San José State University  
College of Social Sciences, History  

Syllabus  

History 15-10: Essentials of U.S. History  

Fall 2018 – 3 Units

Instructor: Dr. George L. Vásquez
Office Location: DMH-217
Telephone: (408) 924-5528
Email: george.vasquez@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays 4 to 5 p.m., Thursdays 12 to 1 p.m., or by appointment
Class Days/Time: Tuesdays, 6 to 845 p.m.
Classroom: Boccardo Business Center-107
GE/SJSU Studies Category: US1 and D2

Course Description
From the SJSU Catalog: Treatment of essentials of U.S. history. Satisfies the American institutions requirement in U.S. history (US1) and the Core GE requirement in Social Sciences: Comparative Systems, Cultures, and Environments (D2).

History 15 is designed to introduce students to the essential events, ideas, turning points and transitions that have shaped American history during the twentieth century, from the Spanish American War to the eve of 9/11. Students will focus on both conventional and alternative interpretations of historical events and political processes that have shaped our modern economic, political and social systems. This information will be presented in a multi-cultural framework, including both conflict and consensus perspectives, of the choices and options available to individuals and groups in their social, economic and political relations. Students will also read key primary source documents and writings in the history of the United States, in order to give them direct exposure to the words, thoughts and feelings of the incredibly diverse personalities that helped shape and define the crises of the last century – the progressive era, World War One, the Great Depression, World War Two, the Cold War, the Great Society, the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War, Watergate, Reagan and the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the Clinton Years. Students will be able draw connections between the great social, economic, political and cultural issues of the past and those issues that animate our American society today. Throughout the course of the semester, students will develop the skills used by historians to research, analyze,
critically think and argue about the past, which will provide them with transferable skills essential for future success in their careers and in their roles as American citizens.

**General Education Learning Outcomes (GELO)**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to: 1. GELO 1 (US1): Describe the principal events, developments, ideas, politics, and international relations in all the territories now in the United States from the beginnings of this society until the present. While considering these topics, students will be asked to analyze certain subtopics. Assessed by multiple-choice and essay questions on midterm and final exams, periodic quizzes, primary source problem activities, poll questions and in-class discussion assignments.

2. GELO 2 (D2): Place contemporary developments in cultural, historical, environmental, and spatial contexts. Assessed by multiple-choice and essay questions on midterm and final exams, periodic quizzes, primary source problem activities, poll questions and in-class discussion assignments.

3. GELO 3 (D2): Identify the dynamics of ethnic, cultural, gender/sexual, age-based, class, regional, national, transnational, and global identities and the similarities, differences, linkages, and interactions between them. Assessed by multiple-choice and essay questions on midterm and final exams, periodic quizzes, primary source problem activities, poll questions and in-class discussion assignments.

4. GELO 4 (D2): Evaluate social science information, draw on different points of view, and formulate applications appropriate to contemporary social issues. Assessed by multiple-choice and essay questions on midterm and final exams, periodic quizzes, primary source problem activities, poll questions and in-class discussion assignments.

5. GELO 5 (D2): Compare and contrast two or more ethnic groups, cultures, regions, nations, or social systems in the context of U.S. history. Assessed by multiple-choice and essay questions on midterm and final exams, periodic quizzes, primary source problem activities, poll questions and in-class discussion assignments.

**Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to: 1. CLO 1: Distinguish between primary and secondary materials and decide when to use each

2. CLO 2: Develop a methodological practice of sifting, analyzing, ordering, synthesizing, and interpreting evidence.

3. CLO 3: Identify and summarize other scholars’ historical arguments.

4. CLO 4: Apply historical knowledge and analysis to contribute to contemporary social dialogue.

5. CLO 5: Generate a historical argument that is reasoned and based on historical evidence selected, arranged, and analyzed

6. CLO 6: Generate significant, open-ended questions about the past and devise strategies to answer them

7. CLO 7: Read the history text, study and take notes and then apply the knowledge in class

Essentials of U.S. History, History 15-10, Fall, 2018
Required Texts/Readings

Textbooks & Workbook


• George L. Vásquez, *Workbook, to accompany* Leuchtenburg’s *The American President* (San José: Maple Press, 2018)

Leuchtenburg’s *The American President* and Schlesinger’s *The Imperial Presidency* can be purchased at Spartan Bookstore or online from Amazon.com. The workbook can only be purchased at Maple Press, located at 330 S. 10th St., San José, CA 95112, tel. (408) 297-1000. Please note that Maple Press only accepts cash or checks, no credit cards.
Other Readings

If you choose to read a survey of American history in the twentieth century to boost your general knowledge of the subject, try one of the following:


Also useful are the following more specialized works in the *Oxford History of the United States* series:


Library Liaison

Nyle Monday, nyle.Monday@sjsu.edu, (408) 808-2041

Course Workload

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally 9 hours per week for a three unit class), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. ***NOTE CAREFULLY — Because this course taken together with 15B satisfies requirements that normally take three courses (9 units), the workload is heavier than a normal 3-unit class. Be aware that taking this course as part of a full load of 12 units will require more time and effort than if you are taking 4 normal 3-unit courses. More details about student workload can be found in University Policy S12-3 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf.

Assignments and Grading Policy

1. Examinations: There will be two examinations – a mid term (Oct. 9) and a final (Dec. 18). Each exam will consist of short answer questions and fill-ins, identification terms and essay questions. Materials to be tested will include lecture discussions and course workbook questions, assigned readings and documentaries screened in the classroom. Each exam will be worth 20% of the final grade.
2. **Quizzes:** There will be weekly objective quizzes on the assigned reading (Leuchtenberg). The purpose of these quizzes is to provide a persuasive incentive to read the assigned chapters and be prepared for classroom discussions. This also means coming to class having completed the appropriate workbook assignments for that class session. At the end of the semester each student’s best five quiz grades will be averaged and will count for 20% of the final grade.

3. **Written Assignment:** Each student will write a five-page typewritten essay on Schlesinger’s *Imperial Democracy.* The assignment consists in writing an essay on the American Presidency which encapsulates the conclusions reached in Schlesinger’s *The Imperial Presidency.* More detailed instructions will be circulated in class at a later date. This assignment is due in the classroom on Nov. 20 at the beginning of the hour. *No late papers will be accepted.* The analytical essay is worth 15% of the final grade.

4. **Team Oral Presentations:** Six student teams will be formed at the beginning of the semester to present oral profiles of the following presidents – William McKinley, William Howard Taft, Calvin Coolidge, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and George H. W. Bush – the classroom. Detailed instructions will be distributed once the teams have been selected. These presentations will be worth 10% of the final grade.

5. **Research Project:** Each student will also analyze the first inaugural address of a single president and contrast it with the actual accomplishment of that president during his term of office. The student’s findings should be typed (at least three pages) and submitted to the instructor at the beginning of the last class hour (Dec. 4). Students should indicate to the instructor in writing by the third class session (Sept. 4) who their subject for this assignment is. This research exercise is worth 10% of the final grade.

6. **Student Participation:** Students are expected to attend class regularly and to participate actively in classroom discussions, demonstrating that they have completed the reading assignment as well as the workbook exercise for each class session. Class participation is worth 5% of the final grade.

There will be no extra credit opportunities.

**Grade computation**

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Exercise</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Team Oral Report</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid Term Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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Grades will be computed on the following standard scale:
A grade of “F” will be given to work which receives a 59 or lower.

**Late Papers and Missed Quizzes and Exams, etc.**

1. There will be no make up of quizzes under any circumstance.
2. The mid-term exam may be made up if the student has a legitimate excuse and if the instructor is notified of the reason for the absence in a timely fashion.
3. All students are expected to be present on the final exam day.
4. Incompletes will be given only for extraordinary reasons and then only if the student has completed a substantial portion of the course work (at least two thirds).
5. No late papers will be accepted. (The only exception is severe illness, and then only if the student presents a medical report signed by the attending physician.)
6. Per department policy, grades cannot be emailed to students. (It is the responsibility of the student to pick up all examinations, quizzes, and papers in a timely fashion.
7. I am pleased to fill out an academic or fraternity/sorority grade check form, but you must give me advance notice and then arrange to meet me in my office.

**Classroom Protocol**

1. The class begins at 6 p.m. While it is understandable that circumstances may occasionally cause late arrival, repeatedly coming to class late is unacceptable. If you do come late, enter as quietly as possible and make sure the door closes as quietly as possible.
2. Sudden illness or personal emergencies are the only acceptable reasons for leaving in the middle of class. Go to the rest room before coming to class. If you must leave class, do so as quietly as possible and make sure the door does not bang when you exit and return. During an examination do not leave the room without asking the instructor’s permission.
3. Please turn off cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices that could disrupt the classroom. Lectures and classroom discussions are not to be recorded or transmitted in any manner without the instructor’s prior approval.

**University Policies**

Per University Policy @16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ Syllabus Information web page at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/"
# Course Schedule

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
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| 1    | Aug. 21    | Organizational Meeting  
|       |            | Film: “The Gilded Age”                                                                                   |
| 2    | Aug. 28    | Reading: Leuchtenburg, ch. 1 [Theodore Roosevelt & William Howard Taft]  
|       |            | Film: “Theodore Roosevelt: Roughrider to Rushmore”  
|       |            | Workbook: Prologue and ch. 1                                                                             |
| 3    | Sept. 4    | Reading: Leuchtenburg, ch. 2 [“Woodrow Wilson”]  
|       |            | Film: “Woodrow Wilson, Reluctant Warrior”  
|       |            | Workbook: ch. 2                                                                                           |
| 4    | Sept. 11   | Reading: Leuchtenburg, ch. 3 [‘Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, Herbert Hoover”]  
|       |            | Film: “Landslide – A Portrait of President Herbert Hoover”  
|       |            | Workbook: ch. 3                                                                                           |
| 5    | Sept. 18   | Reading: Leuchtenburg, ch. 4 [“Franklin Delano Roosevelt”]  
|       |            | Film: American Experience: “FDR”                                                                            |
| 6    | Sept. 25   | Reading: Leuchtenburg, ch. 4 [“Franklin Delano Roosevelt”]  
|       |            | Film: American Experience: “FDR”                                                                            |
| 7    | Oct. 2     | Reading: Leuchtenburg, ch. 4 [“Franklin Delano Roosevelt”]  
|       |            | Film: American Experience: “FDR”                                                                            |
|       |            | Workbook: ch. 4                                                                                           |
| 8    | Oct. 9     | Mid Term Exam  
|       |            | Reading: Leuchtenburg, ch. 5 [“Harry Truman”]  
|       |            | Film: American Experience: “Harry S. Truman”  
| 9    | Oct. 16    | Reading: Leuchtenburg, ch. 5 [“Harry Truman”]  
|       |            | Film: American Experience: “Harry S. Truman”  
|       |            | Workbook: ch. 5                                                                                           |
| 10   | Oct. 23    | Reading: Leuchtenburg, ch. 6 [“Dwight D. Eisenhower”]  
|       |            | Film: American Experience: “Ike”                                                                             |
|       |            | Workbook: ch. 6                                                                                           |
| 11   | Oct. 30    | Reading: Leuchtenburg, ch. 7 [“John F. Kennedy”]  
|       |            | Film: American Experience: “JFK”  
|       |            | Workbook: ch. 7                                                                                           |
|       |            | Oral Report #1 -- William McKinley                                                                         |
| 12   | Nov. 6     | Reading: Leuchtenburg, ch. 8 [“Lyndon B. Johnson”]  
|       |            | Film: American Experience: “LBJ”  
|       |            | Oral Report #2 – William Howard Taft                                                                         |
| 13   | Nov. 13    | Reading: Leuchtenburg, ch. 8 [“Lyndon B. Johnson”]  
|       |            | Film: American Experience: “LBJ”  
<p>|       |            | Workbook: ch. 8                                                                                           |
|       |            | Oral Report #3 – Calvin Coolidge                                                                            |</p>
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| 14   | Nov. 20| Reading: Leuchtenburg, ch. 9 [**“Richard Nixon”**]  
Film: American Experience: “Nixon”  
Workbook: ch. 9  
**Oral Report #4 – Gerald Ford** |
| 15   | Nov. 27| Reading: Leuchtenburg, ch. 11 [**“Ronald Reagan”**]  
Film: American Experience: “Ronald Reagan”  
Workbook: ch. 11  
**Oral Report #5 – Jimmy Carter** |
| 16   | Dec. 4 | Reading: Leuchtenburg, ch. 13 [**“Bill Clinton”**]  
Film: “Bill Clinton: Hope, Charisma & Controversy”  
Workbook: ch. 13  
**Oral Report #6 – George H. W. Bush** |
| 17   | Dec. 18| Final Exam, 17:15-19:30 |

Obama & his predecessors