

# HISTORY 2620.004: The United States Since 1865



Spring 2026

Class Location: Life Sciences Building A117

Class Days: Monday/Wednesday/Friday 12pm to 12:50pm

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**Instructor:**

Dr. Manny A. Grajales

**Office Location:**

Wooten Hall, 241

**Office Hours:**

Tuesday 2pm to 3:30pm; Wednesday, 3pm to 4pm  
or by appointment

**Instructor's University Email:**

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Alexander Mayor

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**Course Materials:**

My intention is for materials to be cost-efficient for students. Required and recommended readings will be available online or through e-campus. **NOTE:** You do **NOT** have to buy American YAWP. The book is FREE online through Canvas or the website provided below.

**Required:**

- *The American Yawp*, Edited by Joseph Locke and Ben Wright: Stanford University Press. This book is free, available online at <http://www.americanyawp.com/>
- *Containing Multitudes: A Documentary Reader of the American Past*, Edited by Wesley G. Phelps and Jennifer Jensen Wallach. Arkansas: University of Arkansas Press, 2022. (E-Reader: Can be found at UNT Bookstore, Amazon, etc.)

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## Why History?

History is the sum total of human experience in all its complexity. It is also the only guide we have to the decisions that will shape our future. The study of history allows us to see parallels, analogies, and recurrent patterns, detect long-term trends and forces, and understand what is really different about the present. History shows us how past decisions shape and limit future options and how every facet of life is socially and culturally constructed. Equally important, history exposes us to the full richness of human experience and introduces us to fascinating individuals and events and to long-term processes that gradually transform our lives.

## Course Description

This course is designed to explore major issues in US History since 1865. We will trace several themes from the past century and a half to understand the political, social, economic, and cultural development of the United States since 1865. In this class, our focus is not just learning what happened but analyzing why things happened. Several basic questions will arise throughout the course: What major historical events impacted America's development as a nation during the last 150+ years? How does race, class, and region shape ideas of citizenship and identity? What events/figures contributed to the development of the United States' national self-image? In the process, students will learn to think critically about the past, and to evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of historical sources and incorporate it into a coherent argument.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Define key historical terms, individuals, ideas, events, and the significance of each in American history.
2. Draw direct connections between historical events and the consequential impact.
3. Critically analyze historical primary sources.
4. Apply the foundational knowledge of history to understanding present circumstances.
5. Identify the significance of why we study history.

## Course Assignments/Grading Breakdown

### Discussion Posts: (5 discussions, 20% total)

Throughout the semester, you will complete five discussion posts. Each discussion post will answer prompt questions in a blog-style post. The discussion responses you submit should all follow the same format and style. These should be 250-350 words and are meant to be written in a "blog style," as opposed to more formal writing. You must show your work (Citations) to demonstrate how you formed your idea or opinion.

The intention behind this is to map the *process* of learning and analyzing history--**therefore it should have a tone of personal reflection in addition to analysis.** Reflect on the content you've learned in this unit. Then, consider your position/experience and how you relate to this material (yes--you can use first-person). Though there is an overall informal tone to these posts,

your answers should employ critical thinking (as opposed to regurgitating material) and effectively apply reading and media sources from the unit's module within your overall analysis.

**Chapter Quizzes: (5 quizzes, 20% total)** Five quizzes will be assigned at different points of the semester in Canvas that focus on the materials you read for that specific chapter (for example, you will have a quiz assigned for Week 4 on Chapter 3). You will answer five questions that focus on the materials you read in American YAWP. The questions will not be about names and dates. Instead, questions will focus on concepts. **The quizzes will be set with opportunities to retry the quiz if you are not satisfied with the grade on your first attempt.**

**Primary Source Analysis: (10%)**

**At the end of week 11**, you will submit an essay that is between 700-800 words in length that answers the question asked using one or more primary sources from the relevant portion of the reader or the source(s) provided by your instructor. Your essay should contain a thesis or argument that answers the question and should use evidence from the source to support that argument. You may use your textbook, the additional reader, and resources in the module to complete this assignment. Further directions about this assignment will be provided in the Canvas course shell. **Note: This is an assignment you can start and work on throughout the semester. Please don't try to Speed run this (ex: wait until 90 minutes before the due date).**

**History in Visual Media/Popular Culture (20% total, two components)**

Historical depictions and themes are prevalent in popular culture. Whether visual or aural (Music), our first engagement with any type of history is through pop culture. For this project, I want you to choose a popular culture medium set in history or based on historical topics set within the chronological timeline of our course (1860s to 1990s) and write an essay that evaluates how the medium interprets historical themes, characters, and/or memory. Make sure your choice is not something you have to pay additional money for (use streaming services you already have, access to UNT library, etc). I will provide more details during the first week.

This Assignment has two components:

**Proposal, Due week 6: (5%)**

- You will submit a 100-200 words proposal with at least two secondary sources.
- More information on this will be available in Canvas.

**Final assignment, Due week 13: (15%)**

- Prompts for the different style types will be available in Canvas and explained during the first week of classes

**Exams: (3 exams, 10% each exam, 30% total)** Students will have three exams throughout the semester, as indicated in the syllabus. Each exam will cover assigned readings, lectures, class discussions, etc. Exams will consist of a short answer identification section and an essay. The written component affords students opportunities to discuss and analyze the historical context and significance of the themes discussed in class. Exams will be available on Canvas. After we

finish the last lecture of the unit, I will open the exam that day. From there, you will have five days to complete the exam online.

**NOTE:** The final exam will be optional, based on content from Chapters 25-29 instead of cumulative. More details on opting out of the final will be discussed during week 1.

## Grading

Grades for the semester will be determined according to the following breakdown. There will not be extra credit opportunities in class. Grades will be tabulated in Canvas for you:

Discussion Posts (5 total)	20%	Final Exam	10%
Quizzes (5 total)	20%	History in Popular Culture Proposal	5%
Primary Source Analysis	10%	History in Popular Culture Writing	
Exam 1	10%	Assignment	15%
Exam 2	10%		

The grading scale used for this course is as follows:

90% or more	A
80-89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
59 or less	F

## Course Expectations

The following are the basic expectations for success in this course.

- **Come to class prepared.** You must keep up with the assignments to perform well in this course. Do not hesitate to ask questions during lecture or after class.
- Quizzes, exams, and writing assignments must be completed on the scheduled due date, unless the student provides a valid, documented excuse. Absence on exam days will only be excused with appropriate documentation (e.g., doctor's note, letter from coach/Academic Advisor).
- All assignments can be discussed with the instructor by email or in person during office hours.
- **To pass this class, all assignments must be completed!**

**Attendance Policy:** Because this is a lecture course, your attendance and attention in class is expected. I urge you to arrive on time, pay careful attention to the lecture, and remain in class until you are dismissed. Attendance will be taken each day. If you arrive late, check with me or the TAs after class to ensure that you are not charged with absence. I follow the university policy regarding absences and will discuss this further on the first day. Appointments to see me regarding absences should be made outside of class, whether in person or through email. Please be aware of important dates on the Academic Calendar: Q-drop, Holidays/Reading Days, and final exam schedule.

**Why does attendance matter?** Attendance is expected to succeed in this class. Of course, you all have free will and can do what you will. However, good attendance will determine two things. First, potential bump up in your final grade if you are on the margins (for example, if you are at a 78 at the end of the semester but have good to perfect attendance, it will be bumped to an 80). Second, priority to make up assignments. If you're a ghost student that doesn't show up and then asks me to speed run your assignments on week 13 versus the person who has tried to actually show up and be present but was struggling to turn stuff in because, life, I'm giving priority to the person who shows up.

Big take away...just show up. If you are sick or have a university excused absence, inform me or the TAs with advance notice. For TAMS students, if you have events you need to attend, you still need to let me know. Student athletes, even if the admins send us stuff, those emails sometimes slip through the cracks. It's your responsibility to let me know you have to miss class for tournaments, games, community events, etc.

**Caregiver Responsibilities Policy:** Many students balance the pursuit of their education with the responsibilities of caring for children, other family members, or community members. If you run into challenges that require missing class, or if your caregiving responsibilities interfere with meeting a deadline, contact me and we can discuss ways to support your learning with more flexibility.

**Late Work Policy:** I understand life happens: Work, family, other assignments, the realization that an assignment might have needed more time, etc. If you reach a point where you are freaking out about a deadline and the options that pop into your head include a sleepless night to finish (which might not be your best work), not submitting anything, or plagiarizing (example: copying from a website word for word, using an old assignment, using ChatGPT, etc), I'd rather you turn the assignment in late than get a zero.

Having said that, **all assignments have a 12-hour grace period after the set due date to still be submitted and counted as on-time.**

If you require an extension to submit the assignment late outside of the grace period, email me or talk with me after class to discuss the timeline and any late penalty that will be attached (if applicable). I ask you let me know about the need for an extension well in advance of the due date. However, I understand emergencies happen suddenly, and I will take that into account.

**\*Note on Citing for Discussion posts, Exams, other written assignments:**

I want you all to do outside research using UNT Libraries and other avenues. If you incorporate a source from outside of course materials, make sure to create bibliography at the end of your assignment listing those outside sources. However, if it is painfully obvious you used AI sources, it will be graded harshly based on the information offered or a Zero if confirmed.

\*Also, if you do not cite or your citations are blatantly incorrect, that will be 15 points off the assignment

**Communication with Instructor/Graduate Teaching Assistants:**

Please come to talk to me about any concerns, confusion, or issues that arise during the semester. If you are struggling with the class, need to talk out an idea about your paper, or need to talk about something, the times listed for office hours, making an appointment for office hours, or email are the best ways to communicate with me.

When emailing me or the TAs, ensure the following:

- 1) Properly address your professor (Professor Grajales, for example)
- 2) Use UNT emails only- other emails often go into spam/junk
- 3) Identify the course you are in by listing the course number in the subject line of the email
- 4) Identify yourself by giving me your entire name and your specific question or request
- 5) Ensure your email is professional in approach and language, especially if asking about grades, assignments, or something else
- 6) Ensure you address your professors appropriately (Hello, Professor Grajales, for example)
- 7) Ensure you respond that you have received the information you needed
- 8) If you need some help with writing emails to professors, UNT provides this handy Online Communication Tips page

**A few notes, guidelines, and suggestions:**

- Any discussion of grades must be done in person/Zoom during my office hours (or by appointment), as FERPA protocol dictates grades cannot be discussed over email.
- I will answer within 24 to 48 hours.
- Questions that can be found on the syllabus will receive lower response priority.
- Will there be extra credit? That depends on if there are events on campus that qualify. I will say this...actually showing up to class (minus if you are sick or personal matter) will actually help your grade...just an easter egg for later in the semester.
- If I hear nothing from you, I assume everything is fine... **Letting me know concerns early allows us to find a solution to the problem.**
- **Don't wait until Week 13 when options are limited. If you're struggling, reach out! I want you to succeed!**
- **NOTE on grading protocol for Written assignments:** After I return written assignments to you, there is a **mandatory 24-hour reflection** period before requesting a meeting. This allows you to read through and understand the comments made.

## Course Schedule

## **Syllabus Change Policy**

This syllabus is subject to change at the professor's discretion. However, any changes made will be communicated fully, with ample time to adjust.

## **Unit 1: End of Reconstruction to the Progressive Era** **(Read American YAWP Ch 15 through 18 for Unit 1)**

## Week 1 [Week of January 12<sup>th</sup>]

Introduction to class and expectations; Writing Tips/Learn about campus resources; What is History?

**Due: Establishing Community post, Sunday, January 18<sup>th</sup> (11:59pm)**

## Week 2 [Week of January 19<sup>th</sup>]

Reconstruction, Chapter 15      No Class Monday – Martin Luther King Day

*Due: Chapter 15 quiz, Sunday, January 25<sup>th</sup> (11:59pm)*

## Week 3 [Week of January 26<sup>th</sup>]

Capital and Labor, Chapter 16

**Due: Chapter 16 quiz, due Sunday, February 1<sup>st</sup> (11:59pm)**

## **Week 4 [Week of February 2<sup>nd</sup>]**

The West, Chapter 17

## Start on Chapter 18, Life in Industrial America

**Due: Chapter 17 Discussion Post, Sunday, February 8<sup>th</sup> (11:59 pm)**

## Week 5 [Week of February 9<sup>th</sup>]

Life in Industrial America, Chapter 18

**Due: Exam 1. Exam is due by**

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## Unit 2: World War I to End of World War II (Read American YAWP, Ch. 19-24)

## Week 6 [Week of February 16 ]

## **Due: History in Pop Culture Proposal Sunday February 26**

**Due: Quiz Chapter 10, Sunday, February 22nd (11:50pm)**

**Due: Quiz Chapter 19, Sunday, February 22 (11:59pm)**

## Week 7 [Week of February 23<sup>rd</sup>]

## Finish Chapter 20, Start Chapter 21, World War I and Aftermath N. Ch. 21.1 – 21.3 27<sup>th</sup>\*

No Class Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup>\*

**Due: Chapter 21 Discussion Post, Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup> (11:59 pm)**

**Week 8 [Week of March 2<sup>nd</sup>]**

Chapter 22, The New Era

***Due: Chapter 22 Quiz, Sunday March 8<sup>th</sup> (11:59 pm)***

**SPRING BREAK    March 9<sup>th</sup> to March 13<sup>th</sup>    Enjoy the break! No Classes!**

**Week 9 [Week of March 16<sup>th</sup>]**

The Great Depression, Chapter 23, Start Chapter 24, World War II

***Due: Chapter 23 Discussion Post, Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> (11:59 pm)***

**Week 10 [Week of March 23<sup>rd</sup>]**

World War II, Chapter 24

**No Class Friday, March 27**- Focus on Exam

***Due: Exam 2. Submit by Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup> (11:59 pm)***

**Unit 3: US during the Cold War to 1990s Tech Boom:  
(Read American YAWP Ch 25-29)**

**Week 11 [Week of March 30<sup>th</sup>]**

The Cold War, Chapter 25. Start Chapter 26

***Due: Primary Source Analysis by Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup> (11:59 pm)***

**Week 12 [Week of April 6<sup>th</sup>]**

The Affluent Society, Chapter 26, Start Chapter 27

***Due: Chapter 26 Discussion Post, Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup> (11:59 pm)***

**Week 13 [Week of April 13<sup>th</sup>]**

The Sixties, Chapter 27, Start Chapter 28

***Due: History in Popular Culture due Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup> (11:59pm)***

**Week 14 [Week of April 20<sup>th</sup>]**

The Unraveling, Chapter 28, Start Chapter 29

***Due: Chapter 28 Quiz due Sunday, April 26<sup>th</sup> (11:59 pm)***

**Week 15 [Week of April 27<sup>th</sup>]**

The Triumph of the Right, Chapter 29. Finish with The Nineties and the Turn of the Century

**Final Exams Week: May 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>**

The Optional Final Exam will be completed online. It opens May 1<sup>st</sup> and will be due by May 6<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm.

## **Course Technology & Skills**

### **Minimum Technology Requirements**

Provide a list of the minimum technology requirements for students, such as:

- Computer
- Reliable internet access
- Speakers
- Microphone
- Plug-ins
- Microsoft Office Suite

## **Computer Skills & Digital Literacy**

Provide a list of course-specific technical skills learners must have to succeed in the course, such as:

- Using Canvas
- Using email with attachments
- Downloading and installing software
- Using spreadsheet programs
- Using presentation and graphics programs

## **Campus Resources**

### **Technical Assistance**

Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustration that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. Here at UNT we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

**UIT Help Desk:** [UIT Student Help Desk site \(Links to an external site.\)](http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm)

(<http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm>)

**Email:** [helpdesk@unt.edu](mailto:helpdesk@unt.edu)      **Phone:** 940-565-2324

**In Person:** Sage Hall, Room 130      **Walk-In Availability:** 8am-9pm **Telephone**

### **Availability:**

- Sunday: noon-midnight
- Monday-Thursday: 8am-midnight
- Friday: 8am-8pm
- Saturday: 9am-5pm

**Laptop Checkout:** 8am-7pm

## **Rules of Engagement**

Rules of engagement refer to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors. Here are some general guidelines:

- While the freedom to express yourself is a fundamental human right, any communication that utilizes cruel and derogatory language on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability,

genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law will not be tolerated.

- Treat your instructor and classmates with respect in any communication online or face-to-face, even when their opinion differs from your own.
- Ask for and use the correct name and pronouns for your instructor and classmates.
- Speak from personal experiences. Use “I” statements to share thoughts and feelings. Try not to speak on behalf of groups or other individual’s experiences.
- Use your critical thinking skills to challenge other people’s ideas, instead of attacking individuals.
- Avoid using all caps while communicating digitally. This may be interpreted as “YELLING!”
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm in emails or discussion posts as tone can be difficult to interpret digitally.
- Avoid using “text-talk” unless explicitly permitted by your instructor.
- Proofread and fact-check your sources.
- Keep in mind that online posts can be permanent, so think first before you type. See these [Engagement Guidelines \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

(<https://clear.unt.edu/onlinecommunication-tips>) for more information.

**ADA Accommodation Statement:** The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable 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 reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](#) website (<http://www.unt.edu/oda>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.