average Soviet Russian

“Science Fiction/Comic Books”
“Ayn Rand and Hollywood”
“Education and Military/Space Spending”
“Proxy Wars from Korea to Afghanistan and Their Fallout”

Secondary Sources:
- Tom Engelhardt, The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusionment of a Generation rev ed. (University of Massachusetts, 2007).
- Choi Chatterjee and Beth Holmgren, Americans Experience Russia: Encountering the Enigma, 1917 to the Present (Routledge, 2013).

**Primary Sources:**
- James Baldwin, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953)
- James Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues” (1957)
- Carlotta Lanier’s Memoir
- Cold War Comic Books:
  - Invincible Iron Man, Vol. 1 (Tales of Suspense, 42,46, and 50)
    
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWeZ5SKXvj8&feature=related

**Unit 12: Colonial Independence Movements, Civil Rights, and Countercultures**

“Influence of Colonial Independence Movements”
“Liberation Theology and the Evolution of African American Thought Away from Victimization”
“Students for a Democratic Society”
“Mexican American Civil Rights Movement”
“Asian American Civil Rights Movement”
“Women’s Rights”
“American Indian Movement”
“Disability Rights Movement”
“Gay Rights Movement”
“Interactions between different Civil Rights Movements & between AIM and Leftists”
“American Counter-Cultural Influence Abroad”

Cultural Brokers: Bob Marley, The Beats, James Baldwin, Franz Fanon, Jimmie Durham, Russell Means, Harvey Milk, Martin Luther King, Ellen DeGeneres, Robert Kennedy, Cesar Chavez, Desi Arnaz, Mary Tyler Moore, Gloria Steinem, Jane Fonda

Secondary Sources:
-Thomas Adam, *Intercultural Transfer and the Making of the Modern World: Sources and
Contexts (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 111-134.
-Film: The Reconstruction of Asa Carter (2010).

Primary Sources:
-James Baldwin, Giovanni’s Room (Dial Press, 1956)
-Martin Luther King Jr., “Letter from a Birmingham Jail,” Available Online: http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Articles_Gen/Letter_Birmingham.html
-Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (Grove Press, 2005).
-Anne Moody, Coming of Age in Mississippi (Delta, 2004).

Unit 13: The Rise of Transatlantic Conservatism
“The Backlash against Multiculturalism and Postmodernism”
“Evangelical Revival”
“Libertarian Revival & the Triumph of the Individual over Society”
“American Thought & Policies Influencing Britain”
“Reagan’s Racial Rhetoric Exacerbates Racial/Cultural/Class Divides”
“Cultural Hubris Reignited After Vietnam”

Political/Cultural Brokers: Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, Angela Merkel, Nicolas Sarkozy

Secondary Sources:

**Primary Sources:**
- Film: *Do the Right Thing* (1989)

**Unit 14: Globalization and American Culture: 1970s to the Present**
“Sports/Sporting Culture”
“Women Embrace Male Rauch Culture”
“U.S. Musical Influence”
“U.S. Scientific/Psychological Influence”
“U.S. Corporate Exploitation”
“U.S. Cultural Tastes Driving Drug Wars and Sex Trafficking”
“Increasing Gaps in Wealth Creating Social/Spatial/Cultural Divides”
- WTO Protests
- Occupy Movement
“NAFTA and Recent Mexican Migration”
“Middle East Migrations”
“Far East Migrations”
“Native American Experience”
“Americanized “Others” return to the land of their ancestors”

*Cultural Brokers: Hillary Clinton, Michael Jordan, Benazir Bhutto, U2, Tupac Shakur, Lady Gaga, PSY*

**Secondary Sources:**
- Theresa Alfaro-Velcamp, *So Far from Allah, So Close to Mexico: Middle Eastern Immigrants in Modern Mexico* (University of Texas Press, 2007).
- Rabab Abdulhadi, Evelyn Alsultany, and Nadine Naber (eds.), *Arab & Arab America Feminisms: Gender, Violence, and Belonging* (Syracuse University Press, 2011).

**Primary Sources:**
- Amartya Sen, A World Not Neatly Divided (Nov. 23, 2001); in Katharine J. Luald, *Sources of the Making of the West: Peoples and Cultures, A Concise History, Volume II* (Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2007), 242-244.
- Film: *Smoke Signals* (1998)
- Film: *Skins* (2002)
- Film: *Quinceanera* (2006)