

HIST 201: US History from 1877 to the Present
TR 4:00 – 5:50 p.m.
SB 128

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is a general introduction to United States history since 1877. We will examine political, social, and economic developments in the United States since 1877 with an emphasis on close readings of primary source documents. We will also examine the various ways Americans from many different backgrounds have defined what it means to be “free,” and will discuss how the resulting debates over “freedom” and “liberty” have changed over time.

COURSE OUTCOMES/LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- 1.1 Students will demonstrate the ability to identify key social, economic, cultural, and political themes in American history.
- 1.2 Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate their understanding of U.S. History in written form.

After completing this course, students should be able to:

- Identify major debates and major problems that dominated social and political conversations about the nature of American freedoms and liberties during each major period and/or decade of U.S. history from Reconstruction to the end of the 1960s.
- Identify key terms and major arguments from primary sources and secondary writing about history.
- Write a clear thesis statement that makes an argument about how debates over Americans’ rights, freedoms, and liberties have changed over time, have been shaped by the time periods in which the debates are situated and what ideas and concepts regarding rights and freedoms have persisted through changing historical periods.
- Discuss both in writing and verbally major debates over the meaning of Americans’ rights, freedoms and liberties drawing on specific historical evidence.
- Explain what it means to think historically in writing and verbally.

REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE COURSE:

Students are required to read assigned chapters, documents and supplemental readings. Take notes on the reading in preparation for lectures, discussions, debates, and exams. Two hours should be reserved for each hour spent in class to complete course-related readings and to study. This means students should set aside **5-8 hours of study time outside of class** every week to complete reading assignments, to take notes on the readings, and to review notes from class, and study the concepts students have learned in class and from readings and activities. The University recommends that students set aside 8 hours of study time each week outside of class

for each 4-unit course in which they are enrolled. Important historic context will be taught through in-class lectures, documentary clips, and in-class activities, discussions, and debates. Students are expected to take thorough notes on all in-class material. Students should use class notes and notes on required reading assignments in preparation for exams.

Required Readings:

Eric Foner, *Give me Liberty! An American History, Volume Two, Seagull Fourth Edition*

*Copies of Foner will be available on reserve at the Pfau Library.

ASSIGNMENTS/Exams:

Midterm Exam	300 points
Final Exam	400 points
Advertising Assignment (2/25-2/26)	100 points
Thursday Discussion Participation	100 points (10 points per discussion)
Tuesday In-Class Writing	100 points (10 points per assignment)
Total points:	1000 points

Final Grading Scale:

A = 930 to 1000 points; A- = 900 to 929 points; B+ = 870 to 899 points; B = 830 to 869 points; B- = 800 to 829 points; C+ = 770 to 799 points; C = 730 to 769 points; C- = 700 to 729; D+ = 670 to 699 points; D = 630 to 669 points; D- = 600 to 639 points; F = 599 or fewer points.

Exams, Discussions, and Writing Assignments:

The Midterm and Final Exams will be written in the form of essays that contain key term/primary document identifications. On both the midterm and final, students will choose key terms and/or primary documents to identify from a list provided. Key terms and documents will be pulled from assigned readings, assigned documents, lectures, and in-class discussions.

The essay structure will be as follows: Introductory paragraph beginning with a one-sentence thesis statement and an overall answer to the essay question; three paragraphs on midterm and five paragraphs on the final presented in chronological order representing distinct time periods explaining key terms and/or primary documents from the list provided on the exam, and each paragraph providing specific supporting evidence for the student's thesis statement; and a concluding paragraph in which the student analyzes how the body paragraphs specifically support the thesis statement and providing original conclusions for the essay as a whole. Essays will be graded using a rubric for each paragraph. Rubric is provided on Blackboard. Students will be given specific instructions about how to approach identifying these terms and documents and how to approach writing this structured essay throughout the course, particularly through in-class writing and in discussions and debates in class. Exam booklets will be provided. No materials other than a pencil/pen and hand-written notes on a half-sheet of paper or 5x7 notecard will be necessary for the exam.

During class Tuesday, students will be asked to write practice paragraphs about a key term or document presented in class and in readings in preparation for the lecture. These questions or prompts will be based on the assigned reading from the week and/or the lecture for the day. In-class writing exercises are what we call "low stakes writing." Students will receive full credit if

they make a genuine effort to complete the assignment. Zero credit will be given if students are not in class to complete the work (no make-up credit will be offered regardless of the reason – this is an in-class activity only). Half credit will be given if writing demonstrates a serious lack of effort or if the writing is completely illegible or seriously incomplete.

Thursday classes are set aside for primary source analysis, discussion and debate. Students will work in groups to analyze one or more primary sources, participate in discussions and debates. Students will turn in evidence of their group work. Group leaders are responsible for recording a digital image of the group work and distributing it to group members for the purposes of studying for the midterm and final exams.

Classroom Conduct:

Students are expected to demonstrate respect for each other and for both the Professor and the Teaching Assistant(s) during all class meetings and in all forms of communication. This expectation is especially important for our small discussions. Any disruptive behavior, disrespectful behavior, or violations of general course rules of conduct such as multitasking, working on outside material, using electronic devices for anything other than strictly taking notes will be grounds for removal from class and loss of any credit that may have been associated with class that day. No make-up or late work will be accepted from a student if he/she is asked to leave class.

Even though students may feel anonymous in university classes, especially large general education classes, certain standards of classroom etiquette still apply. Please let me know before class begins if you will need to leave class early, and sit in the back and along the aisles. These instances should be avoided. It is disruptive to other students and rude to everyone if you pack up and leave in the middle of class.

Policy on electronics. Extensive research has proven that use of electronic devices is distracting to the user and those around him/her. Research also proves that taking notes on a keyboard is far less effective than handwritten notes for developing understanding and for memory. Students should bring paper and pen/pencil to take extensive notes in class during lectures and discussions as this is a vital part of the learning process. Please turn off cell phones before coming into class and put them away. Cell phones are not to be used in class except to capture the in-class written work for the purposes of studying and revising for exams. Multi-tasking, working on outside work, accessing the internet for any reason, or using any electronic device for any purpose except for taking a picture of a student's own in-class writing is prohibited. **Students who violate this policy will be asked to put away their electronic devices and depending on the nature of the violation, may be asked to leave class.**

Academic Integrity Statement: As in all of your classes, you are expected to abide by university standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism, cheating, turning in work completed for another class, or any form of academic dishonesty, such as copying other students' work may result in automatic failure of this course, zero credit for the assignment in question, and reporting to CSUSB judicial affairs. Please see your professor with any questions regarding this policy.

Communication and CSUSB Email:

Please take advantage of office hours for questions related to the course, readings, or other university-related concerns. Email is also a useful form of communication for specific questions, and course related announcements. Course-related information will be sent using the blackboard email system to student coyote accounts. Students are required to use their CSUSB email account while enrolled at the university and should make it a habit to check this account frequently for course-related announcements and information.

When emailing your professors, please use your CSUSB email account. Please include "HIST 201" as the subject line of the email. Email questions will usually be answered within 48 hours (not including weekends). If you do not receive a response within 48 hours of sending the email (not including weekends), you should re-send the email, and please make sure your email came from your CSUSB email account, and that the subject line contained the required "HIST 201" to distinguish your email from the rest of the mail in my inbox.

Please remember that all email communications with your professors are professional forms of communication. Emails that are not signed, are not written with a professional audience in mind, or that ask questions that can be easily answered by consulting your syllabus may not receive a response. Do NOT use informal methods of communication with your Professor as you might with a friend. Even though you should feel comfortable coming to any professor for help, either in person or via email, this is a professional environment and all communications should be professional in nature. Introduce yourself by name, be prepared and succinct in your requests, make sure your question(s) cannot be easily answered by reading the syllabus, and sign all communications with your full name.

Face to face communication is always best. If you have questions, concerns, or need assistance with anything that requires a more in depth conversation, please come by during office hours or make an appointment.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

If you are in need of an accommodation for a disability in order to participate in this class, please contact Services to Students with Disabilities at UH-183, (909) 537-5238. Services to Students with Disabilities determine what if any accommodations will be provided. Students with accommodations should identify themselves to the professor as soon as possible after enrolling in the course.

Tips for Success:

Complete all reading assignments on time.

Take notes on everything inside class and all assigned readings noting summary conclusions and thoughts rather than just raw details. Handwritten notes are best as it encourages synthesis and your own thoughts rather than verbatim transcript of raw details.

Focus on key term identification in taking notes and studying. See the end of chapters for a list of major key terms. Even though this class is not based on memorization of key terms, you need to be able to use them and understand them to make historical arguments.

Pay attention to the nuts and bolts of these key terms, such as answers to the “who, what, when and where” questions; **but most importantly**, pay attention to WHY these terms matter? Why is this term historically significant either to the time period or to broader trends in American history?

Read and re-read all primary documents and take notes on argument/thesis, audience, intended purpose, significance to the time period in which it was written, and your own observations/questions after reading the document.

Listen carefully to lectures. Lectures not only provide information, they are also models of historical thinking and the ways in which historians identify important themes in American history. Lectures and in-class activities will explain the debates surrounding these themes within specific historic contexts, and on Thursdays we will discuss the significance of those themes and the outcomes of the debates. Students will be asked to demonstrate these same skills in short in-class writing assignments, and in discussion/debates. All lectures are designed in one way or another to help reinforce course concepts and to prepare students for exams.

Every class is important. Make it a priority to attend class. If a student must miss a class, complete reading assignments, borrow notes from another student who was in class (and remember to return the favor), and if anything is unclear, make time to see Dr. Lyon during office hours with follow-up questions. **No emails, please.**

Do not email me if you are going to miss class. If you have **extreme extenuating circumstances** for missing the midterm or final and have documentation, such as unexpected hospitalization for ruptured appendix, or your own death, for example, please have someone submit documentation before the exams begin. There is no guarantee a make-up will be made available for all documentable cases. Make a point to be in class for exams. Documentation will be consulted to determine if a make-up opportunity is warranted. Documentation should be emailed to clyon@csusb.edu or faxed to: (909) 537-7645 c/o Dr. Lyon.

Meet your professors outside of class. Come by during office hours to introduce yourself and discuss anything course or university related that you would like. Office hours are an extension of the classroom and an opportunity for you to advance your understanding of the subject matter and get to know your professors on a more informal basis.

Personalize your learning. You will not have to memorize everything in class. This class is not about memorizing disconnected names, dates, events, etc. You are invited to participate in the process of interrogating history through primary sources. Think for yourself, and focus on the documents and aspects of each time period that resonates with you.

Course Calendar and Reading Assignments

This course calendar and syllabus are subject to revision if necessary. Any revisions, amendments or additions to this course syllabus will be disseminated via the university's blackboard system and will be sent to student email accounts.

The California Faculty Association is in the midst of a difficult contract dispute with management. It is possible that the faculty union will call a strike or other work stoppage this term. I will inform the class as soon as possible of any disruption to our class-meeting schedule.

Reading assignments must be completed before class on the day the assignments are listed.

Week 1

January 12 What did Freedom look like in 1877? How has it changed since then? Why?
[Foner, Chapter 15] *In-Class Writing

Read: "What Does it Mean to Think Historically?"

<https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/january-2007/what-does-it-mean-to-think-historically>

January 14 Political Equality and the Right to Vote
What freedoms do the 14th and 15th Amendments guarantee and for whom?
*Discussion/Debate

Read: the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution

Read: Susan B. Anthony's speech:

<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/anthony/anthonyaddress.html>

Read: the Judge's instructions to the jury:

<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/anthony/courtinstr.html>

WEEK 2

January 19 What does freedom mean during the Gilded Age?
Read: Foner, Chapter 16 *In-Class Writing

January 21 What are the rights of labor? What are the rights of industrial capitalists?
*Discussion/Debate

Read: Documents from Chapter 16

Ira Steward, "A Second Declaration of Independence"

Andrew Carnegie, "Wealth"

Read: Chicago Workers During the Long Gilded Age, "Wages and Nationalities in a Chicago Neighborhood," <http://dcc.newberry.org/collections/chicago-workers-during-the-long-gilded-age> [Be prepared to discuss your answers to the four discussion questions listed in the map section of the website. Scroll down the page to find the maps and questions. Please browse the rest of the website.]

WEEK 3 Segregation, Exclusion, Imperialism and an Expanding Nation

January 26 Freedom's Boundaries at Home and Abroad
Read: Foner, Chapter 17 *In-Class Writing

January 28 Should the United States take imperial possessions?

Guest Lecture: Sarah McNamara, University of North Carolina
* Discussion/Debate

Read: Documents from Chapter 17

Josiah Strong, *Our Country*

"Aguinaldo's Case against the United States"

Browse and select at least 2 articles to read: *New York Times* articles from the Lodge Committee on the Philippines, (analyzing newspapers as primary sources)

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Lodge_Committee_testimony_from_the_New_York_Times#Philippine_Problem_before_the_Senate

WEEK 4 Progressive Era and Reform: Workplace Safety

February 2 What is the Progressive Era? What does it mean to be a "progressive" reformer?
Read: Foner, Chapter 18 *In-Class Writing

February 4 **Read:** Newspaper Accounts of the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire (analyzing newspapers as primary sources). Browse articles and read at least two:
<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/triangle/trianglenewsaccounts.html>

How should the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire be remembered?

***Find at least one newspaper article discussing the Triangle Factory Memorial, bring it to class for discussion.**

Discussion/Debate points half for bringing article to class and half for engaging in discussion/debate. Turn articles in with written work or upload to Blackboard Discussion.

See: <http://trianglememorial.org>

*Discussion/Debate: How should the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire be remembered?

*Prepare for midterm exam. Bring electronic copies of in-class writing.

Group work revising paragraphs, making historical arguments, using primary sources as evidence.

WEEK 5 Midterm Exam and World War I: Freedom of Speech

February 9 **Midterm Exam**

Please bring your 5x7 index card, of a half sheet of regular paper with handwritten notes only. Exam packet will be provided.

WEEK 5, continued

- February 11 World War I, the 13th Amendment and the 1st Amendment
* In-Class Writing and Discussion/Debate
Read: Foner, Chapter 19 and documents
Eugene Debs and the Espionage Act
W.E.B. DuBois, "Returning Soldiers"

WEEK 6 The 1920s: Immigration and Americanization

- February 16 The "Roaring" Twenties
Read: Foner, Chapter 20 *In-Class Writing
- February 18 *Discussion/Debate: Who should have the right to be an American?
How do professional historians approach these questions?
Read: Documents from Chapter 20
Read: Mae M. Ngai, "The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924," *The Journal of American History* 86, no. 1 (June 1, 1999): 67–92.

WEEK 7 The 1930s: New Deal, Media, and the Arts as Social Commentary

- February 23 The Great Depression and the New Deal
Read: Foner, Chapter 21 *In-Class Writing
- February 25 *Discussion/Debate: How does media both shape and reflect American history?
Read: President Roosevelt's "Fireside Chat"
John Steinbeck, *The Harvest Gypsies*

***Advertising ASSIGNMENT:** Advertising in the 1920s and Great Depression. Select two advertisements published in the United States of the same product from two different time periods: one from the 1921-1928; and the other from 1934-1940. Bring digital images or hard copies to class, whichever is more convenient. We will do the assignment in class. If you want to look ahead, please visit and read: Making Sense of Ads, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/ads/intro.html>.

Part I: Find your advertisements and bring to class. **Part II:** Analyze for purpose, audience, strategy, and what the advertisement reveals about the time period. Analysis will be done in class. Completed Assignments must be uploaded to Blackboard Discussion page ("Advertising Assignment") no later than 5:00 p.m. Friday, February 26. Late submissions will be docked 20 points per calendar day the assignment is late. In order for the assignment to be complete, it must contain two advertisements that comply with the assignment instructions and a complete analysis (with all questions answered) for each.

WEEK 8 World War II and Japanese American “Internment”

March 1 World War II and the Four Freedoms

Read: Foner, Chapter 22 and documents *In-Class Writing

March 3 **Guest Speaker** – Lily Yuriko Nakai Havey

Living in an internment camp in Colorado.

Recommended Reading: *Gasa Gasa Girl Goes to Camp*, by Lily Havey

***Discussion/Debate credit:** You must write one question for our guest.

We will draw questions from the pile randomly to answer. Questions will receive credit if they demonstrate an informed point of view. Questions that could be written without studying this time period and without listening to the presenter will receive half credit.

WEEK 9 Cold War and Affluent Society: Desegregation

March 8 The Cold War

Read: Foner, Chapter 23 and documents *In-Class Writing

March 10 Affluent Society

Read: Foner, Chapter 24 and documents

* Discussion/Debate

Visit: <http://www.naacpldf.org/brown-at-60-watch#pbs>

WEEK 10 The 1960s: Civil Rights

March 15 Civil Rights and Protest in the 1960s

Read: Foner, Chapter 25 and documents *In-Class Writing

March 17 Discussion: Prepare for Final Exam

* Discussion/Debate

Compare and contrast the struggles and debates over freedom, and civil liberties in war and peacetime from 1917 through the 1960s. Bring digital images of in-class writing to class to revise, discuss, and prepare for final.

Finals Week

Thursday, March 24, 4-5:50 p.m.

Final Exam Bring 5x7 index card or half-sheet of paper with handwritten notes only.

Exam booklet will be provided.

The five "C"s of historical thinking will drive our learning in this class. History is not the random memorization of names, dates, places, and events, nor is it the recitation of the great accomplishments of outstanding individuals or the memorization of wars, treaties, laws, and policies. Historians use primary sources to answer questions about the past using these five core concepts that frame historical thinking. You will be given ample opportunities to practice historical thinking through in-class writing, primary source analysis, and discussions and debates. You will be tested on your ability to demonstrate your mastery of these skills on the midterm and final exam. When grading your exams, we will be looking for evidence that you can analyze the past through these five core ways of thinking about the past.

What Does It Mean to Think Historically?

Thomas Andrews and Flannery Burke, January 2007

American Historical Association, *Perspectives on History*, available at: <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/january-2007/what-does-it-mean-to-think-historically>

Introduction

When we started working on Teachers for a New Era, a Carnegie-sponsored initiative designed to strengthen teacher training, we thought we knew a thing or two about our discipline. As we began reading such works as Sam Wineburg's *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts*, however, we encountered an unexpected challenge. If our understandings of the past constituted a sort of craft knowledge, how could we distill and communicate habits of mind we and our colleagues had developed through years of apprenticeship, guild membership, and daily practice to university students so that they, in turn, could impart these habits in K–12 classrooms?

In response, we developed an approach we call the "five C's of historical thinking." The concepts of change over time, causality, context, complexity, and contingency, we believe, together describe the shared foundations of our discipline. They stand at the heart of the questions historians seek to answer, the arguments we make, and the debates in which we engage. These ideas are hardly new to professional historians. But that is precisely their value: They make our implicit ways of thought explicit to the students and teachers whom we train. The five C's do not encompass the universe of historical thinking, yet they do provide a remarkably useful tool for helping students at practically any level learn how to formulate and support arguments based on primary sources, as well as to understand and challenge historical interpretations related in secondary sources. In this article, we define the five C's, explain how each concept helps us to understand the past, and provide some brief examples of how we have employed the five C's when teaching teachers. Our approach is necessarily broad and basic, characteristics well suited for a foundation upon which we invite our colleagues from kindergartens to research universities to build.

Change over Time

The idea of change over time is perhaps the easiest of the C's to grasp. Students readily acknowledge that we employ and struggle with technologies unavailable to our forebears, that we live by different laws, and that we enjoy different cultural pursuits. Moreover, students also note that some aspects of life remain the same across time. Many Europeans celebrate many of the same holidays that they did three or four hundred years ago, for instance, often using the same rituals and words to mark a day's significance. Continuity thus comprises an integral part of the idea of change over time.

Students often find the concept of change over time elementary. Even individuals who claim to despise history can remember a few dates and explain that some preceded or followed others. At any educational level, timelines can teach change over time as well as the selective process that leads people to pay attention to some events while ignoring others. In our U.S. survey class, we often ask students to interview family and friends and write a paper explaining how their family's history has intersected with major events and trends that we are studying. By discovering their own family's past, students often see how individuals can make a difference and how personal history changes over time along with major events.

As historians of the American West and environmental historians, we often turn to maps to teach change over time. The same space represented in different ways as political power, economic structures, and cultural influences shift can often put in shocking relief the differences that time makes. The work of repeat photographers such as Mark Klett offers another compelling tool for teaching change over time. Such photographers begin with a historic landscape photograph, then take pains to re-take the shot from the same site, at the same angle, using similar equipment, and even under analogous conditions.² While suburbs and industry have overrun many western locales, students are often surprised to see that some places have become more desolate and others have hardly changed at all. The exercise engages students with a non-written primary source, photographs, and demands that they reassess their expectations regarding how time changes.

Context

Some things change, others stay the same—not a very interesting story but reason for concern since history, as the best teachers will tell you, is about telling stories. Good story telling, we contend, builds upon an understanding of context. Given young people's fascination with narratives and their enthusiasm for imaginative play, pupils (particularly elementary school students) often find context the most engaging element of historical thinking. As students mature, of course, they recognize that the past is not just a playful alternate universe. Working with primary sources, they discover that the past makes more sense when they set it within two frameworks. In our teaching, we liken the first to the floating words that roll across the screen at the beginning of every *Star Wars* film. This kind of context sets the stage; the second helps us to interpret evidence concerning the action that ensues. Texts, events, individual lives, collective struggles—all develop within a tightly interwoven world.

Historians who excel at the art of storytelling often rely heavily upon context. Jonathan Spence's *Death of Woman Wang*, for example, skillfully recreates 17th-century China by following the trail of a sparsely documented murder. To solve the mystery, students must understand the time and place in which it occurred. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich brings colonial New England to life by concentrating on the details of textile production and basket making in *Age of Homespun*. College courses regularly use the work of both authors because they not only spark

student interest, but also hone students' ability to describe the past and identify distinctive elements of different eras.³

Imaginative play is what makes context, arguably the easiest, yet also, paradoxically, the most difficult of the five C's to teach. Elementary school assignments that require students to research and wear medieval European clothes or build a California mission from sugar cubes both strive to teach context. The problem with such assignments is that they often blur the lines between reality and make-believe. The picturesque often trumps more banal or more disturbing truths. Young children may never be able to get all the facts straight. As one elementary school teacher once reminded us, "We teach kids who still believe in Santa Claus." Nonetheless, elementary school *teachers* can be cautious in their re-creations, and, most of all, they can be comfortable telling students when they don't know a given fact or when more research is necessary. That an idea might require more thought or more research is a valuable lesson at any age. The desire to recreate a world sometimes drives students to dig more deeply into their books, a reaction few teachers lament.

In our own classes, we have taught context using an assignment that we call "Fact, Fiction, or Creative Memory." In this exercise, students wrestle with a given source and determine whether it is primarily a work of history, fiction, or memory. We have asked students to bring in a present-day representation of 1950s life and explain what it teaches people today about life in 1950s America. Then, we have asked the class to discuss if the representation is a historically fair depiction of the era. We have also assigned textbook passages and Don DeLillo's *Pafko at the Wall*, then asked students to compare them to decide which offers stronger insights into the character of Cold War America.⁴ Each of these assignments addresses context, because each asks students to think about the distinctions between representations of the past and the critical thinking about the past that is history. Moreover, each asks students to weave together a variety of sources and assess the reliability of each before incorporating them into a whole.

Causality

Historians use context, change over time, and causality to form arguments explaining past change. While scientists can devise experiments to test theories and yield data, historians cannot alter past conditions to produce new information. Rather, they must base their arguments upon the interpretation of partial primary sources that frequently offer multiple explanations for a single event. Historians have long argued over the causes of the Protestant Reformation or World War I, for example, without achieving consensus. Such uncertainty troubles some students, but history classrooms are at their most dynamic when teachers encourage pupils to evaluate the contributions of multiple factors in shaping past events, as well as to formulate arguments asserting the primacy of some causes over others.

To teach causality, we have turned to the stand-by activities of the history classroom: debates and role-playing. After arming students with primary sources, we ask them to argue whether monetary or fiscal policy played a greater role in causing the Great Depression. After giving students descriptions drawn from primary sources of immigrant families in Los Angeles, we have asked students to take on the role of various family members and explain their reasons for immigrating and their reasons for settling in particular neighborhoods. Neither exercise is especially novel, but both fulfill a central goal of studying history: to develop persuasive explanations of historical events and processes based on logical interpretations of evidence.

Contingency

Contingency may, in fact, be the most difficult of the C's. To argue that history is contingent is to claim that every historical outcome depends upon a number of prior conditions; that each of these prior conditions depends, in turn, upon still other conditions; and so on. The core insight of contingency is that the world is a magnificently interconnected place. Change a single prior condition, and any historical outcome could have turned out differently. Lee could have won at Gettysburg, Gore might have won in Florida, China might have inaugurated the world's first industrial revolution.

Contingency can be an unsettling idea—so much so that people in the past have often tried to mask it with myths of national and racial destiny. The Pilgrim William Bradford, for instance, interpreted the decimation of New England's native peoples not as a consequence of smallpox, but as a literal godsend.⁵ Two centuries later, American ideologues chose to rationalize their unlikely fortunes—from the purchase of Louisiana to the discovery of gold in California—as their nation's "Manifest Destiny." Historians, unlike Bradford and the apologists of westward expansion, look at the same outcomes differently. They see not divine fate, but a series of contingent results possessing other possibilities.

Contingency demands that students think deeply about past, present, and future. It offers a powerful corrective to teleology, the fallacy that events pursue a straight-arrow course to a pre-determined outcome, since people in the past had no way of anticipating our present world. Contingency also reminds us that individuals shape the course of human events. What if Karl Marx had decided to elude Prussian censors by emigrating to the United States instead of France, where he met Frederick Engels? To assert that the past is contingent is to impress upon students the notion that the future is up for grabs, and that they bear some responsibility for shaping the course of future history.

Contingency can be a difficult concept to present abstractly, but it suffuses the stories historians tend to tell about individual lives. Futurology, however, might offer an even stronger tool for imparting contingency than biography. Mechanistic views of history as the inevitable march toward the present tend to collapse once students see how different their world is from any predicted in the past.

Complexity

Moral, epistemological, and causal complexity distinguish historical thinking from the conception of "history" held by many non-historians.⁶ Re-enacting battles and remembering names and dates require effort but not necessarily analytical rigor. Making sense of a messy world that we cannot know directly, in contrast, is more confounding but also more rewarding. Chronicles distill intricate historical processes into a mere catalogue, while nostalgia conjures an uncomplicated golden age that saves us the trouble of having to think about the past. Our own need for order can obscure our understanding of how past worlds functioned and blind us to the ways in which myths of rosy pasts do political and cultural work in the present. Reveling in complexity rather than shying away from it, historians seek to dispel the power of chronicle, nostalgia, and other traps that obscure our ability to understand the past on its own terms.

One of the most successful exercises we have developed for conveying complexity in all of these dimensions is a mock debate on Cherokee Removal. Two features of the exercise account for the richness and depth of understanding that it imparts on students. First, the debate involves multiple parties; the Treaty and Anti-Treaty Parties, Cherokee women, John Marshall, Andrew Jackson, northern missionaries, the State of Georgia, and white settlers each offer a

different perspective on the issue. Second, students develop their understanding of their respective positions using the primary sources collected in *Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents* by Theda Perdue and Michael Green.⁷ While it can be difficult to assess what students learn from such exercises, we have noted anecdotally that, following the exercise, students seem much less comfortable referring to "American" or "Indian" positions as monolithic identities.

Conclusion

Our experiments with the five C's have confronted us with several challenges. These concepts offer a fluid tool for engaging historical thought at multiple levels, but they can easily degenerate into a checklist. Students who favor memorization over analysis seem inclined to recite the C's without necessarily understanding them. Moreover, as habits of mind, the five C's develop only with practice. Though primary and secondary schools increasingly emphasize some aspects of these themes, particularly the use of primary sources as evidence, more attention to the five C's with appropriate variations over the course of K–12 education would help future citizens not only to *care* about history, but also to *contemplate* it. It is our hope that this might help students to see the past not simply as prelude to our present, nor a list of facts to memorize, a cast of heroes and villains to cheer and boo, nor as an itinerary of places to tour, but rather as an ideal field for thinking long and hard about important questions.

Notes

1. Sam Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001).
2. Mark Klett, Kyle Bajakian, William L. Fox, Michael Marshall, Toshi Ueshina, and Byron G. Wolfe, *Third Views, Second Sights: A Rephotographic Survey of the American West* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 2004).
3. Jonathan D. Spence, *Death of Woman Wang* (New York: Viking, 1978); Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth* (New York: Knopf, 2001).
4. Don DeLillo, *Pafko at the Wall: A Novella* (New York: Scribner's, 2001).
5. William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, ed. Samuel Eliot Morison (New York: Random House, 1952).
6. Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).
7. Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents* 2nd ed. (Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005).