The University of North Texas

Department of History

HIST 2620.04—U.S. History to 1865

Fall 2025

Sage 116

T-TH, 12:30 to 1:20 p.m.

# Dr. Alex Mendoza

**Office: WH 260**

# Office Hours: T-TH 11:00 to 12:30 p.m.

**Email: alex.mendoza@unt.edu**

**TEACHING ASSISTANTS:**

* **Noah Barron NoahBarron@my.unt.edu**
* **Sergio Garcia SergioGarcia7@my.unt.edu**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course seeks to familiarize students with the major topics in American history from its discovery through Reconstruction. We will focus on diverse subjects including politics, race, gender, economic, and cultures, all the while attempting to understand how these historical events affected the lives of everyday citizens.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

* Identify, explain, and contextualized social, political, religious, and economic changes and themes during the pre-Columbian, early colonization, American Revolutionary, early Republic, Jacksonian Democracy, Westward expansion, and the Civil War periods in North America.
* Students will have a clear understanding of the role of slavery in U.S. history and its influence on all aspects of life.
* Evaluate the significance of key turning points in US history
* Identify major historical figures and key events in US history to 1865 and communicate their significance
* Analyze primary historical documents in order to understand complex ideas of contingency and social constructs

**ASSIGNED TEXTS:**

* *The American Yawp*. Free online: <https://www.americanyawp.com/> (on Canvas and simply online)
* Jennifer Jensen Wallach and Wesley Phelps, *Containing Multitudes: A Documentary Reader of US History*, Volume 1 (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2022)

**GRADING:**

Generally speaking, a grade of 90.00% corresponds to a borderline A- & 89.99% to a B+; 80% is the line between a B- & a C+ and so on. **Grades will not be curved in this course.**

* **Exams 60% (top 3)**
* **Quizzes (10) 10%**
* **Discussions (3) 15%**
* **Signature Assignment Essay 15%**

This course tries to maintain a strict reading/testing schedule. Students who have a difficult time reading or following schedules are encouraged to rethink about enrolling in this course.

**EXAMS:**

A total of four exams—three midterms and a final—will be administered during the semester. Each exam, including the final, will require that you answer 1 of 2 essay questions and a choice of IDs. Each exam will count as 15% of your grade. The top THREE exams will be averaged and count as **60 %** of your overall grade.

**QUIZZES:**

Every week there will be a multiple-choice quiz based on the assigned chapter in the *American Yawp* for that week. The quizzes will be administered on Canvas and you may use any books and/or notes you wish. You will have 30-minutes to complete each quiz. You will be allowed an unlimited number of attempts to complete each quiz. There will be a total of 14 quizzes during the semester, and the top 10 quiz grades will account for **10% of the overall grade**. Quizzes are due weekly according to the course schedule.

**DISCUSSION ASSIGNMENTS:**

There are three graded discussion assignments during the semester. Several primary (firsthand) documents have been uploaded by the instructor in the appropriate discussion forum (Discussion Forum #1, #2, #3, for the course. Students will be required to write a posting of approximately 200-words per assignment which should cover the questions posed. The discussions are worth **15%** of the overall grade.

**SIGNATURE ASSIGNMENT ESSAY:**

All students must write one short paper (about 750 words). Your answers will come from the assigned readings in *Containing Multitudes* textbook by Phelps and Wallach.

* Topic: Civil Rights Era

Your analytical essay constitutes **15%** of your grade. You will submit your essay on Canvas. A more detailed guide is forthcoming later this semester. Due date is:

**CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:**

I do not have a formal attendance policy. Having said that, research has shown that students who attend class are more likely to be successful. Research has shown that students who attend class are more likely to be successful. The knowledge and skills you will gain in this course highly depend on your participation in class learning activities. Because of that, I expect you to attend all class sessions unless you are ill or have a valid reason for missing. I plan to track class attendance to help me understand how and when students are engaging in the course.

**LATE WORK POLICY:**

All Canvas assessments, unless otherwise noted, are due at 11:59 p.m. on the date posted for each assignment.It is your responsibility to ensure that the assignment was submitted properly. Late assignments can be submitted by reaching out and requesting late work to be submitted. If you miss a quiz or discussion, the penalty is 10% each day after the due date (including weekends) until a week after the originally scheduled assessment date. Exams require documentation and a meeting with your assigned Teaching Assistant to schedule. Notice must be provided within 48 hours of the missed test. **No makeup assignments will be accepted after the last day of classes at UNT on December 04, 2025**

**MAKEUP POLICY:**

Exams may **NOT** be taken early. If you miss a test due to illness or another emergency, please email the professor and respectfully request a makeup. Makeups will be in a different format and question set than the original test. You must reach out within 48 hours of the originally scheduled exam. Please note that I drop one of the exam grades. We have a designated Makeup Day at the end of the semester but please keep makeups to documented absences and not performance-based attempts.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

The University of North Texas promotes the integrity of learning and embraces the core values of trust and honesty. Academic integrity is based on educational principles and procedures that protect the rights of all participants in the educational process and validate the legitimacy of degrees awarded by the University. In the investigation and resolution of allegations of student academic dishonesty, the University’s actions are intended to be corrective, educationally sound, fundamentally fair, and based on reliable evidence. Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003.

**ADA POLICY:**

The University of North Texas (UNT or University) does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission, treatment, or access to its programs or activities, nor in employment in its programs or activities. The University is committed to providing equal educational access for qualified students with disabilities in accordance with state and federal laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as Amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In addition, the University is committed to making all programs and activities sponsored by UNT accessible, as required by the Texas Accessibility Standards and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines. To this end, all academic units are willing to make reasonable and appropriate adjustments to the classroom environment and the teaching, testing, or learning methodologies in order to facilitate equality of educational access for persons with disabilities.

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

**USE OF CANVAS:**

The instructor will use UNT’s Canvas platform to distribute information throughout the semester. Lecture outlines, exam reviews, and announcements will all be found on the course Canvas page. Students must learn the process of accessing course information and quiz materials on specific dates. The burden of responsibility lies with the students. Canvas may not compute your class averages accurately. Please keep track of your own grades.

**STUDENT COMPORTMENT:**

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students’ opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the class environment and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT’s Code of Student Conduct (https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) to learn more.

**USE OF EMAIL**:

Feel free to e-mail me in regard to anything related to the class, the topic, or professional requests. Please do not e-mail me in regard to requests for extra credit. I will not respond to anything I deem inappropriate or unprofessional. I also retain the right to forward all such e-mails to university officials. Please use my university email address listed on page 1 of this syllabus. I do make some requests:

* + If you email me, please use a semblance of professionalism.
  + Please realize that I have multiple classes so be sure to tell me which class you are in.
  + Please use UNT email addresses (our filters may not deliver a private email address)
  + Please note that I do not check emails late into the evening or even on weekends.

**NOTE TAKING:**

You are expected to take notes during lectures, discussions, and, if applicable, videos. Lecture outlines and exam study guides will assist you in this process. However, it is not enough simply to copy the lecture outline—you must take notes in order to do well on exams. If you miss a class, check with your fellow students to see if someone will lend you their notes. The professor does not provide lecture notes.

**WHAT I EXPECT FROM YOU:**

* Keep up with the readings and the due dates.
* Please try not to be late to class. If there is a reason why you must be late, try to be quiet as you come in.
* Take all exams on the scheduled dates.

**WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM ME:**

* My lectures will be well-prepared and organized.
* I will strive to help you succeed in this class.
* I will see that your papers and exams are graded as promptly and accurately as possible.
* I will remain accessible throughout the semester and hold office hours regularly.

**POLICY STATEMENT: Please keep in mind that there are no assignments or extra credit opportunities to substitute for poor grades or non-attendance.**

**Professor Mendoza reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus. All changes will be announced to the class.**

**Schedule of Lectures and Readings (subject to change)**

# Date Lecture# Lecture Topic

**Week One: Course Introduction and Exploration**

**Aug**. 19 00 Introduction & Syllabus

21 01 Reconstruction **Yawp**, Chapter 15

**Week Two: Colonies**

Aug. 24 02 Railroads and Big Business **Yawp**, Chapter 16

Aug. 26 03 Workers and Labor

**Week Three: Changes**

Sep. 02 The West **Yawp**, Chapter 17

Sep. 0404 Immigration **Yawp**, Chapter 18

**Discussion 1 Due Date (Canvas)**

**Week Four: New Government**

Sep. 09 05 Populism **Yawp**, Chapter 20

Sep. 11 06 Progressives **Yawp**, Chapter 20

**Week Five: Turn of the Century**

Sep. 16 07 The Spanish American War**/**Review **Yawp**, Chapter 19

Sep. 18 **Exam I Due (Canvas)**

**Week Six: The Pinnacle of War**

Sep. 23 08 World War I **Yawp**, Chapter 21

Sep. 25 09 The 1920s **Yawp**, Chapter 22

**Week Seven: The 1930s**

Sep. 30 10 The Great Crash **Yawp**, Chapter 23

Oct 02 11 American Isolationism and WW II **Yawp**, Chapter 24

**23**

**Week Eight: War Clouds**

Oct. 07 12 War against the Axis **Yawp**, Chapter 24

Oct. 09 13 War at Home **Yawp**, Chapter 24

**Discussion 2 Due Date (Canvas)**

**Week Nine: World War II**

Oct.14 14 Ending the War: Atomic Bombs/Review **Yawp**, Chapter 24

Oct. 16 **Exam II (Canvas)**

**Week Ten: Cold War Era**

Oct. 21 15 The Cold War Abroad **Yawp**, Chapter 25

Oct. 23 16 The Cold War at Home **Yawp**, Chapter 25

**Week Eleven: The 1950s and 1960s**

Oct. 28 18 The 1950s **Yawp**, Chapter 26

Nov. 30 19 Civil Rights: Education & Segregation **Yawp**, Chapter 26

**Week Twelve: Vietnam**

Nov. 04 20 Vietnam: War and Society **Yawp**, Chapter 28

**Signature Assignment Essay Due Date**

Nov. 06 Review/Summary

**Week Thirteen:**

Nov. 11 **Discussion 3 Due Date (Canvas)**

Nov. 13 **Exam III (Canvas)**

**Week Fourteen: Reconstruction**

Nov. 18 21 The 1970s and 1980s **Yawp**, Chapter 29

Nov. 20 22 The Twenty-First Century **Yawp**, Chapter 30

**Week Fifteen: Thanksgiving**

**Nov. 24-28 Thanksgiving Holidays—UNT Closed**

**Week Sixteen: Summary**

Dec. 02 **Summary/Review Day**

Dec. 05 Makeup Day

# Final Exam

**Thursday December 11**

**10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

**(Check the UNT website for any updates)**