

Syllabus

Chaminade University of Honolulu HIS/POL 305: Contemporary American History Spring 2019

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

History of the United States from 1877, with varying emphasis on social, political, economic, diplomatic, and cultural development. PRE-REQUISITES/CO-REQUISITES: none

This course requires you to have a desktop or laptop computer; tablets and phones are inadequate for map display, and are not acceptable for this course. No text is required; however, there is a \$25 one-term software user license fee, as discussed below. There will be no refund of this fee after the withdrawal deadline for the course, and this license cannot be re-used for other WisdomMaps courses.

COURSE MATERIALS:

There is no text required for this course. We will be using "WisdomMaps", based on a concept that was pioneered by Leonardo da Vinci some 500 years ago, which we've taken to a new level. WisdomMaps are premised on the idea that all information is interrelated, and they provide a way of laying out information *visually* so that the learner can see how things fits together.

The maps use a "relational ontology" to link information together in terms of causes, means, consequences, meaning, implications, shared concept, and more.

This course invites you the learner to go wherever you like in the mind maps and explore whichever topics most interest you (while at the same time developing a balanced and well-rounded perspective of the overall material), and it asks you to develop insight into the meaning and implications of those topics. You will find that there is considerably more information and multimedia resources available on your topics of interest than you will find in a textbook (which is why no text is required).

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:

In terms of assignments, there is only one: a written journal each week of the reflections, insights, and observations that you have developed in your perusal of the mind maps, along with your review and discussion of your classmates' journals in a weekly discussion forum. Your grade in this course will depend on the nature and extent of your engagement with the maps and their myriad resources, and upon the quality of insight you develop into your areas of interest. A good faith effort will serve you well.

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE:

Journal 1 due Wednesday, Jan. 16; choose topics from the following map for this assignment:

1877 – 1900_Society
1877 – 1900_Culture

Review your classmates' journals and comment on at least three journals of your choosing by Sunday, Jan. 20.

Journal 2 due Wednesday Jan. 23; choose topics from the following maps for this assignment:

1877 - 1900_Power
1877 - 1900_Economy

Review your classmates' journals and comment on at least three journals of your choosing by Sunday, Jan. 27.

Journal 3 due Wednesday, Jan. 30; choose topics from the following maps for this assignment:

1900 - 1920

Review your classmates' journals and comment on at least three journals of your choosing by Sunday, Feb. 3.

Journal 4 due Wednesday, Feb. 6; choose topics from the following maps for this assignment:

1920 –1932
Great Depression

Review your classmates' journals and comment on at least three journals of your choosing by Sunday, Feb. 10.

Journal 5 due Wednesday, Feb. 13; choose topics from the following maps for this assignment:

World War II
Cold War

Review your classmates' journals and comment on at least three journals of your choosing by Sunday, Feb. 17.

Journal 6 due Wednesday, Feb. 20; choose topics from the following maps for this assignment:

1945 – 1960
Civil Rights Movement

Review your classmates' journals and comment on at least three journals of your choosing by Sunday, Feb. 24.

Journal 7 due Wednesday, Feb. 27; choose topics from the following maps for this assignment:

1960 – 1973

Review your classmates' journals and comment on at least three journals of your choosing by Sunday, Mar. 3.

Journal 8 due Wednesday, Mar. 6; choose topics from the following maps for this assignment.

1973 – 2000

Review your classmates' journals and comment on at least three journals of your choosing by Sunday, Mar. 10

Journal 9 due Wednesday, Mar. 13; choose topics from the following maps for this assignment:

2000 - Present

Review your classmates' journals and comment on at least three journals of your choosing by Sunday, Mar. 17

ORIENTATION:

Welcome to your WisdomMaps course!

WisdomMaps is a new generation of "mind maps", which are a way of laying out information visually, so that the user can see how everything fits together. Mind maps were pioneered by Leonardo da Vinci some 500 years ago, so I'm in the process of updating Leonardo's brain-child for the 21st century.

A word about why I teach the way I do. I believe that if you enjoy, you engage, and when you engage, you learn, and you learn best what you enjoy the most. I want you to enjoy your adventure in mind maps, which are designed to let you go wherever your curiosity takes you... and you'll be surprised and delighted at the stuff you'll bump into as you get into the habit of wandering and wondering.

This is not the usual sort of directed-study course where I tell you what you must learn and what you'll be examined on. I provide the mind maps for each week, and you focus on what you like within those maps. I want you to wander and wonder and learn as much as you like. Then, I want you to share what you've learned with the rest of us. We'll all compare notes as we go along (I will always be available to comment and consult), and you'll learn by teaching each other (which is the best way to learn).

In the course of a college education, students will learn at least as much from each other as they will from any other source (including the teacher). That's especially true in today's social media-driven environment. My role as mentor is to guide the development of your journals and your discourse with each other.

Now, as for the maps themselves. The information in a WisdomMap is presented in bite-sized "text-bites." This is because reading long passages of text no longer works very well for the present generation of learners, who more than ever are *visual* learners given to tripping the light fantastic on the Internet and extracting the nectar of whichever multimedia resources capture their attention along the way. Books are becoming an antiquarian delight, and the last thing many people want to do these days is to immerse themselves in some Great Dismal Swamp of a textbook (to say nothing about having to pay for it!). People today are wired to take in information differently, and mind maps are designed to engage the learner's interest in ways that work best for them.

WisdomMaps are easy. Just click on the plus-sign next to the "aspect" node up at the top of the map axis—this will cause the content of the map to display. Remember that the topics in a map are organized from top to bottom (much of it chronologically), and from left to right (from more general to more specific). Some of the maps are tiny, but some are pretty big. It may look overwhelming at first, but think of it as going for a swim at Waikiki: the ocean is endless, but you're just there to splash around in the shore-break—there's no need to wander off into deep water (unless that's what you want to do).

You'll see that the maps are filled with topics, and that each topic has a set of links to Google multimedia resources (click on the right-pointing arrow in the yellow Google link to open up those resources). Here's what you'll find:

- Google Scholar: Brings together all the papers written for learned societies, doctoral dissertations... lots to dig into for those of who want to explore the deepest depths of a particular topic.
- Google Blogs: Basically, personal websites dedicated to a particular topic—the sort of thing that happens when you cut someone loose on their particular passion
- Google Books: All the books that have anything to do with the topic (that Google has digitized) are available here. Some are free, most are not, so let your debit card be your tuition account.
- Google Web: Serves up all the websites on your topic.
- Google Images: My favorite! This is what I like to describe as “eye candy that’s brain food.” Sumptuous and thought-provoking. And here’s where it really gets *interesting* for all you visual learners: click on a image, and it opens up a larger version of that image. You’ll then see a button to the right that says “Visit Page”. Click on that, and you’ll get the webpage that’s the source of the image, where you can partake of all the information on the topic of that image that you want—it’s a very convenient way to get all the background you want on the subject that has visually captured your interest, and a great way to learn visually. What better way to arouse curiosity than with an image.
- Google News: Here’s how the topic is playing out in the news.
- Google Videos: The world’s biggest library of videos, including all the YouTube stuff.

Last but surely not least: Google Translate. You’ll find this link at the top of the main north-south axis of the map. If you’ve encountered a website that you’d like to see rendered into Spanish or Korean or Farsi, all you have to do is copy the URL of that website and paste it into the text field that you’ll see when you click on the Google Translate link. This is an amazing way to learn to read another language as you toggle back and forth between the English original and the translation.

The point of all this multimedia is to cause you to engage and have fun with the subject; once this starts to happen, your curiosity will take you as far as you want to go (and with mind maps, there are truly no limits).

These Google links are where you’re going to see 95% of the action, so to speak. But these links, as much fun as they are, are really just the trimming on the tree: the ornaments, the tinsel, the bling. It’s the tree itself, the structure of the mind map, that contains the true meaning of a mind map: it’s how we tie information together that matters, because information acquires meaning and value only when it is considered in relation to other information. To that end, we’ve developed a “relational schema” of link-words that tie information together in terms of...

- **why:** the reasons for something;
- **how:** the means by which it happened;
- **so:** the results, effects, or consequences;

In addition, we have *thinking points*, which are meant to get you to think and to wonder. These are:

- **meaning:** the significance of something (not its definition);
- **implications:** a topic's roots--where it comes from, and where it may lead;
- **analogy:** a comparable event or situation, found elsewhere in another map on another subject (history repeats itself... in countless ways);
- **concept:** a concept that "governs," describes, sheds light, or characterizes a topic, and which characterizes other topics elsewhere.

As for the color-coding of the map nodes, here's the general idea:

- A map node with a right-pointing arrow links (by clicking on that arrow) to another map on that topic.
- A node is green is a main point.
- A node in beige is a proper noun (or adjective).
- A node in dusky-orange is a place.
- A node in silver-blue is a quote.
- A node in light-yellow refers to a time period.
- A node in dusky-yellow is a link to a Google multimedia resource; any topic has these Google multimedia links appended to it is the "home port" for that topic, meaning that wherever that topic appears elsewhere in the map or in other maps, it is linked to the topic's "home port" here.

That said, I'd like to discuss the assignments. There is only one assignment (but it's in two parts):

The assignment is for you to develop and present a weekly PowerPoint journal as a log of your intellectual adventure for that week. I want you to tell us, in your own words, what topics you bumped into that you really like and why you think they matter. You are welcome to use your own words, however humble, since you are talking to your classmates, and I want you to communicate in whatever way you're most comfortable with (minus the profanity). You do not need to worry about academic formatting or citing sources, although I would appreciate it if you would at least spell-check your work, since spelling and grammatical errors detract from the quality of your work. Do not recite or quote long passages of anything.

For those of you who do not have PowerPoint, there is a free "light" version available for download from Microsoft and other sources online (just do a search for "free powerpoint"). PowerPoint is easy to learn, and there are numerous training

videos available on YouTube. PowerPoint enables you to include images and other stuff in your journals, which are a hugely important part of the journal assignment.

The format of your journal should be like this:

- Choose a topic. Give us a paragraph for that topic. The first few sentences should introduce the topic, and the next few sentences should explain why it matters.
- Post an image or two nearby that supports the topic; the image should tell a story about the topic you're discussing, and should help get the viewer into the habit of In addition, choose at least three images (on any of the topics in the week's maps) that you find especially thought-provoking, and reflect on each of those images with a "stream of consciousness" paragraph that describes all that it brings to mind and what it means. In addition, choose at least three images (on any of the topics in the week's maps) that you find especially thought-provoking, and reflect on each of those images with a "stream of consciousness" paragraph that describes all that it brings to mind and what it means.
- Give us the URL of a video (or website or some other online resource) on this topic that you reviewed and enjoyed. Put on your movie critic's cap and give us in a few sentences on specifically why you liked it. Do not omit this step (it will cost you points if you do).
- Do the same thing with several more topics. Each weekly journal should be 10 – 15 slides of combined text/graphics in all.

Once you finish your PowerPoint journal for the week, I want you to post it to the discussion forum for that week in the course in Canvas.

The second part of your weekly assignment is the requirement to review three or more of your classmates' presentations (you decide which ones) by the following Sunday, and to post your comments on each of those presentations in separate threads in the weekly Discussion forums in Canvas. For each of those journals you review, you should respond by engaging some point of academic substance and discussing it with whatever insight you can contribute. Generalized opinions as to the merits of the journal are not what we're looking for here.

You should review as many of your classmates' journals as possible (this is a big part of how you learn). Try to review a certain number each day, rather than all at once. Do things in measured doses so that you don't get worn out—you're supposed to to enjoy this.

To summarize:

- One weekly journal assignment per week, of 10 – 15 slides of text and graphics and URLs of videos and other online resources.
- Review as many of your classmates' journals as you can, and comment on at least three of those journals in the weekly discussion forum.

Again, I want you to have fun doing this, since the object of this course is to whet your appetite for the subject. If we succeed in doing that much, you'll take it from there, on your own time, and perhaps parlay it into a lifelong interest in the subject (then you'll *really* learn). Hopefully, you'll be revisiting the maps from time to time as your interest grows.

However, don't have too much fun! I need for us to be very clear on this: any missing weekly assignments can only be made up by taking an Incomplete for a period of time that would allow you one full week for each missing assignment. These assignments cannot be "made up" by submitting several of them at once to get caught up. WisdomMaps are a contemplative way of learning, and each assignment requires one full week of reflection. If you miss a week, there's no way to make up the learning from your review of each other's work.

Each week's assignment (your journal and your review and discussion of you classmates' journals) is due by the Sunday that ends that week. No extensions. Come the end of the course, if you have any missing assignments, your only choices would be to a) take an Incomplete, or b) take a course grade based on the work that you *have* submitted (with no credit for the missing assignments).

As for your assignment grades, each week I'll be giving you a brief and concise response summary that will include your grade for the assignment (which includes both the journal and your reviews of your classmates' journals) and a checklist of things that you've done right and things that you need to do better. Your grade in this course will depend in large measure upon how well you *improve*, which means that if you don't continually improve, your course grade will stagnate. However, a good faith effort on your part will suffice to keep you out of trouble, and I will always work with you.

One more thing before you go: please understand that you are not expected to absorb and scrutinize all the maps that are assigned for the week—most weeks, there's far too many maps and far too much material. All I expect you to do is to lightly review the content of the week's maps so that you can decide which topics you'd like to focus on (you decide), and then hone in on those. WisdomMaps are meant to give you as much material as to need to satisfy your curiosity about stuff that interests you, but don't let yourself be overwhelmed by trying to cover too much ground. Just go with what interests you.

Let's get started, shall we? The syllabus tells you which maps you should be perusing in each week, so go ahead and open them up, and from there, go wherever your curiosity takes you, and keep me informed of the progress of your intellectual adventure. WisdomMaps are for the curious, and the more curiosity you demonstrate, the better you'll do in this course. Wander and wonder!