

Survey of US History II

Last Updated: Fri, 01/02/2026

Course prefix: HIST

Course number: 2112

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
23831

Instructor First Name: Daniel

Instructor Last Name: Amsterdam

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

Through a combination of lectures, readings, visual art, documentary photography and film, this primarily lecture-based course examines the major political, economic, social and cultural trends that have made the United States the nation that it is today. The class also examines related dynamics in Atlanta and in Georgia more generally. The course focuses on the period since 1877 and especially examines:

- 1) the rise of a modern industrial economy and its transformation in recent decades;
- 2) the creation of modern American government as well as debates over its proper size and scope;
- 3) how inequality has riddled American society and how various groups have sought to redress this fact;
- 4) why the United States has gone to war since the late 19th century and how these conflicts have, in turn, shaped American life.

Course learning outcomes:

- 1) To give students a greater understanding of major events and trends that have shaped the development of the United States since 1877.
- 2) To give students a greater understanding of what historians do and therefore what “history” is.

3) To convince students that historical inquiry is critically important for making sense of the world around them.

4) Additional, related learning objectives specific to general education (Core Impacts) requirements as described below.

Required course materials:

With the exception of *Outcasts United*, all of the books listed below are available for free as ebooks through the GT library. Students are also regularly required to read short primary sources posted on Canvas.

1) Rebecca Burns, *Rage in the Gate City: The Story of the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot*

2) Michael C.C. Adams, *The Best War Ever: America and World War II*

3) Robert A. Pratt, *We Shall Not Be Moved: The Desegregation of the University of Georgia*

4) Warren St. John, *Outcasts United: An American Town, A Refugee Team, and One Woman's Quest to Make a Difference*. (Be sure not to buy the young adult version by mistake.)

Grading policy:

Assignments and Grading:

In-Class Exercises on Required, Book-Length Readings (15% of final grade)

Mid-Term I (20% of final grade)

Mid-Term II (20% of final grade)

Mid-Term III (20% of final grade)

Final Exam (25% of final grade)

Grading Scale:

90-100 – A

80-89.99 – B

70-79.99 – C

60-69.99 – D

59.99 and Below – F

Attendance policy:

Although the instructor does not keep track of attendance, attending class is absolutely essential to succeed in the course.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question: How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome: Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion

This is also a Core IMPACTS course that satisfies part of the Georgia Legislative Requirement

This course should also direct students toward a broad Orienting Question: How do I prepare for my responsibilities as an engaged citizen?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome: Students will demonstrate knowledge of the history of the United States and the history of Georgia

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Critical Thinking
- Intercultural Competence
- Persuasion

