This course will focus on the history of ordinary Americans from the Civil War to the present. The course begins with a survey of the living and working conditions of ordinary Americans, men and women, white, black and Native American, middle class and working class, young and old, in the period 1870-1917. The second section examines how the great social changes of the twentieth century, including the World Wars and Vietnam War, the Great Depression and the prosperity of the 1950s and 1960s affected them. The final part of the course resurveys ordinary Americans today to analyze the significance of the social changes that have occurred over the last 140 years.

Course requirements
Students are expected to come to class (attendance will be taken) and take part in discussions. There will be at least two quizzes on the readings. Each student will write a book report (due Wednesday) and a 10-12 page term paper. There is a Midterm and Final Exam.

Grading
Class attendance, participation, quizzes and the book report will count for 30% of your grade. The Term Paper will count for 25% of the final grade; The Midterm will count for 20% and the Final 25%.

Term paper
A 10-12-page paper (for undergraduates) on an individual, event, organization or process that has affected the lives of ordinary Americans is due May 2. The paper must be based, in part, on primary sources. A proposal for your paper, explaining the topic you have chosen and the sources you plan to use, will be due on February 7. You are free to change your proposal after that, but should submit a revised
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proposal. Some possible term paper topics are listed at the end of the syllabus. Draft are optional and due on April 18.

Graduate students
Students taking History/Am. Studies 172 for graduate credit will be required to do additional reading and writing. I will meet with graduate students during the second week of classes to discuss the additional requirements.

Course Website: On Blackboard

Books available for purchase at the bookstore:
Hareven and Lagenbach, *Amoskeag*
Neil R. McMillen, *Dark Journey*
John Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks*
Robert McElvaine, *Down and Out in the Great Depression*
Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*

Part 1 -- A Survey of American Society

**Date:**  **Lectures and Assignments**
January 17  Introduction
Reading:  McMillen, *Dark Journey*, chs. 1-2

January 22  Black America
January 24  Black America (cont.)
Reading: McMillen, *Dark Journey*, chs. 4, 6, 7

January 29  Urban America
January 31  The Immigrant Working Class
Reports: John Bodnar, *The Transplanted*; Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*; Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will*; David Nasaw, *Children of the City*; Gunter Barth, *City People*

February 5  The Middle Class

February 7  Women and the Cult of Domesticity

Reading: Lagenbach and Hareven, *Amoskeag*, pp. 73-109, and Olivier Zunz, *Making America Corporate*, ch. 4, on Blackboard


**Paper proposal due February 7**

February 12  Indian America

February 14  The White Invasion of the West

Reading: Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks*, pp. 1-161, 213-270


**Part 2  --  Social Change in the Twentieth Century**

February 19  **No class  --  Washington’s Birthday**

February 21  World War I and The 1920s

Reading: McMillen, *Dark Journey*, chs. 7 and 8


February 26  The Great Depression

February 28  The New Deal

Reading: McElvaine, *Down and Out in the Great Depression*, Intro., chs. 1-4, 11, 13

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*Deal for Blacks;* Irving Bernstein, *The Lean Years;* Irving Bernstein, *The Turbulent Years;* Susan Ware, *Beyond Suffrage*

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**March 5**  
Topic: The: The New Deal (cont.)

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**March 7**  
**Midterm Exam**  
Reading and Reports: None

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**March 19**  
The Social Impact of World War Two

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**March 21**  
Movie: “Rosie the Riveter”  
Reading: John Blum, *V Was for Victory*, pp. 155-167 and 188-207, on Blackboard  
Reports: Susan Hartmann, *The Home Front and Beyond;* Ruth Milkman, *Gender at Work;* Roger Daniel; *Prisoners Without Trial;* Ronald Takaki, *Double Victory*

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**March 26**  
Suburbanization and the 1950s

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**March 28**  
Origins of the Civil Rights Movement  
Reading: Kenneth Jackson, *The Crabgrass Frontier*, chs. 9, 13-15 on Blackboard  

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**April 2**  
Women, Work and the Women’s Movement

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**April 4**  
Women, Work and the Women’s Movement (cont.)  
Reading: Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, Chs. 1-2, 7, 9-10, 14, Epilogue  

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**Part 3 -- Contemporary American Society**

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**April 11**  
The 60s and Alternative Lifestyles

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**April 13**  
Gays and Lesbians in American Life
Reading: John D’Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*, chs. 1, 3, 12, on Blackboard

April 16  The Deindustrial Revolution
April 18  Urban Crisis and Urban Revival
Reading: Joel Garreau, *Edge Cities*, pp. 7-15, 373-401, on Blackboard

Optional Drafts Due April 18

April 23  The Newest Immigrants
April 25  Race and Ethnicity in the Changing City
Reading and Reports: None

April 30  Social Change in the Twentieth Century
May 2  Review Session
Reading and Reports: None

**Term paper due May 2**

May 9  **Final exam tentatively scheduled 2:40-4:40**

**Term paper topics**
Below are some suggestions for topics. Students are encouraged to do a topic not on the list. If you plan to choose a topic not on the list or are unsure what to write on, please talk to me.

**Individuals:** People who have influenced social history include urban reformers like Jane Addams, black leaders like Marcus Garvey. Industrialists like Henry Ford, labor leaders like Samuel Gompers and John L. Lewis, and women's rights activists like Carrie Chapman Catt.
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**Events:** Events that either influenced ordinary Americans or revealed things about their lives include such diverse subjects as the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott, the 1919 Steel Strike, the 1967 Detroit Riot, the 1935 passage of the Wagner Act, the Chinese Exclusion Acts, and the 1924 Immigration Act, court cases like Muller v. Oregon or Adkins v. Children’s Hospital.

**Organizations:** The Townsend Clubs for old-age pensions in the 1930s, the early years of the NAACP, the founding of the CIO or NOW, the American Protective Association, the American Indian Movement.

**Process:** Describe the growth of a single suburb or area of a city; examine the migration of immigrants to a specific region; look at the decline of an industry and its impact on workers; analyze how housework changed in the twentieth century; look at the growth of a black middle class in the 60s and 70s.

A one page paper proposal explaining your topic and the sources you plan to use is due on the date listed in the syllabus.