HISTORY 130-07, TR 11:00-12:15, HOLT 352 (COURSE # 6394)

INSTRUCTOR: BOB ARCHER

COURSE SYLLABUS

THIS COURSE will cover the study of United States history from the era of the American Revolution to our post-9/11 dilemmas.

INSTRUCTION INFORMATION

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OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday-Thursday, 11:15-12:20, & Wednesday, 6-6:50

COURSE OBJECTIVES

From George Washington and a bunch of nervous lawyers declaring independence from Britain, to the catastrophe of the American Civil War, and on through to all the nastiness, violence, carnage and upheavals of the World Wars, then beyond that to the Vietnam War and its quasi-replay the Iraq War, we will lay bare as much history, warts and all, of the United States as we can possibly squeeze into one semester. Familiar characters like Washington, Lincoln, the Roosevelt presidents, Martin Luther King, Tricky Dicky Nixon and Dubya Bush will make appearances alongside other illustrious, notorious and some not-so-well-known figures such as John Brown, Emma Goldman and Margaret Sanger, Jack Dempsey, Babe Ruth, Jack Kerouac, Jackie Robinson, Bob Dylan and Joan Baez, the 1980 U.S. Olympic Hockey team, Angela Jolie, of course, and a host of others.

Simply put, History 130 is a survey course in American history that examines key events, themes, movement and personalities of the American story. Studying our collective past enables us to shed light and understanding not only on the growth and struggles of the American people, but also on many of our current social, political cultural, and economic problems and concerns.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

BOOKS: THERE ARE TWO REQUIRED BOOKS – BOTH ARE UNUSUAL BY UNIVERSITY STANDARDS.

A PEOPLE’S HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES, BY HOWARD ZINN. It should be obvious from the get-go that this book has a heavy left-wing bent. But lest you think I agree with all of Zinn’s interpretations of our past, let me set you straight: I don’t. The service Zinn provides, though, is something very useful: a history of the U.S. that acts as a needed tonic against the jingoism and brainless patriotism that too often passes for thinking in our society these days. Zinn asks us to examine our past as honestly as possible, for that is the only hope we have for correcting our behavior in the future.

DON’T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HISTORY, BY KENNETH DAVIS. Davis had a good time writing this book, and it shows. A conversational narrative history that entertains while enlightening.

THERE ARE ALSO SHORT READINGS ON THE COURSE WEB SITE THAT WILL SUPPLEMENT AND ILLUMINATE WHAT YOU LEARN IN CLASS AND IN THE ASSIGNED READING. CHECK OUT THE READING SCHEDULE BELOW TO FIND THEM.

INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT INFORMATION!!!

-----AFTER THE COURSE CALENDAR SECTION OF THIS SYLLABUS, I’VE PROVIDED A LIST OF STUDY QUESTIONS FOR EVERY WEEK OF THE SEMESTER. YOU SHOULD FIND THIS HELPFUL...PERHAPS INVALUABLE. CERTAINLY YOU’LL NEVER STOP THANKING ME.

-----DON’T COME LATE AND DON’T LEAVE EARLY. BOTH ARE INCREDIBLY DISRESPECTFUL, IDSRUPTIVE, AND ANNOYING.

-----COMPLETE ALL THE COURSE WORK – OR FLUNK.
**READING ASSIGNMENTS:** I urge you to keep up with the reading schedule, which is provided in the “Course Calendar” section of this syllabus. By following this schedule, or even reading ahead, you will find yourself well prepared for the weekly quizzes and midterms.

**QUIZZES:** There will be ELEVEN quizzes. The quizzes will consist of true-false/multiple choice (about 10-20 per quiz) or written questions. Quizzes will be on Tuesdays. I will drop your lowest quiz score. Consult the Course Calendar below for all quiz dates.

**MID-TERM EXAMINATIONS:** There will be THREE EXAMS: TWO MID-TERM EXAMS AND THE FINAL. Exams will be worth 100 points each. Check the Course Calendar below for exam dates. See the Course Calendar below for exam dates.

**EXTRA CREDIT:** THERE WILL BE NO EXTRA CREDIT

**TIME REQUIREMENTS OUTSIDE OF CLASS**
To be eminently successful, the typical student will find it necessary to spend at least two hours studying for every hour in class (about 6 hours of study per week). Don’t procrastinate! If you do, you will find that there is not enough time to accomplish everything you need to do.

**ATTENDANCE**
Attendance is required. More than THREE unexcused absences will result in your final grade being dropped a half-point for each subsequent unexcused absence. Also, if you leave class early without informing me you intend to do so first, I will mark you as absent for that day. Early departures are annoying and disruptive.

**GRADE EVALUATION**
The quizzes and exams will all be given points, recorded in the grade book, and added up for a final grade. **CHEATING**
Dishonesty is unacceptable. If discovered, expect to receive a failing grade for the course.

**COURSE CALENDAR** (subject to modification at the instructor’s discretion)

**WEEK 1, JANUARY 29 & 31:** **INTRODUCTION; A GLANCE BACK AT THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.** JUST A QUICK SKIM OVER THE INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT EVENTS THAT LED TO THE FORMATION OF OUR LITTLE REPUBLIC.
**READ:** DAVIS, DON’T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HISTORY, PP. 63-71 AND 93-134

**WEEK 2, FEBRUARY 5 & 7:** **THE MEXICAN WAR & SLAVERY AS IT WAS.** THE U.S. INSTITUTIGATES A WAR WITH MEXICO AND WINS, WITH MOST AMERICANS BELIEVING THAT OUR “MANIFEST DESTINY” JUSTIFIES THIS VIOLENT LAND GRAB. BUT THE ORIGINAL SIN OF THE NATION, BLACK SLAVERY, REMAINS A PERSISTENT SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL REALITY WHICH TO THE GROWING ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT IN THE NORTH BETRAYS THE VERY IDEALS ON WHICH THE NATION WAS FOUNDED. THE COUNTRY BEGINS TO DIVIDE OVER THE ISSUE OF SLAVERY.
**READ:** DAVIS, DON’T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HISTORY, 183-201 AND ZINN, A PEOPLE’S HISTORY...CH. 8(“WE TAKE NOTHING BY CONQUEST, THANK GOD”)
**QUIZ #1:** TUESDAY, ON LAST WEEK’S (WEEK 1) READINGS

**WEEK 3, FEBRUARY 12 & 14:** **THE ROAD TO THE CIVIL WAR.** THE COUNTRY BEGINS TO FALL APART IN THE 1850’S, AS SOUTHERNERS DIG IN TO PROTECT THEIR “PECULIAR INSTITUION.” EXTREMISTS LIKE JOHN BROWN EMERGE TO TRY AND FORCE THE ISSUE. WITH LINCOLN’S ELECTION IN 1860 SOUTHERN STATES BEGIN SECEDING FROM THE UNION. SOON, IT’S WAR.
**READ:** DAVIS, CH. 4, 201-215; ZINN, CH. 9, 171-188 (“SLAVERY WITHOUT SUBMISSION, EMANCIPATION WITHOUT FREEDOM”)
**QUIZ #2:** TUESDAY, ON LAST WEEK’S (WEEK 2) READING

**WEEK 4, FEBRUARY 19 & 21:** **THE CIVIL WAR & RECONSTRUCTION.** AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY ENSUES. THE CIVIL WAR IS THE SINGLE MOST SPECTACULAR EVENT IN OUR HISTORY, BUT THE COST IS HIGH. THE NORTH PREVAILS AFTER SEVERAL YEARS, BUT RECONSTRUCTING
THE UNION IS ANOTHER MATTER. WE’LL VIEW RECONSTRUCTION AFTER THE CIVIL WAR IN THE CONTEXT OF HOW DIFFICULT IT HAS BEEN FOR THE AMERICAN FORCES IN IRAQ TO DEAL WITH THE INSURGENCY AFTER THE AMERICAN ARMY HAD EASILY WON THE CONVENTION MILITARY ENGAGEMENTS. IT’S ONE THING TO WAGE WAR; IT’S QUITE ANOTHER TO CREATE ANYTHING REMOTELY RESEMBLING A LASTING PEACE.

**READ:** DAvis, CH. 4, 215-251; ZINN, CH. 9, 188-210 AND CHAPTER 10 “THE OTHER CIVIL WAR”, ONLY 233-251

**QUIZ #3.** TUESDAY, ON LAST WEEK’S READING

**WEEK 5:** TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26: FINISHING RECONSTRUCTION
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28: FIRST MID-TERM EXAMINATION ON ALL PREVIOUS LECTURES, READINGS, FILMS, AND HANDOUTS

**WEEK 6, MARCH 5 & 7:** THE GREAT WAR AND MODERN MADNESS. THE PLANET GOES NUTS AND OVER TEN MILLION PEOPLE DIE IN THE DUMBEST WAR IN HISTORY. WORSE, DESPITE THE DREAMY VISIONARY IDEALS OF AMERICAN PRESIDENT WOODROW WILSON, WHO TRIES TO ESTABLISH A “NEW WORLD ORDER” THAT WILL FOLLOW HIS “FOURTEEN POINTS” FOR PEACE, THE POSTWAR WORLD MAKES EVEN LESS SENSE THAN THE PREWAR WORLD DID, SETTING THE TABLE FOR EMERGENT DICTATORS LIKE HITLER AND MUSSOLINI.

**READ:** DAvis, 303-328, ZINN, CH. 14 (“WAR IS THE HEALTH OF THE STATE”)

**NO QUIZ THIS WEEK**

**WEEK 7, MARCH 12 & 14:** HARD TIMES: THE GREAT DEPRESSION. AFTER THE FUN AND GAMES OF THE “ROARING TWENTIES,” THE U.S. TRIES TO COPE WITH A COLLAPSED ECONOMIC SYSTEM AS FDR INTRODUCES HIS “NEW DEAL” PROGRAM OF RECOVERY. ACROSS THE POND, THE NAZIS MAKE THEIR MOVE ON THEIR NEIGHBORING STATES AND THE JAPANESE RUN WILD IN THE FAR EAST. INCREASINGLY, ANOTHER WORLD WAR SEEMS INEVITABLE.

**READ:** DAvis, 328-358, ZINN, CH. 15 (“SELF-HELP IN HARD TIMES”)

**QUIZ #4:** TUESDAY, ON LAST WEEK’S READING

**WEEK 8, NO CLASS MARCH 19 & 21:** SPRING BREAK

**WEEK 9, MARCH 26 & 28:** ARMAGEDDON AGAIN: THE U.S. IN WORLD WAR II. WAR RAGES AROUND THE GLOBE AS HUGE ARMIES ATTEMPT TO ANNIHILATE EACH OTHER, AND PERHAPS THE HUMAN RACE. THE U.S. DEPLOYS ATOMIC WEAPONRY ON JAPAN, BUT ALSO DISCOVERS AND LIBERATES CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN EUROPE. THE WORLD WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN.

**READ:** DAvis, 358-421, ZINN, CH. 16, 407-442 (“A PEOPLE’S WAR?”)

**QUIZ #5:** TUESDAY, ON LAST WEEK’S READING

**WEEK 10: APRIL 2 & 4:** THE EARLY COLD WAR & THE McCARTHY ERA. CAPITALISM VS. COMMUNISM LEADS TO PARANOIA AND REPRESSION IN POSTWAR AMERICA.

**READ:** DAvis, 421-436, ZINN, CH. 17 (“OR DOES IT EXPLODE?”)

**QUIZ #6:** TUESDAY, ON LAST WEEK’S READINGS

**WEEK 11: APRIL 9:** THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT
**APRIL 11:** SECOND MID-TERM EXAMINATION ON ALL LECTURES, READINGS, FILMS, AND HANDOUTS SINCE THE FIRST MIDTERM

**WEEK 12, APRIL 16 & 18:** VIETNAM: THE WAR WE COULDN’T loose AND HOW WE DID. WE WILL EXAMINE THE VIETNAM WAR IN THE CONTEXT OF TODAY’S IRAQ WAR. ALMOST EVERYTHING AMERICANS LEARNED ABOUT COUNTERINSURGENCY WARFARE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
IN THE 60’S WAS FORGOTTEN BY THE TIME OF THE 2003 INVASION OF IRAQ, WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO THE QUAGMIRE THERE.

READ:  DAVIS, 436-479, ZINN, CH. 18 (“THE IMPOSSIBLE VICTORY: VIETNAM”)

QUIZ #7:  TUESDAY, ON LAST WEEK’S READING

WEEK 13, APRIL 23 & 25:  YEAH, BABY!: THE SWINGIN’ SIXTIES AND “RIGHTS CONSCIOUSNESS”.  EXCESS, PROTEST, AND THE AMAZING CRIMES OF THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION.  FROM BOB DYLAN TO THE HIPPIES AND THE MERRY PRANKSTERS TO CHARLES MANSON TO WOUNDED KNEE II TO TRICKY DICKY NIXON TO THE MANIAC G. GORDON LIDDY TO THE FALL OF SAIGON AND ON TO DISCO, IT WAS A TIME WHEN IT SEEMED THAT OUR COUNTRY MIGHT ACTUALLY BE GOING CRAZY. BUT IT WAS WEIRDLY FUN, TOO.
READ:  DAVIS, 479-510, ZINN, CHS. 19-20 (“SURPRISES” & “THE SEVENTIES: UNDER CONTROL?”)

QUIZ #8:  TUESDAY, ON LAST WEEK’S READING

WEEK 14, APRIL 30 & MAY 2:  THE RESURGENCE OF CONSERVATISM. FROM RONALD REAGAN TO GEORGE W. BUSH, HOW CONSERVATISM CAME TO DOMINANT THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN THE U.S., WHILE ALSO MORPHING FROM “TRADITIONAL” CONSERVATISM TO THE NEO-CONSERVATISM OF THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION.
READ:  DAVIS, 510-541, ZINN, CHS. 21 (“CARTER-REAGAN-BUSH I: THE BIPARTISAN CONSENSUS”)

QUIZ #9:  TUESDAY, ON LAST WEEK READING

READ:  DAVIS, 541-582, ZINN, CH. 24 (“THE CLINTON PRESIDENCY”)

QUIZ #10:  TUESDAY, ON LAST WEEK’S READING

WEEK 16, MAY 16 & 18:  THE AFGHANISTAN & IRAQ WARS. AN INCISIVE LOOK AT GEORGE W. BUSH’S WARS.

QUIZ #11:  ON LAST WEEK’S READINGS

FINAL EXAM TIME:

TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2-3:50 p.m.

STUDY QUESTIONS

WEEK ONE

1. What events contributed the greatest to the American colonists’ growing unhappiness with British rule?
2. What were the roles played by Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson in Americans’ assertion of their independence in 1776?
3. How much colonial opposition was there to British rule in 1776?
4. What motivated the colonial poor to fight the British?
5. Zinn argues that the American Revolution “was making the ruling elite more secure against internal trouble (ch. 5).” What evidence does Zinn provide to support this assertion?
6. The Battle of Saratoga (1777) brought the French into the war on the side of the Americans. Why was this result significant enough to make the Battle of Saratoga the “turning point” of the war?

7. What were the grievances of the American troops who mutinied or rebelled during the American Revolution?

8. What were the methods of control used by the Revolutionary elite to control disobedient and rebellious colonists?

9. How did farmers resist impoverishment?

10. Why did the Indians fight with the British against the colonial rebels?

11. How did blacks respond to the opportunities presented by the Revolutionary War? How effective were their responses?

12. Why did the author of “All men are created equal”, Thomas Jefferson, remain a slaveholder all his life?

13. Who benefits most from a strong central government? How?

14. In the months preceding Shays’s Rebellion, what were the grievances of western Massachusetts farmers? What were the state government’s responses (both judicial and legislative)? To the grievances of these farmers? What were the Boston merchants’ responses to Shays’s resistance?

15. Did Shays’s Rebellion have the salutary effect of “refreshing the tree of liberty”?

16. Did the U.S. Constitution define a democratic government? Is a democratic government possible in an economically polarized society?

WEEK TWO

1. When did Mexico achieve independence from Spain?

2. When did Texas become independent from Mexico?

3. When did Texas become a state of the United States?

4. When did the Mexican-American War begin?

5. What were the arguments that the U.S. news media used to support a war with Mexico?

6. By 1848, did Congressman Abraham Lincoln end up supporting the war?

7. The poet Walt Whitman wrote that Mexico must be soundly punished. What did Mexico do that persuaded Whitman to demand that Mexico be “crushed”?

8. What role did race play in both the promotion of and opposition to the war?

9. The New York Herald wrote that by conquering Mexico, the United States would “civilize” it. What do you think the Herald meant by “civilize”?

10. Who were the opponents of the Mexican War? How did they manifest (in word and deed) their opposition? To what degree were their tactics effective?

11. How can the division within the U.S. over the Mexican-American War (1846-48) be seen as a prelude to the Civil War (1861-65)?

12. Why did many of the American soldiers wish to quit fighting?

13. How much of Mexico did the U.S. take/buy/acquire in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo? Was this a better bargain than the Louisiana Purchase (1803)?

14. On what basis did the U.S. government support slavery?

15. What actions did the U.S. government take to support slavery?
16. Why would a slave dance and laugh the evening of the morning that he had received two hundred lashes?
17. Was resistance to slavery more, as much, or less, effective than rebellion?
18. What is the evidence that it was dangerous to slave masters to allow poor whites and blacks to fraternize?
19. How did slaves manage to maintain a community? Why did they work so hard to do so?
20. Why was there a price on David Walker’s head?
21. Why was Frederick Douglass “the most famous black man of his time”?
22. How did Harriet Tubman contribute to the undermining of the slave power?

WEEK THREE

1. What was J.W. Loguen’s argument against the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850?
2. What does Sarah Logue’s proposal and Loguen’s response reveal about how slave owners justified slavery?
3. How did the racism of some white abolitionists reveal itself? How could a white person be both an abolitionist and a racist? Why would a racist be an abolitionist? (Was the institution of slavery undermining the free labor philosophy that allowed the northern elite to justify economic inequality of the factory system?)
4. What was the “triple hurdle” that Sojourner Truth had to overcome?
5. How old was John Brown at the time he led the raid on Harper’s Ferry? What did he hope to accomplish? Was he successful?
6. Abraham Lincoln was able to speak to both sides of the slavery debate. Why did he feel compelled to speak to both sides, given his personal solution to the problem of slavery in America?
7. How did the northern elite’s plans for economic expansion force the South into radical opposition?
8. Lincoln’s goal in waging Civil War on the South was to “preserve the Union” by subjugating the South to the northern capital’s control. What series of events altered Lincoln’s rhetoric to include black emancipation as a goal of the war?
9. How was Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation a military tactic?
10. What evidence supports the thesis that the North could not have won without the help of American black soldiers?
11. After the South surrendered, how did Congress dispose of the land confiscated during the war? Of what significance was this decision? (For example, what did it reveal about the congressional majority’s belief about the future status of blacks in the United States?)
12. In 1868, was the Georgia legislature successful in expelling its black members?
13. Why does Zinn choose to tell us about Frances Ellen Watkins Harper? What is the point?
14. Why does Zinn think that laws calling for equal treatment of blacks and whites were meaningless in practice? What other reforms would have had to accompany such laws for the laws to be meaningful in Zinn’s eyes? Why? Do you agree?
15. What caused Republicans to abandon their defense of black rights?
16. In 1883, the Supreme Court declared the Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional. What was the majority argument? What was Justice Harlan’s dissenting argument? 17. How did blacks respond to the end of the U.S. government’s military protection of black civil rights?

WEEK FOUR

1. Review the military history of the Civil War.  
2. Review the major events of Reconstruction.  
3. Did the Civil War effectively end the growing division between capital and labor?  
4. Why were there draft riots in 1863?  
5. How did judges interpret the law in favor of those businessmen who wished to expand at the expense of others?  
6. After the Civil War (1861-65) were the conditions of the urban poor the same, worse, or better than they had been before the Civil War (pre-1861)?  
7. What types of work opened up to women as a result of the Civil War?  
8. Why did the men of the National Labor Union vote to include blacks and women among their numbers in 1869?  
9. What evidence does Zinn provide to illustrate the fact that economic crisis made workers adopt more radical tactics than they had used during periods of economic growth? Why would this happen?

WEEK FIVE: EXAM #1 AND THE CLOSING OF THE FRONTIER

1. You read from Davis’s book only on the Thursday after the exam. The reading is straightforward and easy to deal with. The questions for next week’s quiz will come from that reading and Thursday’s lecture on the Indian Wars.

WEEK SIX

ZINN’S CHAPTER 12, “THE EMPIRE AND THE PEOPLE”

1. Why might Teddy Roosevelt have thought that the U. s. needed a war in 1987?  
2. In what sense was expansion overseas “not a new idea?” If it was not new, then why did it not begin until 1898?  
3. How many times did the U.S. government intervene in the affairs of other countries between 1798 and 1895?  
4. U.S. business interests favored an “open door” policy over the conquest of colonies. From this point of view, what were the pros and cons of intervening in the Cuban revolt that began in 1895? Why did intervention ultimately win out?  
5. What were labor’s arguments against going to war against Spain? Why did most unions not oppose the war once it was declared?  
6. Why were the Cuban rebel leaders shut out of the negotiations for peace?  
7. What was the Teller Amendment? Was it honored by the U. S. government?  
8. How did the Filipinos respond to the U.S. decision to take over their country?  
9. How did Beveridge justify American cruelty toward the Filipinos in 1900? Why did the U.S. government resort to such brutality? (Consider the following when
answering the question: race relations in the U.S.; the Filipino population’s relations to the guerrillas; and the U.S. government’s goals of the Spanish-American War).

10. What explains the heavy opposition to the Treaty of Annexation? (For example, why was it ratified by only one vote?)

11. According to an open letter to President McKinley by “a group of Massachusetts Negroes,” what was the federal government’s response when whites attacked and murdered blacks for two days in Wilmington, North Carolina?

ZINN’S CHAPTER 13, “THE SOCIALIST CHALLENGE”

1. Why is the suffrage movement included in a chapter called “The Socialist Challenge”?

2. Emma Goldman argued that “the cause of the Spanish-American war was the price of sugar…” How could that be?

3. In a letter to the New York Herald in 1900 characterizing the U.S. government’s conduct of the Spanish-American War, Mark Twain refers to the U.S. as “Christendom.” Why? Why does he refer to battles as “pirate raids”? How might the war have had the effect of filling America’s “soul full of meanness?”

4. Of the following, who cannot be considered a muckraker? a. Ida Tarbell  b. Lincoln Steffens  c. Henry Frick  d. Upton Sinclair Are there other muckrakers whom Zinn mentions who are not in the list above?

5. How was Taylorism a response to the concerns of big business (concerns raised by the financial collapse of 1907?)

6. Why did 146 Triangle Shirtwaist Company workers die in the fire of 1911?

7. How did the leadership of the IWW differ from that of the AFL? Does the difference in membership between the IWW and AFL explain the difference in tactics and goals between the two organizations? If not, then what does explain the difference in tactics and goals between the AFL and the IWW?

8. “…the IWW became a threat to the capitalist class, exactly when capitalist growth was enormous and profits huge.” Is this a coincidence? Defend your answer.

9. Why do you think that Joe Hill’s trial became known throughout the world?

10. Why did school boards want their female teachers to be single and celibate?

11. Why were workers attracted to socialism? Why did businessmen find socialism the greatest of threats (a threat to what)? Why would women workers be skeptical of socialism? Why would they be skeptical of feminism? Why would black workers be skeptical of socialism? Why would skilled workers be antagonistic to socialism? Is socialism as a theory inherently (by definition) discriminatory?

12. What opinions did Crystal Eastman, Margaret Sanger, and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn share?

13. Why was Helen Keller a socialist but not a suffragist?

14. Why did Mother Jones work so hard to end child labor?

15. If the 26 (or so) deaths at Ludlow on April 20, 1914, were called the “Ludlow Massacre,” why not also refer to the deaths of 146 women in the Triangle fire of 1911 as the “Triangle Massacre” (were they not also murdered)?

WEEK SEVEN: WORLD WAR I
1. When did World War I begin? When did the U.S. enter World War I?
2. How many Europeans died during the war? How many Americans?
3. Why can World War I be called a war of attrition?
4. What was so ironic about the title of Erich Maria Remarque’s novel about World War I?
5. Why were American troops “badly needed” by the French and British governments?
6. How was America’s interest and participation in World War I an extension of the same foreign policy rationale behind the government’s decision to wage war on Spain in 1898?
7. According to Zinn, once the United States declared war on Germany “a national consensus for war was needed, and the government moved quickly to create such a consensus.” What actions did the government take to create consensus?
8. Did the U.S. government’s decision to enter World War I cause an increase in popularity of socialism in America, or did socialism’s popularity merely coincide with America’s participation in the war? (In other works, did the conditions created by the war compel people to become socialists whereas in a time of peace they would not have?)
9. Was advocating socialism during the war equivalent to falsely shouting “fire” in a crowded theater?
10. What were the reasons to oppose America’s involvement in WWI? What were the reasons to support the war?
11. How did World War I shatter the IWW?
12. What is the evidence for Zinn’s argument that “when the war was over, the Establishment still feared socialism?”

WEEK EIGHT: SPRING BREAK

WEEK NINE: THE GREAT DEPRESSION

1. Why did the Seattle general strike end after five days?
2. What did the Seattle general strike symbolize to the business and government elite?
3. Why were there so many strikes directly after the end of World War I?
4. Why is the depiction of the 1920s as prosperous and “roaring” a misleading one?
5. Why might working-class women not celebrate the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment?
6. How did Fiorella LaGuardia behave differently from other political figures in the 1920s?
7. Why did mill owners move their factories to the South in the 1920s?
8. What was John Kenneth Galbraith’s explanation of the American economic collapse in 1929? What was the socialist’s explanation? What was Henry Ford’s?
9. What percentage of the workforce was laid off during the Great Depression? What happened to these workers?
10. What series of historical events did Steinbeck’s The Grapes of Wrath chronicle?
11. What was the direct action or grassroots political activity that the hungry and homeless engaged in as a response to their condition during the depression? What was their cultural response? Their electoral response?
12. What were the demands of the Bonus Army? What was Hoover’s response to those demands? How might Hoover have handled the situation differently?
13. What led to the creation of the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations)?
14. What were the tactical advantages of the sit-down strike over a walkout? What were the disadvantages?
15. How were the workers able to sustain the strike in Flint, Michigan for three winter months?
16. Did World War II function weaken labor’s strength in the same way World War I did?

WEEK TEN: THE ERA OF WORLD WAR TWO

1. How does the U.S. government’s “record in world affairs” prior to 1941 indicate that U.S. involvement in World War II promised not to be an effective blow to “imperialism, racism, totalitarianism, militarism, in the world?”
2. Why did the U.S. government promise the French that their “sovereignty will be reestablished as soon as possible throughout all the territory, metropolitan or colonial, over which flew the French flag in 1939” when two weeks later the U.S. government promised “the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live?”
3. How did the U.S. ensure that it would control the international exchange rates after World War II?
4. How does Zinn explain Roosevelt’s failure to “take steps” that might have saved thousands of people from dying Nazi concentration camps?
5. If an economic motive could be attributed to the signing of Executive Order 9066, what might it be?
6. Why were most American blacks unenthusiastic and even unsupportive of the United States’ participation in World War II?
7. If the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was not necessary to force Japan to surrender, why was it done?
8. Why were there so many strikes following the end of World War II?
9. How does “a permanent war economy” solve the “problems of control?”
10. How did the Truman Doctrine convince Americans that the U.s. government should support fascism in Greece?
11. Is the rationale for American involvement in the Korean War contradicted by its actions during the war?
12. How did the Korean War contribute to the forging of a liberal/conservative consensus?
13. How did the U.S. government portray the independence movements of the Indochinese, Indonesians, Africans, and Filipinos to the American public?
14. For what was Joe McCarthy censured?
15. What point is Zinn making by revealing the positions that Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, and John Kennedy took regarding the government’s anti-Communist strategy of the late 1940s and early 1950s?
16. What role did the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) play in forging the consensus behind American foreign policy after World War II?
17. What was America’s foreign policy after World War II?
18. What was the economic goal of the Marshall Plan? What was the political goal?
19. Why did U.S. foreign policy support right-wing dictatorships? (Why did the U.S. overthrow democratically elected government, e.g., in Guatemala in 1954?)
20. What measures did the U.S. government take to keep the Bay of Pigs invasion secret from the American public? Why did the U.S. government plot to overthrow Castro with such secrecy?

WEEK ELEVEN: EXAM #2

WEEK TWELVE: THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

1. How does Countee Cullen’s poem “Incident” capture the complex and indelible psychological impact of racism?
2. Why were many whites surprised by the black revolt of the 1950s and 1960s?
12. Why did Herndon join the Communist party? For what action(s) did he spend five years in prison?
13. Why did Truman and his advisers feel a need to “act on the race question” immediately following World War II? What evidence exists to support Zinn’s answer to this question?
14. What actions did Truman’s administration take “on the race question?” What actions did they not take?
15. In what way did the 1954 Brown decision by the Supreme Court mark a departure from its previous course? In what way did it not?
16. How did the Montgomery bus boycott begin? What was the end result of the boycott?
17. What were the successful tactics and tools used in the Montgomery boycott that were used in similarly successive struggles?
18. What was the key strategy that Martin Luther King, Jr., contributed to the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s? Did it have long-term results?
19. What was the goal of the Freedom Riders? How were they able to achieve that goal?
20. What compromises did civil rights leaders make in order to have federal approval of the 1963 March on Washington? Why do you think they felt that federal approval was worth such compromises?
21. What do you think Zinn means by this: “...but voting was not a fundamental solution to racism or poverty?”
22. Why did King speak out against the war in Vietnam? Why did he not speak out against the war earlier than he did?
23. How did the government respond to King’s shift in focus from civil rights to poverty? How can one explain the government’s response?
24. Were Fred Hampton and Mark Clark murdered? Defend your answer and establish the argument against your answer. What further detail (in addition to that which Zinn provides) would help make one argument stronger than the other?

WEEK THIRTEEN: THE VIETNAM WAR

1. What were the Vietnamese complaints against French rule as itemized in their 1945 Declaration of Independence and in Ho Chi Minh’s letters to Truman?

17. How did the U.S. Department of Defense internally account for Ho Chi Minh’s widespread popular support? What was the public account?

18. Why did the U.S. finance 80 percent of the French war effort in Indochina? Did the public reason differ from the reason circulated internally?

19. What did the 1954 Geneva Peace Accord stipulate? Why did the U.S. agree to elections and then prevent elections from occurring?

20. Why was the Diem regime unpopular with the South Vietnamese?

21. What was Kennedy’s policy toward Vietnam? How was such a policy consistent with his policy toward Cuba?

22. Why did Vietnamese Buddhists immolate themselves? Were the Buddhist self-immolations an effective tactic?

23. Why did Kennedy not warn Diem of the impending coup? How did the Johnson administration persuade Congress to give the president the freedom to wage war on Vietnam?

24. What were “search and destroy” missions? What was their purpose?

25. What was Operation Phoenix? Why were the American people kept ignorant of its existence?

26. What does napalm do? Why use it rather than conventional weapons?

27. What were the connections that civil rights activists made between American domestic policies and American pursuit of war in Vietnam?

WEEK FOURTEEN: THE SWINGIN’ SIXTIES AND THE HUNGOVER SEVENTIES

ZINN’S CHAPTER 19: “SURPRISES”

1. “By 1960, 36 percent of all women sixteen and older – 23 million women – worked for paid wages. But there were nursery schools for the children of only 2 percent of working mothers.” (Zinn). What is the point of pairing these two statistics together?

2. How did World War II cause the modern feminist movement?

3. “The only way for a woman, as for a man, to find herself, to know herself as a person, is by creative work of her own.” (quote in Zinn). Why would a working-class woman not be inspired to become a feminist by such a statement?

16. By 1969, one out of every three working women had a husband earning less than $5,000 a year. What is the significance of this fact?

17. What was the double bind that working women were in?

6. Why might Radical Women call “bras, girdles, curlers, false eyelashes, wigs and other things” “women’s garbage?”
7. Why would a woman say, “To me, having a baby inside me is the only time I’m really alive”?
8. Why could women not seek legal action before 1967 if they had been discriminated against because they were women?
9. Why is abortion perceived as a feminist issue and not a medical or civil rights issue? What is a feminist issue? Is it different from a human rights or civil rights issue?
10. “Women are controlled by lashing us to our bodies.” What might Adrienne Rich have meant by this?
11. How does “breaking his spirit” reform a criminal?
12. Why did prisoners go on strike, fast, and riot?
13. “The poorer you were the more likely you were to end up in jail.” With what evidence does Zinn support this argument?
14. How was George Jackson an example of a new kind of political prisoner?
15. What was it like to be a prisoner in Attica in 1971?
16. What incident provoked the Attica rebellion? How did the rebellion end?
17. How can you account for the racial harmony among prisoners given the discriminatory manner in which they were treated?
18. What did the Supreme Court determine in 1978 regarding prisoners and their ability to communicate with the outside world? What lesson did prisoners draw from this decision?
19. Why was the emergence of the American Indian movement (AIM) a surprise to whites?
20. How did Chief Luther Bear’s testimony in 1933 explain many Indians’ refusal to adopt the dominant culture as their own?
21. In the 1960s, by what methods did Indians assert their treaty rights?
22. How can you explain the difference between the state’s response to the Attica rebels and the Indians who occupied Alcatraz?
23. What parallels did Evan Haney make between the U.S. government treatment of Indians and the treatment of the Vietnamese?
24. Why was the government’s response to the occupation of Wounded Knee different from its response to the Attica rebellion?
25. How did the sexual revolution manifest itself?
26. What effect did the sixties have on the role of “the expert” in American society? What professions were specifically affected and how?

ZINN’S CHAPTER 20: “THE SEVENTIES: UNDER CONTROL?”

1. What conclusion does Zinn draw from the results of the University of Michigan Survey Research Center’s study of public opinion in 1970?
2. “The courts, the juries, and even judges were not behaving as usual.” How is Zinn defining “usual”?
3. How were those who broke into the offices of the Democratic National Committee at the Watergate Hotel connected to Nixon’s administration? What was the purpose of the break-in?
4. Why would Nixon have promised the Watergate burglars clemency and large sums of money if they were imprisoned?
5. Why would Hunt and Liddy have wanted to gain access to Daniel Ellsberg’s psychiatric files? Why would Barker have been given the assignment to physically attack Ellsberg while Ellsberg would be making a speech?
6. Why would Kissinger want to tap the phones of certain journalists and government officials?
7. Why did Spiro T. Agnew resign?
8. When did the American people learn that the U.S. government was subjecting Cambodia to massive bombing attacks? When did the bombing actually begin?
9. Why did Nixon resign?
10. “The system is working.” What did Anthony Lewis mean by this? Does Zinn agree with Lewis?
11. According to a Wall Street financier, if Nixon resigned, the U.S. would have “The same play with different players.” What do you think he meant by “play”?
12. Why did ITT not care whether Democrats or Republicans won an election?
13. Why would ITT want to overthrow the Allende government in Chile?
14. Why are large corporations not inhibited about giving illegal campaign contributions?
15. How did C. L. Sulzberger explain the lack of popular support for American foreign policy in the 1970s? How does Zinn explain it?
16. What is the significance of the Mayaguez affair? Why did the New York Times commend the “admirable efficiency” of the operation?
17. Why did Watergate prompt in-depth investigations into the CIA and FBI? What did these investigations discover in terms of the degree to which their organizations had gone beyond their mandates? Why does Zinn call into question the sincerity of these investigations?
18. What other factors besides Vietnam and Watergate could be seen as contributing to the American people’s loss of confidence in their business, political, and military leaders?
19. Why might the federal government spend over half its budget on foreign affairs?
20. What effect did the revolts of the 1960s have on the percentage of the federal budget spent on the military? On social programs?
21. According to Samuel Huntington, how much democracy is an “excess of democracy”?
22. What was the purpose of the Trilateral Commission?

WEEK FIFTEEN: THE RESURGENCE OF CONSERVATISM

1. How does Zinn characterize post-1960s activism?
2. How did Carter present himself to the voters during the presidential campaign of 1976?
3. How did Carter’s cabinet appointments belie his populist campaign rhetoric?
4. How did the U.S. acquire the Panama Canal? How could Reagan argue that Carter “lost” or “gave away” the canal? Why would the American people care?
5. What is a “multinational”? Which continent proved the most profitable for these multinationals to invest in? Which was the least profitable? How might you explain the differences in profitability?
6. What were the raw materials that American corporations needed to acquire from other countries? For what did these corporations need these materials? Why would support of repressive regimes guarantee that American corporations could purchase these raw materials at low prices?

7. Why did the U.S. make political loyalty a stipulation for foreign aid?

8. Why did Carter end federal price regulation of oil and gas?

9. Why support a military junta in El Salvador against a peasant rebellion?

10. How might Ferdinand Marcos have used $500 million in U.S. military aid? What was the U.S. getting in return for its generous aid to the Philippines?

11. What were Reagan’s and the first Bush’s last legacies?

12. What did the Supreme Court accomplish during the Reagan-Bush years?

13. What was the significance of Reagan’s ability to end the air traffic controller’s strike?

14. How did Reagan weaken OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Act)?

15. What position did the U.S. take at the 1992 Earth Summit in Brazil?

16. How much did the oil companies profit from Reagan’s decision to lift the price controls on oil?

17. What were the effects of Reagan’s tax cuts?

18. What was Reagan’s rationale for his welfare position?

19. What specific programs did “welfare” constitute? What were the primary recipients of welfare?

20. How did the economic position of blacks in the 1980s testify to the enduring nature of racism?

21. How did Supreme Court decisions in the 1970s prevent most blacks from gaining access to decent education?

22. How much money did taxpayers lose in the savings and loan crisis?

23. Why did the CIA exaggerate Soviet military expenditures?

24. What parallels can you draw between U.S. government conduct of the Vietnam war and the war against the Sandanistas?

25. Why pass laws and not obey them? Why sign treaties and not honor them?

26. What was the purpose of the U.S. invasion of Grenada?

27. How did the U.S. government contribute to the stability of El Salvador’s government?


29. Did the first Gulf War succeed in “overcoming the public’s abhorrence of foreign military interventions”?

30. How was the U.S. government’s role preceding and during the first Gulf War consistent with its diplomatic and military actions since World War II? In what ways was it a departure?

31. How did the first President Bush gain congressional approval to attack Iraq? How did his process compare to that of Lyndon Johnson getting approval and cooperation from Congress to wage the Vietnam war?

32. Why did people who opposed U.S. military action become supporters of such action once the U.S. had attacked Iraq?

33. How did the media’s role in Desert Storm differ from their role during the Vietnam war?
34. Why didn’t the U.S. government remove Saddam Hussein from power?
35. Why were Arab-Americans often objects of attack during and after the first Persian Gulf War?
36. June Jordan observed that the Persian Gulf War was “…a hit the same way that crack is, and it doesn’t last long.” Is this an accurate observation, especially in the light of recent U.S. government and military actions? Why is this a criticism of the Gulf War, and war in general?
37. Why did the U.S. media virtually ignore the number of Iraqi war casualties while focusing on how few Americans died?

WEEK SIXTEEN: THE DAYS OF BUBBA AND SHRUB

1. You’ll get the pertinent information you need on the study guide for the final.