

WEEKS 1 & 2 INSTRUCTIONS

Week 1 - Jan 13 (Online Only)

Contribute to the course introduction discussion forum on Blackboard, by 11:59 pm Tues Jan 14.

We are not meeting in person until Jan 27. During the initial two weeks of our class, I want you to take the initiative to design your own 2-week course of study about this time period and its importance. Since you are an advanced undergraduate, I trust you to craft your own timetable to **accomplish the following tasks before our first class meeting on Jan 27.**

Textbook Exploration

Read all chapters covering American history 1865-1914 in any college-level United States history textbook that you own or can borrow. If you cannot obtain a physical textbook, use the American Yawp free online textbook (link is on the course website). Take notes on your reading. Observe the chapter titles; key terms; discussion questions; illustrations and maps; major events and people. Notice how your particular textbook frames the main problems or themes of this time period, and how it defines the “Gilded Age,” if the term is mentioned.

Course Texts DIY

Select your own collection of readings from the Course Texts page on the course website. I’ve given you lots of options, but each person needs to read:

- Parts of the 1897 Sears Roebuck Catalog (how much is up to you)
- One primary source book – in whole or in part, depending on its length. Some are fiction, some are nonfiction. You should also be familiar with at least some of the other works on the list, especially if you see books you’ve never heard of. Learn about or skim through a few of them, in addition to the one you choose to read.

- One Supreme Court case – read the entire actual decision text, as well as understanding what the case involved and why it’s important. (You can get that information from Oyez.org or a legal reference work; try not to use Wikipedia as your first stop). You should be able to briefly identify every case on the list, as well as the one you choose to study in greater depth.
- One dime novel, at least to the extent of analyzing its cover art, knowing something about the author or publisher, and grasping the novel’s plot and theme.
- Something from the arts and architecture list. Could be a sculpture or painting or a building, or a general sense of the kind of art this person did, such that you could recognize it if shown an example.

Week 2 - Jan 20 (Online Only)

In Week 2 -- **Contribute 10 unique items to a Google doc timeline** by 11:59 pm Tues Jan 21. The G-doc link is on the course website and Blackboard. Try to spread your items out over the full time period, instead of concentrating them closely in time. I have begun the timeline for you, with the date each president took office. Do not contribute duplicate items – if an item appears more than once, no one will get credit for adding it. Be sure to follow the example format I’ve provided, so I know who contributed each item and where it came from.

Prepare for Week 3 - Jan 27 (In Person)

On the 27th, be ready to discuss and share anything from your initial research when called upon. I will also be curious to see what connecting threads you can make between them, or what you found most interesting or surprising. Since everyone is reading a different combination, we should be able to have a rich discussion in which we can all learn from each other.