

University at Florida Department of History

Discussion Section

Class Meetings:	W F: 10:40 A.M. – 11:30P.M.
Location:	Zoom
Instructor:	Joel Black
Office Hours:	By Appointment
E-mail:	jblack@ufl.edu

AMH 2020 presents students with a survey of American History since 1877 and tracks important development in the history of race relations, technology and industry, arts and culture, law, politics, and gender roles. The discussion sections present students with an opportunity to deepen their engagement with their collective past by examining critical moments in that history.

While most of our meetings will be live, through zoom, some of our discussion sections will involve written submissions that present students with other ways of engaging with the course and its content.

Discussion Section meets fourth period (10:40-11:30) on 5/17, 5/24, 5/26, 6/2, 6/7, 6/9, 6/14, 6/16, 6/23. Students submit written work, in lieu of meeting, on 5/19, 5/31 and 6/21.

Grade

Your overall discussion section grade is worth **5 percent** of your final grade and will be determined by a mix of written work and attendance & participation. Showing up alone is not enough. Instead, I expect students to engage actively and to demonstrate knowledge of the readings and course content.

- Written Assignment: 3 (3 x 1)
- Attendance and Participation: 2 (8 x 0.25)
- While attendance is mandatory, I understand that stuff happens. Students can miss one discussion section without it impacting their grade.

Weekly Schedule

[5/17] **Discussion Section:**

Introduction, Overview & Expectations. Begin reading one national newspaper per day (*Wall Street Journal*, *NY Times*)

[5/19] **Writing Assignment due before 10:40 A.M.** Discussion Section does not meet.

Many of you are enrolled in this class because the state legislature passed a law requiring us to discuss how the study of history informs current events, and how studying history can increase “civic literacy.” In exactly 200 words address the following questions.

- Should the study of history be mandate by the state?
- What does civic literacy mean, and how is it related to the study of history?
- What interest would a state government have in its students studying history?

[5/24] **Discussion Section:** 5/24: The West.

In the decades after the Civil War, the nation turned its attention west, where American settlement led to new conflict. In this section, our discussion will include the following questions,

- What factors led to conflict between Native Americans and American settlers?
- How did capitalism and economic growth shape the West?
- And how has the idea of "the West" come to take on such an outsized role in the American cultural imagination?

[5/26] **Discussion Section:** Industrialization and the Progressive Era

Industrialization, which generated exciting new ways of new of manufacturing an economic development would at the same time, transform the ways we engaged with each other. Reformers, many devised and developed by Progressive, represented attempts to deal with the fallout of industrialization, such as the rights of workers for safety and wages, the civil rights of African Americans, the rights of women to the vote. Discussion questions include,

- How did urbanization change the values of American culture?
- How did the presence of African Americans and immigrants from many different countries shape the character of American democracy?
- What challenges were associated with urbanization?

[5/31] **Writing Assignment due before 10:40 A.M.** Discussion Section does not meet.

Choose one thing you saw in a newspaper over the past 2 weeks, and in exactly 200 words use the history we are studying to put it in context.

- Do you see parallels with what is happening today with what happened in United States' history between 1865 and 1920?
- What has changed, and what has not?
- What are some patterns you see across time?

[6/2] **Discussion Section:** WWI

Take a minute to reflect on what you know about America's role in the international realm in the 20th century.

- How would you best characterize this role--an empire, a force for good, international police, a spreader of democracy, or some other phrase?
- As you study the Spanish American War and the expansion of the US into the Caribbean and Pacific, what are the origins of America's role in the world, and what are its costs and benefits?

[6/7] **Discussion Section:** The 1920s

In this discussion section we will explore American society during "the Jazz Age" and attempt to answer the following questions:

- What were the origins of consumerism, and how has it shaped our economy and our identities?
- How did science and religion clash in this period?
- How did the science of eugenics shape American and international views on race and nationalism?

[6/9] **Discussion Section:** The 1930s

After the stock market crash of 1929, America's economy plunged into a depression that reshaped economic and political life in the country. In this discussion section we will examine the origins of the Great Depression as we ask:

- How did Americans' views about the role of the government in the economy change because of the Great Depression?
- What were the successes and failures of New Deal legislation?
- And how did the ideas that came out of the depression era continue to shape American culture?

[6/14] **Discussion Section:** WWII and the Post War legacy

The Second World War fundamentally reshaped American society. In this section we will discuss the following questions:

- How did America become involved in another foreign war it was determined to stay out of?
- What was the American contribution to the Allied war effort?
- What did this war mean for Americans on the home front?
- How did World War II effect American race relations, gender relations, and labor relations? And how did an alliance with Russia evolve into a cold war?

[6/16] **Discussion Section:** Anxiety and Affluence: The Post war Years

- What was the Cold War standoff, and what were its consequences for American culture, foreign policy, politics, and economics.
- How do race relations in contemporary America compare to those of the Civil Rights Era?
- What has changed over time, and what patterns do you see across time?

[6/21] **Writing Assignment due before 10:40 A.M.** Discussion Section does not meet.

You were required to submit an assignment on 5/19 in which you addressed questions related to the state mandate that you study American history as a Civic Literacy requirement. For this assignment you will submit 200 words in which you explain:

- Whether you do, or do not, agree with your 5/19 statement. Why? Why not.
- Draws directly on 2 primary sources to support your position.

[6/23] **Discussion Section:** Review and Summary: Civil Rights and the Rise of the Right.

- Who is responsible for broad social change such as civil rights?

- How did Americans become involved in Vietnam, and how did this shape American culture?
- And how did the youth culture and "New Left" of the 1960s leave their mark on American life?
- What were the effect of "Reaganomics" on the American economy, and the end of the Cold War between Russia and the United States.