



UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA

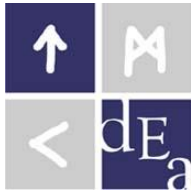
2021-2022 Academic Year

2nd Semester

# US History and Culture (20th-21st centuries)

Prof. Bernardo Palmeirim

**Student's Course Book**



Bernardo Palmeirim

DEPARTAMENTO DE ESTUDOS ANGLÍSTICOS

## **20-21c. American History and Culture**

2021/2022 Academic Year

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# **SYLLABUS AND REGULATIONS**

## **Aims**

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- relate cultural phenomena of different historical periods in terms of their relevance to American cultural history and its changing forms
- understand the cultural context of specific historical events and thematic inter-relations between certain historical phenomena
- find relations, namely of similitude and difference, in research materials of key historical and cultural significance to 20-21c. American history
- conduct graduate-level, introductory academic research in American cultural history using appropriate tools and resources
- present and defend written and oral assignments on the concrete topics in American cultural history they have investigated

## **Program**

Students will be able to frame phenomena from across 12 historical periods within the cultural evolution of modern American history: specifically in relation to the themes of American Divisionism, Experiment and Dream. Students will grasp the ways in which American sociocultural manifestations — in their cultural epochs, presidential administrations and social and institutional history — have advocated (or wrangled with) ideologies, aesthetics and customs within shared (and divided) forms of American life. Students will complete a research project where, by focusing on concrete case studies, they will unfold culturally relevant similarities and differences, fleshing out the ongoing complexities of American communal life.

12 Periods \*(adapted from Eric Foner's *Give Me Liberty: An American History*, 2017.)

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| P1. THE PROGRESSIVE ERA, 1900-1916 | P7. AFFLUENCE, 1953-1960                       |
| P2. WORLD WAR I, 1916-1920         | P8. THE SIXTIES, 1960-1968                     |
| P3. THE TWENTIES, 1920-1932        | P9. NEOCONSERVATISM, 1969-1988                 |
| P4. THE NEW DEAL, 1932-1940        | P10. GLOBALIZATION, 1989-2001                  |
| P5. WORLD WAR II, 1941-1945        | P11. FROM 9/11 TO OBAMA, 2001-2016             |
| P6. THE COLD WAR, 1945-1953        | P12. POST-TRUTH, DIVISIONISM AND TRUMP, 2016 - |

As we traverse these 12 *diachronic* Periods, we will inevitably discuss recurring topics, i.e. *synchronic* sociocultural issues and phenomena that have repeatedly confronted and engaged Americans. I have included 12 generic *Themes* below in case they may inspire you to find a more specific *Topic* within that *Theme* (namely if you choose Option b for your Research Project). Note that these 12 Themes are meant to act as illustrative 'umbrella terms' for Topics and do not parallel the order of the 12 Periods. Below is an indicative, non-restrictive list of Themes and a few illustrative examples of Topics (please go to ONB [ONline Book] for a larger list of suggested Topics and additional resources).

12 THEMES

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| T1. The American Experiment (the sociopolitical: <i>e pluribus unum</i> ) | T7. Foreign Relations (America and the world) |
| T2. 'America' (the land: frontier; states; myth)                          | T8. War, Violence and Pacifism                |
| T3. 'Americans' (the people: mores and traditions)                        | T9. Arts & Entertainment                      |
| T4. Immigration & Migration   | T10. The Media                                |
| T5. Identity and Civil Rights   | T11. Economy                                  |
| T6. Religion & Morality   | T12. Science and Technology                   |

The primary sources for **diachronic** information are **Lepore** and **Cobbs** (see Bibliography below).

The primary sources for **synchronic** information are **Bigsby** and **Burgett** (see Bibliography below).

# Assessment

**Written test: 35%**

**Research Project: total 50%**

An online repertoire of sources and materials, which I will periodically update, will be made available in the ONB to help students enrichen their research within a shared corpus for the class.

For their research project, students must either:

1. Contrast and compare two significant cultural events or phenomena from any two of the 12 historical Periods. Students need to explore the **similarities and differences between those two specific ‘case studies’** in cultural history which fall under the same Theme (e.g. *social effects of FDR’s New Deal v Obama’s New New Deal; reception of black protest songs in the 1930s v BLM*). Your two case studies need to be at least 3 Periods apart (i.e. if your first is from P2, the second has to be from P5 or later).
2. Discuss the **cultural (d)evolution of a Topic** that traverses 20-21c. American history (e.g. a topic within T5 could be *African-American housing segregation in the urban North*; within T8 *Gun Rights v. Gun Control*, or *Anti-War Novels*, etc.), mandatorily including its most recent manifestation(s), i.e. in the 21c.

The research project is comprised of 3 moments:

1. **Abstract (5%)**: 1 page with 250-word abstract of thesis and conceptual framework + 1 page with an annotated bibliography (see ONB). Students who do not submit an abstract will not be able to submit the final essay.
2. **Essay (30%)**: 1,600 to 1,800-word original research essay.
3. **OP - Oral Presentation (15%)**: 8-minute oral presentation on the subject matter of the written essay, followed by a 2-minute discussion.

Students will receive an OP calendar by email. Any problems with dates must be resolved at least one week in advance. Students who must swap an OP slot are responsible for arranging this swap with a colleague and informing the professor by email. Students who do not show up for their OP will receive a zero.

As this class is taught in English, OPs must be in English. Content and communication will be more important than grammatical accuracy. Written assignments may be in either English or Portuguese.

**Active Attendance (15%)**: attendance and constructive participation, namely critical discussions of prescribed reading and class materials; participation in ONB activities (forum); relevant input in class and oral presentation follow-up discussions. Attendance without participation is not sufficient.

# Regulations

1. All communication and online activities will take place through **institutional (campus/ edu/ e-letras) accounts**. You will also need to use your institutional account to access and participate in our ‘**ONB**’ (which stands for ‘ONline Book’ in opposition to our ‘SCB’, this Student’s Course Book). ONB refers to both the moodle and Google Classroom platforms – home to a variety of course materials, resources and activities.
2. Make sure you have set up your institutional account to forward **emails** to your personal email account if you do not check it regularly. **Summaries and homework** can be followed online on the **Fénix platform**. Failure to check your institutional email and/or Fénix is not an excuse for not keeping up with classes and assignments.
3. The **essay** must be printed and delivered in class AND uploaded to **moodle**.
4. All students must have uploaded a **photo** to the **Fénix** platform.
5. Students who fail to sit any of the mandatory tests/tasks will be given a zero for that assignment. Students should be wary that failure to submit coursework will likely lead to failing the course.
6. Classroom behavior: Your presence and **arrival on time** is essential and will be reflected on your final mark — being late not only disturbs class but is also a sign of disrespect for your classmates and your professor. **Mobile phones** should be turned off or in silence. Please keep them in your bags or pockets, *never* on your desks.
7. University students are expected to work on and pursue their own original thinking by critically evaluating that of others. Neglecting to acknowledge sources of information in your work constitutes plagiarism (academic theft). Plagiarism is passing another person’s ideas and theories as your own, including the use of verbatim text without paraphrasing or quoting directly. **There will be zero tolerance for plagiarism**: your work will be marked zero, you will be reported to the competent Faculty bodies, and you may only repeat the subject in the following academic year. Resources on how to avoid plagiarism are available in our ONB.
8. **Working students** may opt for continuous assessment (in which case they will have to comply with all the assessment criteria set for regular students, excepting regular attendance) OR choose to sit an examination (*Época Especial de Avaliação*). The prior option is undoubtedly preferable, since examinations are difficult and trying situations. Working students who opt to sit the exam must prepare adequately and throughout the semester and should maintain timely email communication with the professor. The **exam** will focus on the course syllabus, whereby working students must be familiar with all the contents of the Student Course Book, and most importantly, Lepore’s *These Truths* (Chapter 10 on, inclusive; see Bibliography). Working students who opt for continuous assessment and are not able to attend all classes must follow online summaries, maintain email contact with the professor, and submit assignments by email.
9. **Assignment format & submission:**
  - i. Assignments must be printed double-space, using Garamond (or alternatively Times New Roman) font size 12, and handed in promptly in class AND uploaded to the correct moodle slot before the deadline. Include page numbers in top right-hand corner.
  - ii. Your full name, course name, year/semester, TP and word count should be included on the front page. Word count is just for essay and footnotes (does not include cover page, Abstract or Bibliography).

- iii. **Penalties:** If you submit work to be marked after the deadline, 1 mark will be deducted for each day the work is late. If you submit your work more than 5 days late, your work will not be marked and it will be graded as zero.

10. The **citation style** for this course and assignments is **MLA 8<sup>th</sup> ed** (see ONB for useful links).

## Bibliography

[A comprehensive and periodically updated list of research tools, further study and auxiliary sources and materials (including references to films, series, podcasts, etc. for contextualization) is available in our ONB, mostly under the Google Classroom 'Classwork' tab.]

By order of importance to this syllabus:

**Lepore, Jill.** *These Truths: A History of the United States*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2018.

- Our primary historical source (as of Ch.10, inc.)

**Biggsby, Christopher, editor.** *The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Culture*. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

- Key source. Each Chapter provides focus on a theme or topic; Notes and Further Reading at the end of each Chapter provide starting points for further research. Please find the [Table of Contents in ONB P0](#)

**Levine, Robert S., editor.** *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. 9th ed., C-E, W.W. Norton, 2017.

- Our main source for selected literary texts

**Cobbs, E. & Blum, E.J, ed.** *Major Problems in American History, Volume II: Since 1865, Documents and Essays*. 4th ed., Cengage Learning, 2017.

- Very useful. Collects contrasting views and debates over key issues by contemporaries, organized by period

**Burgett, Bruce, and Glenn Hendler, editors.** *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*. 3rd ed., New York UP, 2020.

- Short essays on key themes and topics in American Culture. Half of the essays are included in the print version, the other half online (see ONB)

**Kennedy, David M.** *The American Spirit: United States History as Seen by Contemporaries*. 13<sup>th</sup> ed., Cengage Learning, 2015.

- Another very useful source for comparing and contrasting data, views and debates in specific periods

**Halttunen, Karen, editor.** *A Companion to American Cultural History*. Wiley Blackwell, 2008.

- Another Companion with focused essays. A more theoretical approach, with a focus on American (Cultural) Studies

**Foner, Eric.** *Give me Liberty: an American History*. 5th ed., 2 vols. W. W. Norton, 2017.

- (vol. 2) A pedagogic American History. See also Kennedy, David. *The American Pageant*. Wadsworth, 2019.

## **CALENDAR** [dates subject to alteration]

SCB = Student's Course Book / ONB = ONline Book / Z = Zoom class

Class	Date	Content	Student
1	<b>Jan</b> 26	Syllabus Overview P0 - Introduction: Lepore and James Baldwin <i>Divisionism and The American Experiment</i>	Get SCB. Read SCB P1 (& from now on read respective SCB materials for next P section in advance) Recommended reading: ONB P0 B
2	28	(ONB P0 – Hodgson: c20 overview) P1	
3	<b>Feb</b> 2	P1 – The Progressive Era (1900-16) <i>Progressive reform; 'frontier'; foreign policy</i>	
4	4	P1 / P2 – WW1 (1916-20) <i>Neutrality &amp; global regulation; Romantic America v. avant-garde</i>	Read ONB 'Writing Abstracts'
5	9	How to Write an Abstract – Doubts P2	
6	11	P3 – The Twenties (1920-32) <i>Technology &amp; business; intolerance; feminism; Harlem Renaissance &amp; jazz</i>	
7	16	P3	
8	18	P4 – The New Deal (1932-40) <i>Great Depression; federal powers; Jim Crow; the blues</i>	
9	23	P4 Viewing: "Grapes of Wrath" (John Ford, 1940) [129m]	
10	25	P5 – WW2 (1941-45) <i>Isolationism; Pearl Harbor; Hiroshima; camps; Am classical music</i>	Start preparing abstract
Carnival break			
11	<b>Mar</b> 4	P6 – Cold War (1945-53) <i>Military industrial complex; McCarthyism; sci fi; folk music</i>	
12	9	P6	<b>Submit abstract</b>
13	11	P7 – Affluence (1953-60) <i>Baby boomers; Beats; TV; covert action</i>	
14	16	P7	
15	18	P8 – The Sixties (1960-68) <i>Civil rights struggle; counterculture; moon race</i>	
16	23	P8 – The Sixties (1960-68)	
17	25	P9 – Conservatism (1969-88) <i>Vietnam, rise of New Right; ERA</i>	
18	30	P9 – Conservatism (1969-88)	<b>Submit essay</b>
19	<b>Apr</b> 1	P10 – Globalization (1989-2001) <i>End of Cold War; Iraq; liberalization; prison industrial complex</i>	
20	6	P11 – From 9/11 to Obama (2001-16) <i>War on Terror; Great Recession; The Internet; mass shootings</i>	
21	8	P11 – From 9/11 to Obama (2001-16)	
Easter break			
22	20	P12 Post-Truth, Divisionism and Trump (2016- ) <i>Populism; echo chambers; COVID; 2020 election &amp; voting rights; BLM; 6<sup>th</sup> January; Evangelicals</i>	
23	22	P12 Post-Truth, Divisionism and Trump (2016- )	
24	27	<b>Test</b>	
25	29	<b>OPs start</b> (Oral Presentations on essay)	
26	<b>May</b> 4	OPs	
27	6	OPs	
28	11	OPs	
29	13	OPs	

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