What is this class about?

**POLITICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY:** This is a history class, which means we will be trying to make sense of the past and to understand how the past connects to today by learning stories about the past and analyzing texts and other media created in the past. “Social” and “political” refer to the kinds of stories we are interested in, which will include stories about laws and wars and elections, but also the stories of normal people and their everyday struggles to survive and to thrive.

**OF THE UNITED STATES:** Because this is a U.S. history class, we’ll focus on the question of what it means (and has meant in the past) to be an American. If the United States is the land of the free, what does freedom mean? And who has the right to claim the freedoms promised to Americans? As we’ll see, those questions have been answered various ways in the last 150 years, depending on the context and the person who answered them.

**II:** “II” means that this is the second half of the U.S. History sequence, but don’t worry if you haven’t taken the first half of the sequence - it’s not required to have it first, and you’ll understand what’s going on without it. This class starts in the period immediately following the Civil War (1865) and continues to the present.

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:**
Prof. Christina Heisser (Please call me Professor Heisser or Dr. Heisser)
Email: christinaheisser@gmail.com
Websites: Canvas: [https://ilearn.laccd.edu/](https://ilearn.laccd.edu/) and [http://lacchistory12.wordpress.com](http://lacchistory12.wordpress.com) (getting started)
Office hours: Franklin Hall 219-D:
Tuesday 2-3 pm; Wednesday 2-4pm, or by appt.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have. I am happy to help!
What will you learn?

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Analyze primary texts from U.S. history and connect them to broader themes and movements in history. (Assessed through participation in class discussion, essays and midterm and final exam.)
2. Explain and analyze issues and events that shaped the political and social development of the United States from the Reconstruction period to the present. (Assessed through short reading responses and essays.)

Why should you care?

Knowledge is power, and being informed about the country we live in gives you power - by helping you to look smart to a potential boss or by allowing you to disregard racist, sexist, or classist ideas dressed up as fact or history. Knowledge about the history of the United States is particularly important because we live in a democracy, and in a democracy, informed civilians have the power to change the system. By “civilians,” I mean normal people, people like you and me. Those civilians include citizens of the United States and non-citizens, too. Citizens can vote for change, of course, but organized non-citizens have also fought effectively for change, in recent times and in the more distant past. For example, the Dreamers, young people who are fighting for rights for undocumented immigrants, are informed non-citizens who have affected the way the immigration system works, even as they fight on for legislative change.

In addition to the content you learn in this class, the skills that you will practice are essential for any informed citizen or professional career. In this class, you will ask questions to identify bias and find meaning in confusing texts or in strange pictures. This practice will help you to better read between the lines for office politics in an email from your boss, decipher political rhetoric, and maybe even comprehend Ikea manuals. You will compose essays using evidence to support an argument - a skill that will help you advocate for proposals at work and win debates at the dinner table. If you already know how to do all these things, this class will give you an opportunity to continue to perfect your skills.

IMPORTANT DATES:

- September 2: Campus closed
- September 6: Last day to drop without a W and without a fee
- November 11: Campus closed
- November 17: Drop deadline (W)
- November 26, 12:45 pm: Untold Stories Showcase
- November 28-29: Campus closed
- December 11, 10:15am: Final exam
What will you do?

Read.

Textbook. The textbook for this class is optional. *Give Me Liberty! An American History*, vol. II, 5th ed., brief edition by Eric Foner is the book that provides the basis for most of the lectures in the class, so if you struggle with note taking or English language skills, it may be helpful to buy the textbook or commit to reviewing it consistently in the library as a supplement to lecture notes. The exams in the course are based on lecture material, and the textbook is an excellent backup to the lectures.

Stuff written by people who lived in the past. Historians call these *primary sources*. I’ll post links for assigned reading on the web through Canvas and, for the first few weeks, our course website. Please print or bring these documents with you to class on your phone or laptop. We will discuss them in detail in class, and it’s important to have it with you for reference.

Think. Ask. Discuss.

It is your job to ask questions in this class, because it is by asking questions that we learn. A historian asks questions about objects - like the photographs and art pictured in this syllabus - and, more often, texts. I hope you will ask relentless questions in this class - of me, of your classmates, of the things we read and look at together. Don’t be afraid to be curious (though we may not always find the answer) and don’t be afraid to look silly - chances are someone else has the same question.

Write.

We will do a lot of writing in this class. Reading, writing, and analysis are the core skills that history can help you to develop, so we will write constantly in and out of class. Most of the writing you do for this classes will not be graded. If you are willing to put in the work, you can be successful, even if you struggle with writing right now.

How will writing be graded? Homework is 26% of your grade for this class. In homework assignments, your writing will be graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. That means if you write 200 words and you show in those 200 words that you did the reading, you get credit. For in-class writing, including exams, you will be evaluated on the content of your writing rather than spelling, grammar, etc.

I believe that everybody can write - it’s a skill that we all develop through practice. My hope is that you will become more confident and more capable in expressing your ideas in writing as we go through the semester.

You can always get in touch with me with your questions as they come up. If you’re lost on how to get started, please ask for help! Send me an email, message me via Canvas, or stop by my office during office hours. I want you to do well, and I am glad when I can help that happen.
Week-by-week: A tentative program

Week 1
Introductions
HW 1 due

Week 2
Chapter 15: “What is Freedom?: Reconstruction, 1865-1877
HW 2 due

Week 3
Chapter 16: America’s Gilded Age, 1870-1890
Chapter 17: Freedom’s Boundaries, 1890-1900
HW 3 due

Week 4
Chapter 18: The Progressive Era, 1900-1916
HW 4 due

Week 5
Chapter 19: Safe for Democracy: The United States and World War I, 1916-1920
HW 5 due

Week 6
Chapter 20: From Business Culture to Great Depression: The Twenties, 1920-1932
HW 6 due

Week 7
Chapter 21: The New Deal, 1932-1940
HW 7 due; Midterm review

Week 8
Midterm Exam

Week 9
Chapter 22: Fighting for the Four Freedoms: World War II, 1941-1945; HW 8 due

Week 10
Chapter 23: The United States and the Cold War, 1945-1953
In-class museum; HW 9 due

Week 11
Chapter 24: The Affluent Society, 1953-1960
HW 10 due

Week 12
HW 11 due; Documentary response due

Week 13
Chapter 26: The Triumph of Conservatism, 1969-1988; HW 12 due

Week 14
HW 13 due; Thanksgiving

Week 15
Wrap-up, review for Final Exam

Note: Homework will be based on short online readings. Full details will be posted in Canvas.

Attendance: To be successful in this class, you must plan to come to class on every day we meet. Your participation is essential for your learning and the learning of your classmates. Grading in this class reflects the importance of the work we do during our class session, which means you must attend consistently to achieve a passing grade in the course.

Important: Students with more than four absences (unexcused and excused included) may be dropped from the course. It is a campus-wide policy to drop for non-attendance, due to our institutional reporting requirements for financial aid. I will try to work with you if emergencies crop up, but it is very important that you keep me informed, or you may be dropped.

You are considered absent if you are late or leave class early. Although life gets in the way sometimes, it helps us all stay focused on learning if we are all present for the entire class period.

If you miss class, you will need to get any necessary information from your classmates. It is a good idea to exchange contact info with someone in the class.

Tardiness: Tardiness or coming in late to class is disruptive to the class and to the instructor. We’ve all had days when the bus doesn’t show up or the car doesn’t start. That said, consistently showing up on time communicates that you make this class a priority and that you respect the instructor and your classmates.
Assignments and Grading:

**Exams (2@150 points each):** Exams will include short answer and essay questions. Students this semester will have the option to choose either a final exam or a final project for inclusion in the Untold Stories showcase. Full details to follow.

**Homework (13@ 20 points each):** Short (200 words) responses to primary document readings, submitted via Canvas. Homework is the foundation for our class discussions, so it must be submitted on time.

**In-class museum (50 points):** We’ll do a pop-up museum in class on this date, using photos, texts, and artifacts that you bring in. You’ll earn points for your contributions to the museum (homework) and for the work you do in class.

**Documentary response (1@50 points):** You’ll choose to watch one of a variety of documentaries and write a 500-word response.

**In-class writing (240 points):** Throughout the semester, we will also do activities in class with a writing component, and you will sometimes write brief reflections on course material. As a whole, these short assignments will be worth 240 points. In-class writing cannot be made up - you must be present to complete it and receive credit. One in-class writing assignment will be dropped per semester.

**A note re: deadlines and makeups:** You can submit one regular homework assignment late per semester. Submit within 7 days of the due date as a Canvas inbox message to me. In-class work cannot be made up, but one missed assignment will be dropped. There are no makeups for exams, except in the case of documented emergencies.

**Extra Credit**
You can earn up to 20 points extra credit throughout the semester, the equivalent of one letter grade on your final exam. See full details in Canvas - the discussion called “Extra Credit.”

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**Grade A: 900-1000 pts.**

An “A” student actively participates in class, completes all course assignments, and contributes insightful and interesting analysis of course material on graded assignments.

**Grade B: 800-895 pts.**

A “B” student regularly attends class and completes course work. They may be missing one or two required homework assignments or have one low exam score, but overall they submit work and explain ideas clearly on graded assignments.

**Grade C: 700-795 pts.**

This student does most homework and completes most in-class activities. Student completes all required exams with realistic attempts on all questions. This student is able to identify historical events but fails to interpret meanings.

**Grades D&F:**

**D: 600-695 pts.; F: less than 600 pts.**

This student completes less than half of homework assignments and misses several in-class assignments. Exam scores are low. This student is unable to identify historical events or explain meaning.
**Rules, Regulations, and other Fine Print**

**Dropping the Class:** It is the student’s responsibility to officially drop the class whenever he or she determines that he/she can no longer attend the class. Failure to drop a class officially may result in a failing grade and/or a financial obligation to the college.

**Important! Drop Date Information**
For full semester courses in Fall 2019, the deadline to drop without a “W” on your transcript is September 6, 2019. Effective July 1, 2012 students are allowed three (3) attempts to pass a single class within the Los Angeles Community College District. If a student gets a “W” or grade of “D”, “F”, or “NP” in a class, that counts as an attempt. If you think you will not be able to complete this course with a C or better, drop by September 6, 2019. If the class begins or ends on a different date, please refer to [http://www.lacitycollege.edu/services/admissions/dates.html](http://www.lacitycollege.edu/services/admissions/dates.html)

**Short-term classes:** Drop dates for short-term classes are not the same as full semester classes. For specific deadline dates, please contact the Admissions Office.

If you need help paying for books and other college expenses, call the Financial Aid Office at (323) 953-4000 extension 2010, or see them at Student Services Village room 117 [http://www.lacitycollege.edu/stusvcs/finaid/](http://www.lacitycollege.edu/stusvcs/finaid/)

**Disability Information:** Students with a verified disability who may need authorized accommodation(s) for this class are encouraged to notify the instructor and the Office of Special Services (SSV 100, 323-953-4000, ext. 2270) as soon as possible, at least two weeks before any exam or quiz. All information will remain confidential.

**Cell Phone/Computer/Electronic Device Policy:** Students may not use cell phones to accept or make calls while in class. They must be turned to silent mode. Computers or tablets are permitted solely for note-taking or research, and no inappropriate uses during class. Students who do not adhere to this policy will be asked to leave class. If there is a second occurrence, the student will be referred to the VP of Student Services, and will return to class after the VP has cleared her or him to return.

**Academic Dishonesty/Cheating – Board Rule 9803.28:** Violations of Academic Integrity include, but are not limited to, the following actions: cheating on an exam, plagiarism, working together on an assignment, paper or project when the instructor has specifically stated students should not do so, submitting the same term paper to more than one instructor, or allowing another individual to assume one’s identity for the purpose of enhancing one’s grade.

**Class Conduct:** Please treat all class members with respect. Please familiarize yourself with the Student LACC Code of Conduct for guidelines on acceptable and unacceptable conduct.

Disruptive behavior or lack of preparation can result in the expulsion of the student from class. Consult the current calendar for information concerning holidays, drop dates, registration, etc. It is the student’s responsibility to follow those dates.

**Disputing Grades:** If you choose to dispute your grade for the course you must submit a type-written, double-spaced letter explaining why you believe your grade was not appropriate to the work you have completed. You must attach all supporting papers, exams, homework assignments and all applicable materials to support your case. I will review your information and make a determination if a grade change is warranted. As a reminder, as I review your information, your grade may be lowered due to my error in giving you a higher grade than you actually earned. You are responsible for your own performance and grade.

**Note:** This syllabus is tentative and subject to change. I may amend, add, and/or delete any of the items. You will be notified of any changes.

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**My citations:** Thanks go to my colleagues in the Faculty Teaching and Learning Academy (FTLA) and LACC Social Sciences Department for providing inspiration, help with the fine print (some of which is reproduced word-for-word here), and constructive feedback.

**Images:** Most images in this syllabus were taken from the Metropolitan Museum of Art Timeline of Art History (metmuseum.org/toah/) and from the University of California’s Calisphere website.(calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu). The Milli Vanilli picture came from Google images.