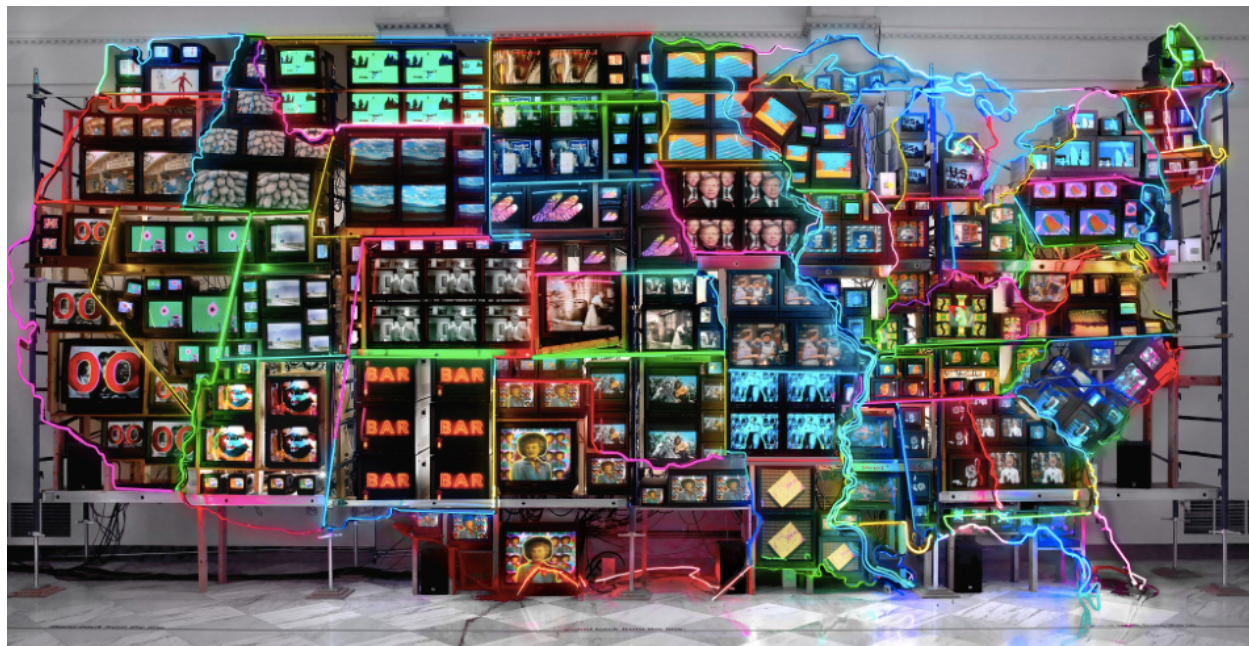


## American History, 1877 to the Present

### Syllabus Part A: General Course Overview



Above: Nam June Paik, *Electronic Superhighway* (1995), Smithsonian Museum of American Art, Washington, DC. A fifty-two channel CRT video screen sculpture/installation with lighted neon tubes indicating the borders of the “Lower 48” states (plus Alaska and Hawaii, on a side wall of the gallery), this glowing, flickering and mesmerizing monster artwork seems a fitting monument to our contemporary, 300-plus-million inhabitant, YouTube- and Netflix-streaming America. The US of A has indeed been on a “superhighway,” and we are certainly moving fast. But where are we going? And where did we come from? How did we get here, and what does it all mean?

For more information about this artwork, visit the website of the Smithsonian American Art Museum:  
<https://americanart.si.edu/artwork/electronic-superhighway-continental-us-alaska-hawaii-71478>

Best contact: email [tfarnold@bsu.edu](mailto:tfarnold@bsu.edu) at any time with any question or concern.

Office: Elliott basement 008F

Office hours: MWF 3-4 pm and TR 10-12 noon + 2-3 pm. Be aware that office hour days and times may change, sometimes at short notice. If Dr. Arnold is not in his office during office hours, check the door for a note regarding amended times, and you can always send an email. Students do not have to make an appointment for office hours – just drop by with any question or concern. If these times don’t work for your schedule, alternate times are available by appointment. Also, significant time during scheduled in-person class meetings will be available to go over and clarify general questions about readings, assignment instructions, evaluation criteria and policies, etc.

### Course description:

This course surveys the American historical experience since 1876. Students will examine key events, ideas, personalities and movements from the Centennial to the twenty-first century.

This course is available for Dual Credit as BSU HIST 202.

### Course goals:

To explore, with as much sophistication as possible, the American experience from 1877 through the present.

To practice thinking, writing, and speaking with clarity, force, and conviction in order to develop academic confidence and authentic skills of analysis, independent understanding, and communication.

Canvas: The course Canvas site is the essential organizing hub for this class. Almost all course readings and other discussion source materials will be posted to the course Canvas site, and there will be a continuously updated calendar with a full schedule of upcoming class activities and expectations. Audio recordings of class sessions will also be posted (and these may be particularly helpful for students who miss a given in-person class meeting). Students should regularly and routinely check the course Canvas site, at least for every scheduled class meeting.

### General policies:

Attendance will be taken for all in-person sessions according to stated Indiana Academy policies, including as explained in the Student Handbook. Please promptly contact the instructor with any questions regarding the application of those policies.

Students are expected to be able to access the course Canvas site using a computer device, either their own or one of the Academy public computer work stations.

However, unless otherwise directed for a specific classroom exercise, students are not allowed to use or access a laptop, tablet, or smart phone during class time. All such devices should be put away and out of sight for the duration of class. Computers are necessary and powerful tools for 21<sup>st</sup> century life, including school, but they are also too often a powerful distraction.

Students are expected to be alert and attentive during lecture class sessions, and are expected to take notes.

Students are expected to carefully consider all indicated sources in preparation for discussion class sessions, and are expected to actively participate in the classroom conversation.

Students are always encouraged to seek help in office hours for any and all questions or concerns, whether those are regarding class policies, lecture content, textbook information, discussion class source materials, participation in discussion, preparation for examinations, the evaluation of examinations, etc. Also, office hours are open for any additional conversation regarding the historical topics and questions considered – just drop by.

Grades will be posted to PowerSchool following a reasonable time for evaluation. Bi-weekly discussion grades will normally be posted within a few days of the last class session of that period. Examinations will normally be evaluated and the grades posted within a week of taking the test. Students will be informed in circumstances of delay. Students should regularly and routinely check their grades on PowerSchool, share those grades with parents or guardians, and promptly contact the instructor with any questions or concerns.

Students will only be excused from scheduled examinations in the cases of an excused absence or documented accommodation. In those cases, students are normally expected to schedule and take a makeup or replacement examination within three working days of the originally scheduled test, or within three days of returning to school.

in the case of extended absence. If circumstances warrant, additional time may be granted to make up a missed examination. In every case, be in communication with the instructor as promptly as possible.

Students who do not make up any missed examination within three working days of the scheduled test, and absent any extenuating circumstances, will receive a grade of 0% for that test.

Academic dishonesty and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Please review the student handbook for a full discussion of the relevant policies.

There may be provision for extra credit or additional or replacement assignments. Such opportunities, if any, will be announced during the semester.

If circumstances warrant, alternate assignments, extended due dates, and other exceptions to stated policies can be arranged on a case-by-case basis after consultation with the instructor. All reasonable accommodation will be made.

Any student with a disability will be accorded appropriate accommodation, as arranged in advance.

As the semester develops, class policies, historical topics, source materials, and the course calendar, etc., may be amended as the instructor sees fit. Therefore, be alert to all announcements and any revisions to the course calendar, including discussion-day reading assignments, examination days and times, etc.

#### Specific in-class policies and expectations

For additional and more specific policies and expectations regarding class meetings, see Part B of this syllabus.

#### Required syllabi statements:

##### 1. Ball State University diversity and inclusion statement:

Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as expressed in our Beneficence Pledge and through university resources found at <http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/multiculturalcenter>.

##### 2. Indiana Academy attendance policy statement:

It is the policy of the Indiana Academy that any absence from class is unexcused, except for illness, death in the family, college or school-related activities, and extenuating circumstances. When a student is absent from a class, the instructor reports the student absence to the Faculty Attendance Coordinator [Ms. Drumm] in the Office of Academic Affairs. Unless the absence is excused by a school official, it is considered unexcused. The decision as to whether an absence is excused is not determined by the instructor. Four (4) or more unexcused absences will lead to academic and residential consequences beyond the scope of this class [as] determined by the Office of Academic Affairs (i.e., residential groundings, parent/principal conference, and/or detention).

##### 3. Indiana Academy Humanities Division artificial intelligence (AI) statement:

The Humanities Division recognizes that artificial intelligence (AI) provides some exciting new tools for academic work. However, AI also poses significant dangers for academic integrity. Passing off as your own any research, words, or ideas which you did not create is plagiarism. That is always the case whether the source is print, internet content, or generated by AI. It is vital to read the policies your individual humanities instructors have regarding AI, and ask them any questions you may have about the use of AI in their course.

#### 4. Indiana Academy History Department content statement:

As with many history classes, the lectures, readings, and discussions [in this course] will include a range of topics that may be triggering, emotionally distressing, and difficult for some students. Engaging with topics such as slavery and human suffering is essential to this discipline. History seeks to understand the experiences and thought processes of former generations, whether for good or ill. Sometimes the language and word choices used by people in the past may be insensitive or politically incorrect today. Nevertheless, the goal of history is to understand the past within its own context and time. If a reading, image shown in class, or discussion is truly troubling to anyone, please do not hesitate to talk to your instructor. In such circumstances, an alternative reading [or other course material] can be assigned.

#### Evaluation overview:

3 examinations @ 100 points each	300
1 final examination @ 200 points	200
8 biweekly discussion periods @ 50 points each	400
Depression Documentary Photography project	100
total	1,000 points + any extra credit

#### Grading scale:

Percentage	Grade
.940-1000	A
.900-939	A-
.870-899	B+
.830-869	B
.800-829	B-
.770-799	C+
.730-769	C
.700-729	C-
Below 700	D*

#### Discussions:

Formal, seminar-style scheduled discussion classes will always be based on historical primary sources either posted to the course Canvas site or distributed in class. Readings and other sources for a given scheduled discussion session will be posted or distributed several days in advance, typically at the end of the previous week. Sometimes, fresh, additional shorter-length source materials will be shared during class sessions themselves, for students to analyze and discuss on the spot.

Students will be expected to carefully prepare for a scheduled class discussion by conscientiously considering any and all of the assigned primary sources. Students will be expected to prepare a Source Evaluation document for each assigned source, and will be expected to bring those completed Source Evaluation documents to the relevant class discussion session.

For biweekly discussion grades, students will be evaluated on the bases of preparation for class, attention and participation during class, and leadership of the class conversation.

Further and more specific information on expectations for discussion preparation and participation can be found in Part B of this syllabus. Students should feel free to contact the instructor with any questions or concerns regarding discussion sources, policies and expectations, or evaluation.

#### Examinations:

There will be three in-class examinations over the course of the semester, plus a final exam (which will cover both the final fourth of the class, as well as include a comprehensive component covering the semester as a whole). The material covered and test format for each examination will be shared in advance.

Further and more specific information on policies for examinations can be found in Part B of this syllabus. Students should feel free to contact the instructor with any questions or concerns regarding examinations, including material covered, test format, policies, and evaluation.

#### Textbook and other readings:

Students need only acquire one book from the bookroom: James A. Henretta, et. al., *America* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Students will never be expected to bring this textbook to any in-person class session. Background reading selections from this textbook will be indicated on the outlines provided for each lecture class. Students should be aware that some examination questions might directly relate to the textbook readings so indicated on the lecture outlines.

Discussion readings and other sources will be provided by the instructor, in most cases as a pdf document posted to the course Canvas site, or as a link to an online text or image. Some materials may be distributed as hard copies in class.

For the course calendar see Part C of this syllabus and the course Canvas site.