

History of the United States of America (from 1945)

Code: 106198
 ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Contemporary History, Politics and Economics	OB	2

Contact

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

Prerequisites

There is none.

Objectives and Contextualisation

This course aims at giving an overview of the American Political History from the end of World War II to the present day. The period coincides with the rise of Washington to its status as a world superpower. Therefore, the course is also useful in order to have better understanding of the History of International Relations during the second half of the 20th century. At the same time, aspects of Economic History, Social History and Cultural History will also be covered.

The course will prioritize the study of historical episodes that may be useful for understanding current affairs and for integrating historical knowledge into a global vision of the social sciences.

Competences

- Assess the social, economic and environmental impact when acting in this field of knowledge.
- Distinguish between and analyse the type of relations that have been established over the last century among the different social, political and economic agents on national, regional and international frameworks.
- Distinguish between governmental decision-making systems in different social and political contexts from the mid-twentieth century to the present day in state-, substate and suprastate frameworks.
- Explain and summarise knowledge acquired in English language at an advanced level.
- Identify the role in the present of the different social memories referring to conflictive pasts, differentiating between the concepts of history and memory.
- Manage and apply data to solve problems.
- Recognise and contextualise texts referring to recent contemporary history.
- Students must be capable of communicating information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- Students must develop the necessary learning skills to undertake further training with a high degree of autonomy.
- Work cooperatively in multidisciplinary and multicultural teams implementing new projects.

Learning Outcomes

1. Analysing the various historiographical perspectives in the different periods of history.
2. Applying the necessary abilities in order to assess and spread historical knowledge.
3. Assessing and critically solving the historiographical problems of war studies.
4. Be familiar with the basic bibliography on historical evolution of governmental systems in the countries of reference for the subject.
5. Capacity to continue future learning independently, acquiring further knowledge and exploring new areas of knowledge.
6. Communicating in your mother tongue or other language both in oral and written form by using specific terminology and techniques of Historiography.
7. Demonstrate capacity to adapt to changing environments.
8. Demonstrate initiative and work independently when required.
9. Demonstrate motivation regarding the quality of the work performed and sensitivity regarding the consequences on the environment and society.
10. Developing the ability of historical analysis and synthesis.
11. Distinguishing the relation between historiographical theory and practice.
12. Engaging in debates about historical facts respecting the other participants' opinions.
13. Express an opinion based on the nature, perspective and rigour of texts referring to the course content.
14. Identifying the main and secondary ideas and expressing them with linguistic correctness.
15. Know different cases of memories in conflict between different places in different states.
16. Know different cases of memories in conflict between different places in the same state.
17. Make a brief comparison of national and/or regional cases within the same international framework.
18. Make a critical comparison of the evolution of the large regional areas that are covered in the subject.
19. Make comparisons between the evolution of governmental systems within a supranational regional area.
20. Make comparisons between the levels of regional autonomy within a state.
21. Organise work in relation to good time management and planning.
22. Recognising and implementing the following teamwork skills: commitment to teamwork, habit of cooperation, ability to participate in the problem solving processes.
23. Select and generate the information necessary for each problem, analyse it and take decisions based on that information.
24. Understand regional specificities within states.
25. Value ethical commitment in professional practice.
26. Work in teams respecting all points of view. Use the specific vocabulary of history correctly.

Content

1. Introduction: From Isolationism to Bretton Woods.
2. The post-war economy and the beginning of the Cold War.
3. Civil rights, Vietnam and the divisions of the 1960s.
4. Oil crises and the rise of neoliberalism.
5. From the end of the Cold War to the Great Recession of 2008.
6. Epilogue: Obama, Trump and the new political polarization.

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lectures	45	1.8	1, 24, 15, 16, 10, 11, 4, 20, 13, 12, 25
Reading and understanding academic papers	5	0.2	2, 24, 8, 10, 4, 19, 13, 14, 12, 23, 26
Type: Supervised			
Conducting reviews and drafting analytical papers	30	1.2	1, 2, 5, 24, 6, 7, 8, 10, 4, 19, 20, 13, 14, 9, 21, 12, 22, 23, 26, 25
Type: Autonomous			
Individual study	38	1.52	2, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 4, 14, 9, 21, 12, 22, 23, 25

- Lectures.
- Debates and discussions.
- Reading and understanding academic papers.
- Learning to compile historical information.
- Conducting reviews and drafting analytical papers.
- Individual study.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continuous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Final work	40%	22	0.88	1, 2, 3, 5, 18, 17, 24, 6, 15, 16, 7, 8, 10, 11, 4, 19, 20, 13, 14, 9, 21, 12, 23, 25
Final written exam	50%	1.5	0.06	1, 2, 5, 15, 10, 11, 14, 21, 23
Participation in class	10%	8.5	0.34	2, 6, 11, 12, 22, 26

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

1) Final written exam: 50%. The exam will focus on the required readings of the course. It will be necessary to demonstrate a correct understanding of the content of the readings, as well as one's own personal intellectual judgement when analyzing them. It will take place just before Christmas.

2) Final work: 40%. The work will be an analysis of a historical episode related to the syllabus, with a maximum length of 10 pages. The diversity of sources used and the analytical and research capacity will be assessed. It will be delivered at the beginning of January.

3) Participation in class: 10%. The student will be able to choose a compulsory reading in order to do an oral and group presentation. Contributions to the debates after these presentations will also be assessed.

SINGLE ASSESSMENT

The single evaluation option will consist of a written exam with general questions (50%), a case study (25%) and a source analysis exercise (25%). The same assessment method as continuous assessment will be used.

RELATED MATTERS

Students will obtain a "Not assessed/Not submitted" course grade unless they have submitted more than 30% of the assessment items.

On carrying out each evaluation activity, lecturers will inform students of the procedures to be followed for reviewing all grades awarded, and the date on which such a review will take place.

In order to participate in the supplementary exam, the student must have been previously evaluated in a set of activities whose weight is equivalent to a minimum of 2/3 of the total grade (CONTINUED ASSESSMENT) or submit all the tests planned (SINGLE ASSESSMENT), and must have obtained, at least, a 3.5 in the final grade.

In the event of a student committing any irregularity that may lead to a significant variation in the grade awarded to an assessment activity, the student will be given a zero for this activity, regardless of any disciplinary process that may take place. In the event of several irregularities in assessment activities of the same subject, the student will be given a zero as the final grade for this subject.

This subject entirely prohibits the use of AI technologies in all of its activities. Any submitted work that contains content generated using AI will be considered academic dishonesty; the corresponding grade will be awarded a zero, without the possibility of reassessment. In cases of greater infringement, more serious action may be taken.

Bibliography

COMPULSORY READINGS

Eric FONER, *The Story of American Freedom*, New York, W.W. Norton and Company, 1998, pp. 219-247.

Michael J. SANDEL, *Democracy's Discontent. America in Search of a Public Philosophy*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1996, pp. 250-273.

Emily S. ROSENBERG, "Consuming Women: Images of Americanization in the "American Century"" , *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (Summer 1999), pp. 479-497.

Daniel IMMERWAHR, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States*, New York, Picador, 2020.

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Richard RORTY, *Achieving Our Country. Leftist Thought in Twentieth-century America*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1999, pp. 75-107.

Gary GERSTLE, *The rise and fall of the neoliberal order: America and the world in the free market era*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2022, pp. 189-229.

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Aurora BOSCH, *Historia de los Estados Unidos*, Barcelona: Crítica, 2010.

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Roxanne DUNBAR-ORTIZ, *La historia indígena de Estados Unidos*, Madrid: Capitán Swing, 2018.

Barry EICHENGREEN, *Hall of Mirrors. The Great Depression, the Great Recession, and the uses -and misuses- of history*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

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Gabriel KOLKO, *El siglo de las guerras: politica, conflictos y sociedad desde 1914*, Barcelona: Paidós Ibérica, 2005.

Melvyn P LEFFLER, *Safeguarding democratic capitalism: U.S. foreign policy and national security, 1920-2015*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020.

Jill LEPORE, *The story of America: essays on origins*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.

James T. PATTERSON, *El gigante inquieto: Estados Unidos de Nixon a G.W. Bush*, Barcelona: Crítica, 2006.

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Amy C. OFFNER, *Sorting out the mixed economy: the rise and fall of welfare and developmental states in the Americas*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021.

W. J. RORABAUGH, *Kennedy y el sueno de los sesenta*, Barcelona: Paidós, 2005.

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Press, 2016.

Wyatt C WELLS, *American capitalism, 1945-2000: continuity and change from mass production to the information society*, Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003.

Odd Arne WESTAD, *La Guerra Fría*, Barcelona: Galaxia Gutenberg, 2018.

Software

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PAUL) Classroom practices	50	English	first semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	50	English	first semester	afternoon