

**History 351: Modern America, 1900-1945**  
(Syllabus, Spring 2008)

Professor: Robert Schultz                      Meeting place: Shaw 204  
Office: CLA 222                                      Meeting times: TTh, 9:25-10:40.  
Office phone: 556-3118  
Office hours: MWF, 9:00-10:00; Th, 11:00-12:00; and by appointment.  
Email: rschultz@iwu.edu

**Course description and objectives:**

This course is designed to provide students with a foundation in the social, cultural, political and economic history of the early twentieth century and to introduce them to competing interpretations of historical events and developments. These are the decades when the United States developed modern institutions to deal with the problems that resulted from a rapidly growing urban population, corporate consolidation, economic depression and two world wars. Early twentieth-century Americans also experienced the intense cultural and social conflicts that emerged with the increasingly diverse industrial society. We will study key aspects of modern American society and culture by analyzing primary historical documents, popular films, documentary footage and other historical texts and artifacts.

**Books available at the campus bookstore.**

We will read each of the following two books:

Cooper, John Milton. *Pivotal Decades: The United States, 1900-1920*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990.

Parrish, Michael E. *Anxious Decades: America in Prosperity and Depression, 1920-1941*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992.

We will read selections from the following two books:

Fink, Leon, ed. *Major Problems in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era*. 2d ed. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001.

Gordon, Colin, ed. *Major Problems in American History, 1920-1945*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999.

**Grades.**

Your grade for this course will be based on the following requirements:

Mid-term exam . . . . .	30% of course grade.
Final exam . . . . .	30% of course grade.
Short research paper . . . . .	20% of course grade.
Quizzes. . . . .	20% of course grade.

A note on quizzes:

The multiple-choice quizzes will cover the assigned readings and videos and will be administered randomly throughout the semester. I'll give you a minimum of 10 quizzes. Your quiz grade will be based on eight of the total number of quizzes. If I give you 11 or more quizzes, then I'll drop your lowest scores and will still base your grade on your best eight. Quizzes cannot be made up except in those instances where students are away from campus for university activities such as a road

game for the women's softball team or for operations and other documented medical emergencies. I drop some quiz scores to cover common illnesses and to give you a couple of days for when you just can't get to class for some reason, including court appearances for traffic tickets, weddings, funerals, and other such personal matters. The quizzes are not comprehensive; a quiz will only cover the material that is to be read or viewed before class on the day the quiz is administered.

### **Daily Schedule.**

In addition to the readings listed below, I have placed a few films on reserve at the library. Be sure to view the films prior to class on the dates the films are listed in the schedule. The films are:

King Vidor, director, *The Crowd* (1928).  
 Gregory La Cava, director, *My Man Godfrey* (1936).  
 John Ford, director, *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940).

All course readings and videos must be read or viewed before class on the dates they are listed.

#### **Week 01**

Jan 08 Course introduction.  
 Jan 10 Reading: Cooper, xiii-30.

#### **Week 02**

Jan 15 Reading: Fink, 263-294; Cooper, 31-61.  
 Jan 17 Reading: Fink, 295-323; Cooper, 62-89.

#### **Week 03**

Jan 22 Reading: Cooper, 90-121; Fink, 325-335.  
 Jan 24 Reading: Cooper, 122-157; Fink, 335-354.

#### **Week 04**

Jan 29 Reading: Cooper, 158-219.  
 Jan 31 Reading: Fink, 355-386.

#### **Week 05**

Feb 05 Reading: Fink, 387-404, 412-440.  
 Feb 07 Reading: Cooper, 220-267.

#### **Week 06**

Feb 12 Reading: Cooper, 268-318.  
 Feb 14 Reading: Fink, 445-468.

**Week 07**

Feb 19 Reading: Cooper, 319-356.

Feb 21 Reading: Cooper, 357-376; Parrish, ix-28.

**Week 08**

Feb 26 **Midterm.**

Feb 28 Reading: Gordon, 1-24; Parrish, 29-46; "Motion Picture Production Code" (handout). **View the film *Wild Orchids* (1929) prior to this class meeting.**

**Week 09**

March 04 Reading: Parrish, 47-93; Gordon, 26-36.

March 06 Reading: Gordon, 56-72; Parrish, 94-113.

**Week 10**

March 11 Reading: Parrish, 114-157; Gordon, 165-172.

March 13 Reading: Parrish, 158-182; Gordon, 89-107, 117-128, 150-165.

**Week 11**

March 18 **Spring recess.**

March 20 **Spring recess.**

**Week 12**

March 25 Reading: Parrish, 183-235.

March 27 Reading: Gordon, 182-209; Parrish, 239-288. **View the film *My Man Godfrey* (1936) prior to this class meeting.**

**Week 13**

April 01 Reading: Parrish, 289-338.

April 03 Reading: Parrish, 339-385. **View the film *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940) prior to this class meeting.**

**Week 14**

April 08 Reading: Parrish, 386-436.

April 10 Reading: Gordon, 241-253, 273-280, 303-336.

**Week 15**

April 15 Reading: Gordon, 370-381; Parrish, 437-476.

April 17 Reading: Gordon, 398-426. **Research papers due.**

**Week 16**

April 22      Reading: Gordon, 428-451.

**The final exam is scheduled for Friday, April 25, 8:00-10:00.**