

# US History II

## Course Text

Brinkley, Alan. *The Unfinished Nation: A Concise History of the American People*, 8th edition, McGraw-Hill, 2016. ISBN: 9780073513331

## Course Description

This course provides an overview of the history of the United States and its effects on American society from Reconstruction following the Civil War to the post-9/11 era. Students apply historical research skills to major themes in American history and evaluate the successes and failures of various Reconstruction plans. Factors that led to the rise of Populism, American expansionist policy, and the development of the Progressive movement are identified, and the effects on American society are discussed. Students investigate the causes of World War I and analyze the social and economic developments that characterized the period between World War I and the Great Depression. Factors that lead to the Great Depression, World War II, and the Cold War are examined, and the major economic, social, and diplomatic developments of the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations are investigated. The causes, events, and consequences of the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s are examined, as well as U.S. involvement in Vietnam and the impact of the war on American society. The major domestic and international developments of the Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, and the first Bush administrations are analyzed and assessed, as is the significance of major domestic and international developments since 1990.

## Course Objectives

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- Apply historical research skills to major themes in American history since the end of the Civil War.
- Evaluate how various Reconstruction plans succeeded or failed.
- Describe and assess the growth and changes that took place in the South and the West following the Civil War.
- Analyze the factors involved in the rise of corporations and heavy industry in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and assess the effects of these trends on American society in general and workers in particular.
- Explain the growth of cities in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and assess the impact of this growth on urban life.
- Identify the factors that led to the rise of Populism in the 1880s and 1890s and assess the impact of Populism on American society.
- Investigate the causes and consequences of American expansionist policy in the 1880s and 1890s.
- Explain the development of the Progressive movement and assess the impact of the movement at the local, state, and national levels.
- Investigate the causes of World War I, examine U.S. reasons for intervention, and evaluate the consequences of the war and the subsequent peace.
- Analyze and assess the social and economic developments that characterized the period between World War I and the Great Depression.

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- Explain the causes of the Great Depression and evaluate the successes and failures of the New Deal as a response to the Great Depression.
- Examine the causes of World War II, describe the course of the war, and assess the consequences of the war for the U.S. and the world.
- Explain the causes, events, and consequences of the Cold War, including the Korean War.
- Investigate and assess the major economic, social, and diplomatic developments of the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations.
- Explain the causes, events, and consequences of the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.
- Analyze and assess the significance of the major domestic and international developments of the Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, and the first Bush administrations.
- Deduce and evaluate the significance of the major domestic and international developments since 1990.
- Examine U.S. involvement in Vietnam and assess the impact of the war, the youth counterculture, environmentalists, minority groups, feminists, and gay movements of the 1960s and 1970s on American society.

## Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites to take U.S. History II but StraighterLine does recommend that students complete U.S. History I first.

## Important Terms

In this course, different terms are used to designate tasks:

- Proctoring: all final exams require proctoring which can be completed conveniently from your home. A webcam is required.
- Tutoring: memberships include online tutoring for students to access with any content/subject related questions in the place of faculty. If your tutor is not able to answer your questions please contact a student advisor.
- Review Activities: non-graded activities to test your knowledge of terms and glossary entries relevant to the topic's content.
- Homework: A non-graded assignment to assist you in practicing the skills discussed in a topic.
- Exam: A graded online test.

## Course Evaluation Criteria

StraighterLine provides a percentage score and letter grade for each course. See [Academic Questions](#) section in FAQ for further details on percentage scores and grading scale. A passing percentage is **70%** or higher.

If you have chosen a Partner College to award credit for this course, your final grade will be based upon that college's grading scale. Only passing scores will be considered by Partner Colleges for an award of credit.

There are a total of 1000 points in the course:

Topic	Assessment	Points Available
3	Graded Exam 1	125
7	Graded Exam 2	125
7	Midterm Exam	200
10	Graded Exam 3	125
14	Graded Exam 4	125
15	Final Exam	300
Total		1000

## Course Topics and Objectives

Topic	Topic	Subtopics	Objectives
1	Reconstruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Getting Reconstruction Underway</li> <li>Did Reconstruction Work?</li> <li>What Ended Reconstruction?</li> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the policies and practices of Reconstruction.</li> <li>Explain and evaluate the short- and long-term consequences of Reconstruction in the South.</li> <li>Identify the reasons and assess the consequences of abandoning Reconstruction.</li> </ul>
2	The New South and the Far West	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Making of the New South</li> <li>The Role of the West in American Life</li> <li>Conflict of Cultures: Native Americans and Settlers</li> <li>The Changing Frontier</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe and assess the economic, political, and social successes and failures of the "New South" in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.</li> <li>Distinguish between Americans' perceptions of the West and the reality of the West in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.</li> <li>Describe and assess the causes, events, players, and consequences of conflict with Native Americans in the West in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.</li> <li>Describe and explain the growth of mining, farming, and ranching in the West during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.</li> </ul>

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			<p>century and their ties to markets in the East.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze the conflict that arose among ranchers, miners, and farmers in the West during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.</li> </ul>
3	Industrial and Urban Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Growth of American Industry and Cities</li> <li>The Foundations of Modern American Capitalism</li> <li>The New Worker</li> <li>Urban Life and Culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and assess the arguments of critics and defenders of industrial capitalism.</li> <li>Explain the impact of demographic, technological, and financial influences on the growth of industry in the United States in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.</li> <li>Describe and explain the causes of urban growth in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.</li> <li>Analyze the consequences of urban growth in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.</li> <li>Assess the consequences of industrial growth in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.</li> </ul>
4	Politics and Empire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political Gridlock</li> <li>What Was Populism?</li> <li>The Debate Over Empire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and explain the political, social, and economic origins of Populism and evaluate the successes and failures of Populism.</li> <li>Analyze the political, economic, racial, and domestic factors that combined to create an expansionist foreign policy.</li> <li>Identify and analyze the causes, players, and consequences of the political stalemate that existed during the 1880s and 1890s.</li> </ul>
5	The Progressive Era	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Origins of Progressivism</li> <li>Local and State Reform</li> <li>National Reform</li> <li>Diplomacy in the Progressive Era</li> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and describe the influences that led to the development of the Progressive Reform movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.</li> <li>Describe and assess Progressive Reform efforts at the local and state levels.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the roles played by Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson in the Progressive Reform Movement at the national level.</li> <li>Describe and compare the diplomatic approaches of Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson and evaluate the results of their efforts.</li> <li>Identify and evaluate the successes and failures of the Progressive Reform Movement in the areas of women's suffrage, labor reform, temperance, immigration, and race relations.</li> <li></li> </ul>
6	The Great War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From Neutrality to Intervention</li> <li>America Goes to War</li> <li>The Unsettled Peace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the U.S. military and economic mobilization for World War I and assess the impact of intervention on the outcome of the war and on American society.</li> <li>Compare the U.S., French, and British proposals for a treaty to end World War I.</li> <li>Evaluate the positions of President Wilson and his opponents in the debate over the ratification of the Versailles Treaty and U.S. participation in the League of Nations.</li> <li>Explain the causes of World War I and the reasons for the U.S. declaration of neutrality and intervention.</li> </ul>
7	The New Era	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Time of Prosperity</li> <li>An Emerging Secular Culture</li> <li>What Caused the Great Crash and Depression?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and explain the importance of key developments, events, people, and groups in the period of prosperity before the Great Depression.</li> <li>Identify and assess the forces that supported and challenged the emerging secular culture of the 1920s.</li> <li>Analyze and evaluate the causes of the Great Crash and Depression.</li> </ul>

8	The Great Depression and the New Deal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Great Depression and the American People</li> <li>• What Was the New Deal?</li> <li>• Did the New Deal Succeed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze and assess the impact of the Great Depression on American families, farms, businesses, and industries.</li> <li>• Describe the responses of local and state officials in both the public and private sectors to this crisis.</li> <li>• Compare the First and Second New Deals and evaluate the successes and failures of the relief, recovery, and reform measures associated with each.</li> <li>• Assess the impact of the New Deal on American society.</li> </ul>
9	World War II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From Isolation to Involvement</li> <li>• The War at Home and Abroad</li> <li>• The World After the War</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze the reasons for American isolationism in the interwar period and its eventual involvement in World War II.</li> <li>• Identify and assess the importance of key events and people associated with the causes, course, and consequences of World War II.</li> <li>• Describe and explain the events that led to the Allies' victory over Germany, Italy, and Japan.</li> </ul>
10	The Cold War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why a Cold War?</li> <li>• The Cold War at Home and Abroad</li> <li>• A Police Action?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the origins of the Cold War.</li> <li>• Identify and assess the importance of key events, people, and groups related to the conditions and consequences of the Cold War, both in the United States and abroad.</li> <li>• Analyze the causes of the Korean War and describe and assess the consequences of U.S. involvement in that war.</li> </ul>
11	Affluence and Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Time of Plenty</li> <li>• Eisenhower: General to President</li> <li>• Camelot and the Great Society</li> <li>• The Push for Civil Rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the reasons for and consequences of the consumer economy's sustained growth in the years after World War II.</li> <li>• Evaluate the Eisenhower presidency in relation to the economy, other domestic issues, and foreign policy.</li> <li>• Evaluate the domestic and foreign policies of the Kennedy presidency.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the effectiveness of President Johnson's Great Society programs.</li> <li>Identify and explain the importance of key events, people, and groups connected to the struggle for civil rights of African Americans and analyze the causes, conditions, and consequences of the struggle.</li> </ul>
12	Vietnam Era	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Getting Involved in Vietnam</li> <li>Vietnam, the Home Front, and Detente</li> <li>Agendas for Change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the Vietnam policies of the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations before American intervention.</li> <li>Identify and explain the importance of key events, people, groups, conditions, and consequences of the Vietnam War.</li> <li>Assess President Nixon's policy of detente with the USSR and the People's Republic of China.</li> <li>Assess the significance of domestic events of 1968 on American society.</li> <li>Evaluate the effectiveness of Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, feminists, gays, environmentalists, and the youth countercultural movement in getting their various agendas met in the 1960s and 1970s.</li> </ul>
13	The Age of Limits and Promise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watergate and Its Aftermath</li> <li>The Ups and Downs of Ford and Carter</li> <li>Reagan and the Rise of the New Right</li> <li>G. H. W. Bush and the World</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain the Nixon administration's role in Watergate and assess the effects of Watergate on American society.</li> <li>Assess the effectiveness of the domestic and international policies and programs of the Ford and Carter administrations.</li> <li>Explain the rise of conservatism in the early 1980s.</li> <li>Assess the impact of the Reagan administration's domestic and international policies and programs.</li> <li>Identify and assess the successes and failures of President George H. W. Bush's</li> </ul>

			administration.
14	The Global Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Clinton Years</li> <li>• Diversity and Change</li> <li>• Terrorism in a Global Age</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and assess the domestic and international successes and failures of the Clinton administration.</li> <li>• Describe and evaluate the impact of major social, economic, environmental, and demographic trends during the 1990s and early 2000s.</li> <li>• Assess how the events on September 11, 2001, impacted the American people and the domestic and international decisions of the George W. Bush administration.</li> </ul>
15	Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and Final Assessment</li> </ul>