

**HISTORY 242**  
**HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES since 1865**

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**CRN 10302 AB1      Tuesdays: 8:30-11:20      D213**  
**CRN 11932 AB2      Thursdays: 14:30-17:20      A261**

**OFFICE HOURS (D 3098): Tuesdays & Thursdays: 12-14:00**

**CONTENT:** At the end of the Civil War, the United States faced the formidable challenges of reuniting a divided nation and extending the promises of American democracy to all citizens. This survey of American society and politics from the end of the Civil War to the recent past examines the extent to which these objectives were fulfilled in the context of a rapidly changing political economy. Special attention is given to cultural and racial relations; industrialization and transformation of the agricultural sector; the expansion of the role of the state in the nation's society and economy; the development of an interventionist foreign policy, and its impact at home. Presentations (in a lecture format) and class discussions of assigned readings will be used to introduce students to the basic chronology, events, and interpretative issues relevant to the American past.

In addition, this course seeks to enhance students' familiarity with the basic skills employed in historical thinking and writing, specifically through analysis of primary documents and critical reading of secondary sources.

**FORMAT:** Class time will be divided between lectures, assisted with Powerpoint presentations, and students' discussions of assigned readings.

**TEXTS:**

Mary Beth Norton et al. *A People and a Nation* (Volume II: Since 1865). Eighth Edition.  
John Hollitz, ed. *Thinking Through the Past: A Critical Thinking Approach to U.S. History* (Volume II: Since 1865). Fourth Edition.

All texts can be purchased at the UFV Bookstore (in Abbotsford). One copy of Norton's *A People and a Nation* is also available on two-hour reserve in the Abbotsford library.

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

Short Essays (15%; 20%; 20%)	55%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	25%

## NOTES ON ASSIGNMENTS:

The midterm exam will include material covered in weeks 1 to 5 (inclusively). It will consist of short identification questions and a short essay based on visual primary sources examined in class.

The final exam will be written during the exam period and will include material covered in weeks 6-13. It will consist of short identification questions and essays based on material covered in class.

The short essays (5 pages each) are based on material included in Hollitz's chapters. No short essay will be accepted late unless a special permission is granted by the instructor ahead of time

For the **first essay** you have the choice to work with chapter 2 or 3 of Hollitz. Both chapters include primary sources only. Your task will be to study these sources, come to a position on (or interpretation of) the topic that is informed by the sources (this is often referred to as a "thesis"), and present your interpretation in a clearly articulated fashion. The essay will be **due in class on week 5**.

The **second essay** is based on chapter 7 or 8 of Hollitz. These chapters include a set of primary sources and a secondary source. Your task is, as with the first essay, to fashion your own interpretation out of the primary material included in the chapter, but here you must also identify the secondary source's thesis, argument or perspective, and situate your own in relation to it. The essay will be **due in class on week 9**.

The **third essay** is based on chapter 10, 11 or 12 of Hollitz. These chapters also include primary and secondary sources, and both need to be integrated in your analysis as described above. The essay will be **due in class on week 13**.

Additional instruction on the shorts essays can be found on pp. 5-8 of this syllabus.

## KEEPING UP:

Regular attendance to class is essential for success in this course. If you have to miss class, please ensure that you keep up with the assigned readings, borrow someone's notes, and review my PowerPoint presentation which I will post on the UFV Network drive after each class. Consulting my PowerPoint presentation might also alleviate the need for intensive note taking during class time.

You may access the UFV Network drive through the internet at **my.ufv.ca>Online Services>UFV Network Files** or directly at **gw.ufv.ca/NetStorage/** Under **Drive Q**, go to folder **History**, then to folder **Hist 242 2010**.

In addition to the slides, some information (which I may or may not mention in class) is typically included in the “Notes Page” of the PowerPoint. To view these notes, click on “View”, then “Notes Page.”

**STUDENT COMMITMENT:** You are expected to come to class prepared to make informed contributions to our class discussions. You will find below the topics that will be covered in class each week and the sections of the texts that you must read before coming to class. Class discussion is predicated on your reading and thinking about the material ahead of time.

**CLASS CONDUCT:** Two cardinal rules should govern our conduct during our weekly meetings: focus on learning and respect of others. During class time I expect students to focus their attention on class-related activities. I would appreciate if you could stay away from text messaging while class is in session, or from using your laptop for other purposes than note-taking. I also expect all class members to respect others’ opinions and avoid behaviours that are disruptive of others’ learning (including tardiness).

### WEEKLY TOPICS AND READINGS

1. **Jan 12/14** Introduction to the course and to Reconstruction
2. **Jan 19/21** Reconstruction  
*A People*, chap. 16  
*Thinking*, chap. 1
3. **Jan 26/28** Industrialization  
*A People*, chap. 18 & 19  
*Thinking*, chap. 2
4. **Feb 2/4** Transformation of the Western “Frontier,” the Agrarian Revolt, and Native-white Relations at the turn of the century  
*A People*, chap. 17 & 20  
*Thinking*, chap. 3
5. **Feb 9/11** The Progressive Era and the Imperial Impulse  
*A People*, chap. 21 & 22  
*Thinking*, chap. 4

Essay #1 is due in class (on Hollitz, chapter 2 or 3)

**UFV Reading Break**

6. **Feb 23/25** The Great War and 20s

*A People*, chap. 23 & 24  
*Thinking*, chap. 6 (optional)

Midterm (on material covered in weeks 1-5, inclusively).

7. **March 2/4** The Great Depression and the New Deal

*A People*, chap. 25  
*Thinking*, chap 7

8. **March 9/11** W.W. II and Struggles for Democracy at Home

*A People*, chap. 26 & 27  
*Thinking*, chap. 8

9. **March 16/18** “The Fifties”: Cold War Politics and Postwar Domesticity

*A People*, chap. 28 & 29 (except for section on Civil Rights)  
*Thinking*, chap. 9 (optional)

Essay #2 due in class (on Hollitz, chapter 7 or 8)

10. **March 23/25** The Civil Rights Movement

*A People*, chap. 29 (section on Civil Rights) & 30 (section “Marching for Freedom”)  
*Thinking*, chap. 10

11. **March 30/April 1** Vietnam

*A People*, chap. 30 & 31 (section “The End in Vietnam”)  
*Thinking*, chap. 11

12. **April 6/8** “The Sixties”: A Decade of Protest

*A People*, chap. 31  
*Thinking*, chap. 12

13. **April 13/15** Reaction

*A People*, chap. 32 & 33  
*Thinking*, chap. 13 (optional)

Essay #3 is due in class (on Hollitz, chapter 10, 11 or 12).

Final exam (on material covered in weeks 6-13, inclusively) during the exam period (April 19 and 30).

## Instructions and assessment criteria for the short essays

Three short essays, based on some of the assigned chapters in Hollitz's *Thinking through the Past*, are due this semester. Each should be approximately 5 pages (1,250 to 1,500 words). Please refer to p. 2 of the syllabus for a list of the chapters on which you may write.

Format:

- The text should be paginated, double-spaced, in a Times New Roman 12 point font
- A cover page is not necessary: include your name and the date the essay is submitted on the left corner of the first page, followed by the title (centered)
- Sources should be cited according to the in-text, or parenthetical, method, by providing the author's last name and the relevant page number(s) in a parenthesis at the end of your sentence. For instance: Reformer Merrill Gates believed that compulsory education was necessary to "civilize" Native Americans (Hollitz, 56-57).
  - Note that the period is placed after the parenthesis.
- A bibliography should be included at the end of the essay. It is not necessary to list the title of each document separately in your bibliography. Follow the following model:
  - Norton, Mary Beth et al. *A People and a Nation*. Volume II: Eighth Edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008.
  - Hollitz, John, ed. *Thinking Through the Past: A Critical Thinking Approach to U.S. History*. Vol.2. 4th Edition. Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2010.

You are encouraged to use the relevant sections of the textbook (Foner) for contextual information, but the material presented in Hollitz should be the focus of your inquiry. There are three main components to these essays and I will assess you on all three:

1. Analysis of the sources (primary and/or secondary, as relevant)
2. Formulation of a thesis
3. Presentation.

### 1. Source analysis:

Most of the primary sources included in the chapter should be incorporated in your analysis.

How does one read or make sense of primary sources? This is the essence of the historian's trade. We will be doing it together in class, on a regular basis, so you'll quickly get the hang of it.

When you read a source, ask yourself the following questions:<sup>1</sup>

- Who is the author?
- When was the source composed or produced?
- Who was the intended audience?
- What is the purpose of the source? (Was it intended to persuade or was it mostly factual, like a census data?)
- How do the author's gender, race, socioeconomic class, religious views (or other relevant characteristics) compare to those of the people about whom he or she is writing?
- What is the historical context in which the source was written and read? What historical events are pertinent to understanding the document?
- What unspoken assumptions does the text contain?
- What biases are detectable in the source?
- How do other contemporary sources compare with this one?

A secondary source is assessed according to slightly different criteria. In a nutshell:

- What is the author's argument, perspective (his/her thesis)?
- What evidence does s/he present to support it? Do you find it convincing?
- Does the author's argument shed light on some of the information provided in the source, but not others?

We often use a secondary source in our writing as additional source of information. You may do so for this essay. But I also would like you to explicitly identify the author's argument and position your own thesis in relation to it. This can take different forms. For instance: "In contrast with the emphasis put on socio-economic factors by historian Mary Brown, I will argue that cultural and racial stereotypes were predominant in Americans' responses to turn-of-the-century immigrants."

## 2. Formulation of a thesis:

How does one come up with a thesis (or position, interpretation)? Read the questions presented by Hollitz in the section "Investigation" (they will help you focus your thinking about the material), then let the documents speak. This is the challenge—and pleasure—of working with historical sources. What are the sources saying about the topic under study? What conclusion can you derive from the evidence presented in the chapter? The conclusion you draw from a set of sources will form the core of your thesis.

Before you start writing the essay, organize your thoughts and notes systematically: what documents will you use to support your thesis? Is your thesis defined in broad enough terms to allow you to include most of the sources in your analysis? Is it so broad that you won't be able to support it convincingly? In either case, you should rethink your thesis.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, p. 11.

### 3. Presentation:

Your introduction should state the topic and thesis of your essay. Please avoid broad generalizations as opening statements—get straight to your topic. As you write the rest of the essay, you may find yourself going back to the introduction to refine and improve your thesis statement. By the time your paper is done, your thesis should be clearly stated.

In the body of the text proceed systematically by demonstrating how your interpretation is supported by the documents. As you integrate the documents in your written analysis, introduce them. Who is the author of a particular source? What kind of document (a newspaper article, a politician’s speech, a diary entry) are you working with? Never quote directly from a document without providing a reference to your source, including a specific page number (Hollitz, p. #).

An appropriate integration of a primary document in a written text would look like such:

Pennsylvania had a reputation for being a colony where even the common people could make a good living. It was perceived as a land where wealth and economic opportunities were broadly available. Such was the opinion of Gabriel Thomas, a yeoman farmer who, a few years after writing this account of economic opportunities in the colony in 1698, became the owner of a thousand-acre plantation: “I must needs say, even the present Encouragements are very great and inviting, for Poor People (both Men and Women) of all kinds, can here get three times the Wages for their Labour they can in England or Wales” (Hollitz, 42). Although Thomas’s perspective might have been influenced by his own good fortune, there is additional evidence that shows that the colony was, indeed, a place of “very great Encouragements.” The climate was mild and employment plenty . . .

Note here how I introduced the source’s author/date; how I gave some indication of his economic status; how I provided some interpretation of the validity of his point of view; and how I related the source to other available documents. I also respected the original capitalization (even though it doesn’t conform to our modern convention); when the occasional error in spelling is found in a source, it is appropriate to note it through the use of *sic* (in brackets) but the device should not be used if it becomes intrusive.

Other tips about the use of quotations:

- Use them judiciously; do not string them together endlessly. Use them to support or illustrate your analysis, not to substitute for your own summary, explanation, or analysis.
- Make sure that the sentence in which you integrate a quotation remains grammatically correct.

Finally, I expect your writing to be grammatically correct and clear. The Writing Center has a very helpful handout, available online: “Grammar -- do words go wrong?” In general, please pay special attention to the following guidelines and common errors.

- Keep your language clear and simple; avoid jargon; don’t fashion convoluted sentences in order to sound erudite—it may backfire!
- Avoid conversational language; strike the right academic tone.
- Use the past tense, not the present.
- Use the conditional (“would”) sparingly; it is not a substitute for the past tense.
- Write in the active, not the passive, voice.
- You may use the personal pronoun “I” as long as your interpretation is based on demonstrated evidence.
- Avoid sentence fragments; write in complete sentences.
- Avoid modification errors (“Crossing the street, a car hit the pedestrian.”).
- Link independent clauses appropriately (not with a comma).
- Don’t misuse the apostrophe (distinguish between the plural and the possessive).

Don’t hesitate to visit the Writing Center or to show me a draft of your essay if you’d like advice on your writing.

#### MARKING TEMPLATE:

Below are the questions I ask when I assess your essay. Before handing in your essay, you should review it with these questions in mind. If you can answer them affirmatively, you’ll probably get a good mark.

1. Have *most* of the sources available in the chapter been used? Are they analyzed adequately: i.e. to capture their meaning as much as possible?
2. What is the essay’s thesis or argument? Is it clearly stated in the introduction? If working with a secondary source: is the author’s thesis identified?
3. Presentation:
  - Does the text systematically support, through specific references to the primary sources, the thesis?
  - Are the sources properly introduced in the text (the author and nature of the document are identified)?
  - Are direct quotations integrated grammatically in the text? Is a reference to the page number provided? (Hollitz, p. )
  - Is the text proofread and tidy? Is it (mostly) free of grammatical errors (plural/possessive, sentence fragment, etc...)?