

## **Imperial Valley College**

**History 121** “U.S. History since 1877”

**CRN:** 20524

**Professor:** Bradford W. Wright, Ph.D.

**Spring 2014**

**Meeting days/times:** Tuesday, 6:30-9:40 PM

**Class Location:** Room 208

**Prerequisites:** None

**Office 301 Hours:** Mon. 1:30-2:30  
Tues. 3:30-4:30  
Wed. 1:30-2:30  
Thurs. 3:30-4:30

**Phone Number:** 355-6597

**E-Mail:** bradford.wright@imperial.edu

### **Course Description and Objectives:**

This is an introductory course in the history of the United States since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. History is about much more than the memorization of names, dates, and facts. It is about understanding the past and its relationship to the present. In this class, we will learn something about what it meant to live in the United States in the not-too-distant past. We will learn about the challenges, decisions, hopes, fears, successes, and failures of all kinds of Americans—influential leaders and common folk alike. From this study, we will gain a greater context through which to appreciate our own diverse experiences and values as well as our common struggle to achieve a meaningful existence. The study of history is ultimately a process of discovering ourselves through our relationship to those who came before us.

As a broad survey of a lengthy period of time, this course will examine a variety of topics and themes. Special emphasis will be paid to the sweeping changes wrought by industrialization and urbanization, the emergence of the United States as a world power with global interests and commitments, the struggle of diverse Americans to achieve freedom and equality, and the rise of a consumer culture which has both reflected and transformed the way we all live.

You should come out of this course with a good basic understanding and appreciation of the people, trends, and events that have shaped the modern history of the United States. And in the process, you will have the opportunity to sharpen your own critical, argumentative, writing, and analytical skills. These will help you in whatever academic, career, or personal goals you may have.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** Students will be able to (1) identify and recall key information from a historical text and/or a documentary film; (2) describe the causes and/or impact of a historical event; and (3) evaluate a primary or secondary history source by the end of the course.

### **Required Texts**

Paul Boyer and friends, *The Enduring Vision, Vol. 2.*

Bradford Wright, *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America.*

## Grading

Final grades will be determined according to the following distribution:

Exam I:	25%	250 points
Exam II:	25%	250 points
Exam III:	25%	250 points
Paper 1:	12.5%	125 points
Paper 2:	12.5%	125 points

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Total:           100%           1000 points

Exams will consist of short answer questions (identifications of terms) and essays. A study guide will be distributed prior to each exam, and these should greatly help students prepare for the exams.

The papers will be 3-4 page, double-spaced, essays on questions related to the assigned reading.

Class participation (including attendance, involvement in class discussions, and other positive contributions to learning in the course) is strongly encouraged. Good class participation will be taken into account in cases where a student finishes the course with a borderline grade. (i.e.: an 89 may be entered as a grade of "A," if the student in question had a good attendance record and participated positively in the class.) Disruptive behavior in class, including frequent tardiness, getting up and leaving before the end of the class, and poor attendance will also be taken into account, negatively, in evaluating a student's class participation.

## Class Policies and Procedures:

### Attendance:

Regular class attendance is expected. If you should miss a class meeting for any reason, you are still responsible for any material and/or class announcements discussed in your absence. Excessive absences (over three) will hurt your class participation grade and effectively cancel any possibility of rounding up your final grade in borderline instances.

### **You are also expected to arrive at class on time and remain for the duration of the class.**

Failure to do so will be considered the same as an absence. It is also simply rude. If you must leave early for a valid reason, I simply ask that you let me know ahead of time. Please be courteous.

Make-Up Exams: You should do everything possible to take the exam at the regularly scheduled time and place. If, however, you must miss an exam because of an extreme illness or family emergency, you may be permitted to make up the exam. If I happen to be giving another exam in another class during the week of the missed exam, it may be possible to make up the exam at that time. **Otherwise, all make-up exams will be given during the last week of the term before finals. Any make-up exam will consist of fewer choices than the regularly scheduled exam. Again, I emphasize that the right to take a make-up exam is not absolute and is open to my discretion.** You are expected to take the exam in class on the regularly scheduled date.

### Classroom Courtesy:

I ask you to respect the rights of your colleagues to learn in a productive, respectful, and disciplined classroom environment and to respect the job that I do to ensure such an environment as I teach. Behavior such as arriving late, leaving early, answering cell phones, text-messaging, listening to iPods, and carrying on personal conversations disrupts the class, interferes with my job as a teacher, and deprives your colleagues of their right to learn. Please do not use iPads or laptops in class. Take notes using traditional paper notebooks. **Cell phone usage in class has become a major problem. It is extremely distracting for myself and for students. If I see a student using a phone in class, I will ask**

**them to stop. If the behavior continues, I will ask them to leave.** Please use common sense and take responsibility for your behavior. **Be courteous and considerate! Don't be rude!** That is all I ask.

Accommodation for Students:

I am happy to work with all students so that each can achieve his/her educational objectives. Any student with a documented disability who may need educational accommodations should notify me and the Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S) office as soon as possible (DSP&S), Health Sciences Bldg. 2100, 355-6312).

Dropping the Course:

If for any reason you decide not to complete the course, remember that it is your responsibility to drop the class. If you simply stop coming to class and do not log on to the WebSTAR and officially withdraw from the course, you will receive an "F" as a final grade.

Academic Honesty:

The college and I take the issues of student dishonesty, cheating, and/or plagiarism very seriously. There are severe penalties arising from acts of academic dishonesty and student misconduct, up to and including dismissal from the college. For a complete discussion of disciplinary procedures for academic dishonesty or other student misconduct, please refer to the current IVC General School Catalogue.

Cheating may include: looking on another student's paper during an exam, the use of additional materials beyond those allowed for an exam, or turning in a paper that was not written by the student, and other acts of plagiarism.

I trust my students to do their work honestly. Please do not betray the trust that I have placed in you.

**Course Schedule and Reading Assignments:**

**Jan. 21:** Introduction/ America in the Industrial Age  
Boyer, Chapter 19

**Jan. 28:** The American City / The Progressive Era  
Boyer, Chapters 20, 21

**Feb. 4:** The American Empire / The U.S. and World War I  
Boyer, Chapters 20, 22

**Feb. 11:** The 1920s  
Boyer, Chapter 23

**Feb. 18: Exam I**

**Feb. 25:** The Great Depression and New Deal  
Boyer, Chapter 24  
Wright, Chapter 1

**March 4:** The U.S. and World War II  
Boyer, Chapter 25  
Wright, Chapter 2

**March 11:** The Origins of the Cold War  
Boyer, Chapter 26  
Wright, Chapter 3

**March 18:** The Fifties  
Boyer, Chapter 27  
Wright, Chapters 4-6  
**Paper #1 Due**

**March 25: Exam II**

**April 1:** The U.S. and Vietnam  
Boyer, Chapter 28  
Wright, Chapter 7

**April 8:** The Civil Rights Era and the Sixties

**April 15:** The Seventies  
Boyer, Chapter 29  
Wright, Chapter 8

**April 21-25: Spring Break—No Class**

**April 29:** The End of the Cold War and the Eighties  
Boyer, Chapters 30-31  
Wright, Chapter 9

**Paper #2 Due**

**May 6:** The Only Global Superpower: America in Our Own Times

**May 13: Final Exam**