

Syllabus  
**RECENT AMERICAN HISTORY, 1877-PRESENT**

HIST 1502W-001  
SPRING 2018



**Instructor:** Dr. Jamie Eves, [jamie.eves@uconn.edu](mailto:jamie.eves@uconn.edu) ; [themillmuseum@gmail.com](mailto:themillmuseum@gmail.com) (emergencies);  
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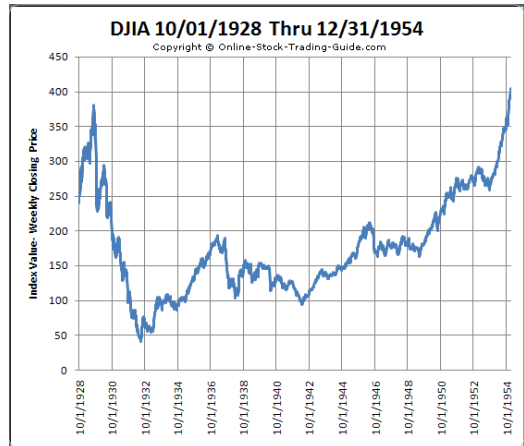
**Office Hours:** T, Th, 10:00 AM – 12:00 Noon; and by appointment

**Classroom:** Classes will meet in CHM T114, 2:00 PM – 3:15 PM , on Mondays and Wednesdays.

**Subject: What we will be doing**

HIST 1502W is a survey (overview) of United States history from the Gilded Age (1877-96) until the present, intended for first- and second-year university students. The goal is to take you beyond “high-school history,” with its emphasis on memorizing raw historical data, and show you how to examine critically the ways that professional historians learn about, interpret, and explain America’s past.

HIST 1502W is also a “W,” or “writing-intensive,” course. The purpose of W courses is not to teach you to be literate (you already are), nor is it to teach you how to write like a college graduate (one class is not enough to accomplish such a goal.) Rather, the purpose of W classes is to combine with other college-level classes with writing content as part of an integrated program that will, by the time you graduate, teach you how to write like a college graduate. They build upon what you already learned in your freshman college composition course and prepare you to write basic college essays and papers at the 2000 and 3000 levels. To those ends, you will be practicing such skills as writing topic sentences, writing introductions, writing conclusions, constructing good paragraphs, and constructing and organizing arguments dialectically.



According to University policy, courses with a W designation should:

- Require that students write a minimum of fifteen pages that have been revised for conceptual clarity and development of ideas, edited for expression, and proofread for grammatical and mechanical correctness;
- Address writing in process, require revision, and provide substantial supervision of student writing. (The structure of revision and supervision may vary, including in-class writing workshops, individual consultation, substantial formative commentary on drafts, and so on.);
- Require that students must pass the writing component in order to pass the course.

## Objectives: What you will get out of this

**1. A structure of recent American history:** The study of anything begins with facts. For those of you who did not learn it in high school (or for those of you who learned it, but subsequently forgot it), HIST 1502W will provide you with the basic factual structure of American History since 1877.

**2. Theoretical tools to help you interpret recent American history:** Facts, though, are pretty much useless unless you can critically interpret (analyze) them to figure out what they mean. HIST 1502 will expose you to ways that trained historians have interpreted the facts of recent American history, and teach you the difference among a fact, an interpretation, and an opinion. It will also challenge you to think critically about standard interpretations, and to develop new interpretations of your own. Most of what we will do in class is intended to meet this objective. So, here is your first lesson:

- (a) Fact: The U. S. Gross Domestic Product rose during President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal to pre-Depression levels.
- (b) Interpretation: The GDP rose primarily as a result of FDR’s economic policies.

(c) Opinion: FDR was America's greatest President.

**3. Improved critical thinking skills:** HIST 1502W will help you improve your ability to think critically about complex subjects.

**4. Meet requirements:** HIST 1502W meets several important University and/or major requirements. It also meets the State of Connecticut requirement for a U. S. History survey course for public school teacher certification.

**5. Preparation for future study:** HIST 1502W will prepare you for the further study of American history, whether as a student in advanced courses here at the University or on your own.

**6. Learning to think and behave like a professional:** HIST 1502W will introduce you to the ways that historians practice their profession, and challenge you also to approach your work in a professional manner. One way that you will behave like a professional is to type (not handwrite) your homework assignments.

## Method: How all this happens

To achieve these outcomes, we will use a variety of learning strategies, including analytical lectures, narrative lectures (storytelling), guided discussions, reading and reflecting on the interpretations of academic historians, examining primary sources, completing weekly assignments, writing in-class essay exams, and writing take-home papers. The reason for using multiple strategies is that not everyone learns things the same way. Some of you will respond best to discussions, others to lectures, and yet others to rolling up your sleeves and writing your own interpretations. Using a variety of methods gives all of you a chance to learn.

I will present broad overviews, using empirical data to argue for (or against) various historical interpretations. I have not assigned a narrative text to go along with these "lectures" (or stories, if you will), because narrative texts are very expensive and – truth to tell – most students don't bother to read them, anyway. But the fact that we are not using a narrative text means that if you miss class, you miss important material that you cannot make up by reading the corresponding section of the textbook. And missing important material almost always has an impact on students' grades. (And by the way, any student who asks me, "Did we do anything important in the class I missed?" will earn a withering stare, the reply "Everything we do in class is important," and a letter-grade deduction.) The point is: don't miss class, and when you are in class, take copious notes. Your notebook thus becomes your textbook. (And looking things up on the internet not only rarely helps, it is more likely than not to lead you in the wrong direction.)



Discussions will be built around specific reading assignments that will be posted on Blackboard (HuskyCT).

By listening and taking notes in class, participating in class discussions, completing the reading assignments on time, handing in the writing assignments on the days they are due, and thinking critically about the material, you will be prepared to make active, informed, and thoughtful contributions – both verbally and in writing – skills that will serve you throughout your study at the University, and beyond.

## **Required readings: The tools we'll use to do this**

There is no assigned textbook for this course. Instead, I will post readings and other materials on Blackboard. These will include:

1. Thomas R. Beardsley, "William Elliot Barrows," (n. d.), Windham Textile and History Museum, <http://www.millmuseum.org/history/captains-of-industry/barrows/>
2. Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*, (2006, 1906), Project Gutenberg, chapters 8 and 9, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/140/140-h/140-h.htm#link2HCH0002>
3. Norma E. Boujouen Ramirez, "The Puerto Rican Experience in Willimantic: A Reflective Account 30 Years Later," (2013), Windham Textile and History Museum, <http://www.millmuseum.org/history/sweat-of-their-brows/the-puerto-rican-experience/>
4. Jamie H. Eves, ed., *The Flight of the Cotton Fairies*(Willimantic, CT: Windham Textile and History Museum, 2010)
5. Bread and Roses Strike of 1912: Two Months in Lawrence, Massachusetts, that Changed Labor History, <http://dp.la/exhibitions/exhibits/show/breadandroses>
6. Heather Munro Prescott and Toby A. Appel, "Pushing the Cause of Women in Medicine Ahead: Connecticut's Women Physicians During the First World War," *Connecticut History Review* (v. 55, n. 2: 198-222, 2016)
7. Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, (1963) (excerpt)
8. Examining My Lai, [http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active\\_learning/explorations/vietnam/vietnam\\_my Lai.cfm](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/active_learning/explorations/vietnam/vietnam_my Lai.cfm)
9. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream," (1963)
10. Port Huron Statement, (1962)
11. Sen. Barry Goldwater, Acceptance Speech, (1964)

## Practice and assessment: Helping you test yourself and improve

### ***Class participation (10%)***

You will actively participate in class discussions. Participation is worth 10% of your grade, and will be based on both the quantity and quality of your verbal comments. Although I have the right to call on you at any time, the responsibility for participating is yours, and you are advised to join in the discussion as often as you can. Courtesy requires coming to class on time and staying for the entire period. If you are absent, it is a good idea to try to get notes from a reliable classmate. You may always discuss any special problems with me during our office hours.

### ***Dialogs (40%)***

You will write five Platonic dialogs based on reading assignments, each about 3 pages long and each worth 8% of your grade. I am assigning dialogs rather than essays, because dialogs force writers to construct arguments dialectically. Further instructions will be posted on HuskyCT. They will be graded as follows:

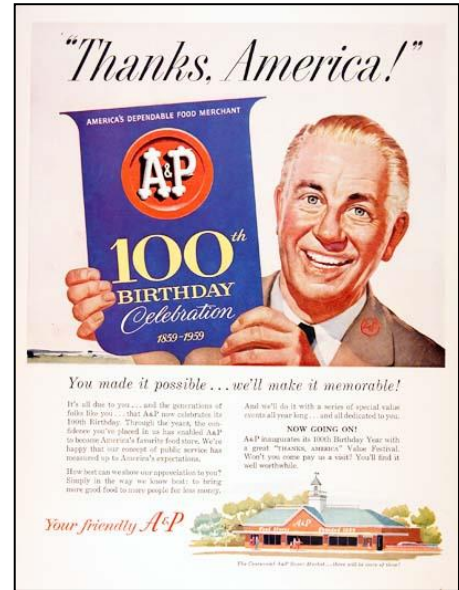
- (a) First draft: 3 points each (2 points for content and 1 point for writing).
  - (b) Revisions: 5 points each (3 points for content and 2 points for writing)
1. Dialog #1. Imagine that one day in Chicago, near the end of the Gilded Age, William Elliot Barrows and Upton Sinclair meet. Barrows has been invited to speak to a community group on the topic of “industrial benevolence.” Sinclair attends the talk, and challenges some of Barrows’s statements. What might they have said to each other? (To write this dialog, you will have use your imagination. While Barrows did work in the greater Chicago area in the 1880s [after he left the Willimantic Linen Company, he was an executive with the Pullman Company that made passenger railroad cars in a factory on the outskirts of Chicago], Sinclair did his research on the Chicago meat packing industry two decades later, in the early 1900s. The two never met, and Barrows died before Sinclair published *The Jungle*.)
  2. Dialog #2. Through the use of fairy magic, Eugene S. Boss and Norma Boujouen Ramirez are whisked away to Fairy Land. (This would be great surprise to both of them, especially Ramirez, who is still alive today and teaching in San Juan, Puerto Rico.) They discuss Willimantic, the Willimantic Linen Company, and the people who lived and worked there. What might they have said to each other? Was there change over time?
  3. Dialog #3. It is 11:00 on November 11, 1919. World War I has been over for exactly one year, and the tumultuous decade of the 1910s is almost over. By chance, one of the women who participated in the Bread and Roses Strike at Lawrence in 1912 encounters one of the Connecticut women medical professionals who participated in World War I (choose from among those you read about). They discuss



the decade, reform, suffrage, work, and progressivism. What do you think they would have said to each other?

4. Dialog #4. It is the Year 2525 (“if man be still alive; if woman has survived”), and through the science of time travel, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Betty Friedan have been beamed into the future to appear on the reality show “Time Survivor,” moderated by A. I. Holo-bot. The topic: The impact of the New Deal and World War II on the American society and economy. (Their memories will be wiped before returning them to their own times, so as not to pollute the timeline. What do think they would say to each other?

5. Dialog #5. Imagine: The U. S. Senate is debating the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Martin Luther King comes to Washington, D.C., to meet with U. S. Senators and urge them to support the act. He meets with Sen. Barry Goldwater of Arizona, who opposes the Act. What would King say to Goldwater to try to get him to change his mind? How would Goldwater respond? (In real history, this meeting never took place. But wouldn't it have been cool if it did?)



**Take Home Essay (20%)**

You will write one take-home essay. The purpose of the essay is to give you the opportunity to examine a historical interpretation (in this case, Richard Hofstadter's interpretation of



progressivism) in some detail. Your essay should be based on materials covered in class; do not use outside readings unless you have received prior permission from me. Your essay should be typed, double spaced, and approximately five pages long, using standard one-inch margins and an eleven-point Times New Roman font, which is the default setting for Microsoft Word. (You should realize that it is more difficult to write a good short paper than a good long paper, and thus you are advised to write more than one draft.) Late papers will be penalized one letter grade for each class day they are late. Exceptions may be made if you can

present empirical evidence of a genuine emergency. Papers delivered by any means other than handing them to me during class are at your risk. Balky, unreliable word processors and printers are your problem, not mine. (“The printer in my dorm was not working” is not an acceptable excuse: there are plenty of other printers on campus for you to use.) For learning purposes, I ask that you base your papers solely on the assigned readings – please do not use any outside sources unless I have given you permission to do so. You will write the essay twice: first a draft worth 8% of your semester grade (6% for content, 2% for writing), and then a finished version worth 12% (8% for content, 4% for writing). Further instructions will be posted on HuskyCT.

### **Examinations (30%)**

You will take two exams, a midterm exam (worth 10% of your semester grade) and a final exam (worth 20% of your semester grade). I will post study guides in advance on Blackboard (HuskyCT). You will be allowed to bring one 8 ½ x 11" sheet of paper with notes to each exam, which you will hand in with the exam. Each exam will consist of essay questions. You will be writing essays because writing essays will teach you far more about critical thinking and interpretation than answering ... ough ... multiple choice questions!

### **Extra Credit**

There will not be any extra credit assignments in this course.

### **Instructor: Who am I?**

My name is Jamie Eves, and I have been teaching history for more than thirty years. I have a Ph.D. in American History from the University of Connecticut, as well as an M. A. in American History from the University of Maine. My research specialties are eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American environmental history, the rise and fall of the American textile industry, the history of New England (including Connecticut), frontier and migration history, and public history – although over the years I have taught more than a dozen different history subjects. My doctoral dissertation was a study of the interrelationship of nature and culture in the Piscataquis River Valley in northern Maine, 1760-1870; my M.A. thesis traced a migration of farm families from Cape Cod in Massachusetts to the lower Penobscot River Valley in Maine, 1760-1820. I am also the Director of the Windham Textile and History Museum (the Mill Museum) in Willimantic, CT, and an official town historian of Windham, CT. Most of my published articles have been about Maine and Connecticut history – some have appeared in professional history journals, while others have been in publications aimed at nonacademic audiences. I was drawn to history by a love of the narrative form, and I try to emphasize good storytelling in all my classes. I believe strongly that history belongs to the people, and that everybody has a right to know their history – that history has to be accessible, readable, local, and affordable. I am particularly annoyed at “fake history” or “junk history” – history that is inaccurate, oversimplified, and/or bent towards some political, religious, or philosophical agenda. I am a husband, father, and grandfather. I am on Facebook, and post a lot of local history content on the Museum’s FB page (<https://www.facebook.com/WindhamTextileandHistoryMuseum/?ref=bookmarks>) ; you are more than welcome to “like” the page. Like most public historians, much of what I do is easily available to the public at little or no cost. If you want to see some of the history I have written, check out the web site of the Windham Textile & History Museum ([www.millmuseum.org](http://www.millmuseum.org)) – most of the history content posted there is mine. (Indeed, I am assigning some of that content to this class.) My doctoral dissertation is shelved in Babbidge Library, in the sub-basement, where I suspect it is daily nibbled by giant mutant rats. I have published articles in *Technology and Culture*, *Connecticut History*, and *Maine History*, and book reviews in a variety of journals. I’m also pretty sure that you can read all about me on [ratemyprofessor.com](http://ratemyprofessor.com).

## Schedule: What you need to do for each class

### UNIT I: AMERICA'S GILDED AGE, 1877-1896

- 08/28 Introduction to the Course.  
08/30 How the Civil War Changed America / The Second Industrial Revolution.
- 09/04 Discussion: Old Industries, Industrial Benevolence: The Willimantic Linen Company of Willimantic, CT. **Read Beardsley.**  
09/06 New Industries: The Pope Manufacturing Company of Hartford, CT.
- 09/11 Divergence: Business Strategies in the Gilded Age.  
09/13 Divergence: The Middle and Working Classes in the Gilded Age. **Read Sinclair.** *Draft of first dialog due.*
- 09/18 Urbanization and Immigration in the Gilded Age. Discussion: Immigrants in a Connecticut Mill Town. **Read Ramirez.**  
09/20 Politics in the Gilded Age. *Revision of first dialog due.*

### UNIT II: THE PROGRESSIVE ERA, 1896-1929

- 09/25 The Populist Revolt. The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. Discussion: Flight of the Cotton Fairies. **Read Eves.** *Draft of second dialog due.*  
09/27 Who Were the Conservatives?
- 10/02 **Midterm Exam**  
10/04 Who Were the Progressives?
- 10/09 The Progressive Presidents. *Revision of second dialog due.*  
10/11 Labor in the Progressive Era. Discussion: Lawrence Strike of 1912. **Read Bread and Roses Strike of 1912: Two Months in Lawrence, Massachusetts, that Changed Labor History.**
- 10/16 The American Empire.  
10/18 Interpreting the Progressive Era. Discussion: Connecticut in World War I. **Read Prescott and Appel.** *Draft of third dialog due.*

### UNIT III: THE GREAT COMPRESSION, 1929-1976

- 10/23 Lecture: What Caused the Great Crash? What Caused the Great Depression?  
10/25 Lecture: Who Was FDR? Discussion: **Read FDR's First Inaugural Address.** *Draft of essay on progressives due.*



10/30 Evaluating the New Deal.  
11/01 Evaluating the New Deal. Discussion: **Review: Economic Statistics for the New Deal.**  
*Revision of third dialog due.*

11/06 What Caused World War II? How Did the United States Get Involved?  
11/08 How Did World War II Change the United States? Discussion: **Read Friedan.** *Draft of fourth dialog due.*

11/13 The Cold War.  
11/15 Vietnam. Discussion: **Red Examining My Lai.** *Revision of fourth dialog due.*

#### THANKSGIVING RECESS

11/27 The Civil Rights Movement. *Revision of essay on progressives due.*  
11/29 New Left and New Right. Discussion: **Read King; Port Huron Statement; Goldwater.**  
*Draft of fifth dialog due.*

12/04 The Seventies: Détente, Oil, and Iran.  
12/06 The Reagan Revolution: The End of the Great Compression, the Beginning of the Great Divergence, and the Dawn of a New Gilded Age? *Revision of fifth dialog due.*

#### **Final exam during finals week**

### **Other important things to remember**

#### ***Academic Misconduct***

As always, cheating – including plagiarism – is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Plagiarism includes quoting someone else without quotation marks and/or without proper citation; using someone else’s ideas without proper attribution; and “close” paraphrasing. It also includes copying all or part of another student’s paper, allowing another student to copy your paper, or turning in the same paper in more than one course. In your worksheets and papers, you **MUST** cite all of the sources you have consulted. (Because of time and space constraints, I will not require you to use proper citations on exams.) Unless it is enclosed in quotation marks and properly cited, all of the material included in your take-home papers and exams **MUST** be in your own words. On your take-home essay, all quotes, ideas, and facts you did not know beforehand **MUST** be accompanied by proper citations. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, you should seek guidance from me. The penalty for plagiarism in this class will be: (1) For worksheets and take-home papers, you will receive a grade of “0” for the assignment. (2) For exams, you will receive a grade of “0” for the exam essay question on which the plagiarism occurred. (3) For a second offense, you will receive a grade of “F” for the course. Cases of plagiarism and other forms of cheating may also be reported to the appropriate university authorities for further action.

***Etiquette***

Although your participation is encouraged and your comments are welcome, I nevertheless expect you to treat me, your classmates, and the material with respect. I expect you to arrive on time, pack up to leave only after the class is dismissed, and refrain from getting up in the middle of class and wandering around. I reserve the right to remove disruptive and/or unprepared students from the classroom, or to dock their class participation grades. I do not expect you to agree with everything I say or laugh at my lame jokes. I greatly respect and admire students who are able to present their own positions, provided that they do so in a rational, logical, and well-spoken manner.