



COURSE DATA

DATA SUBJECT

Code: 34049
Name: Contemporary history of the United States of America
Cycle: Undergraduate Studies
ECTS Credits: 6
Academic year: 2025-26

STUDY (S)

Degree	Center	Acad. year	Period
1005 - Degree in History	Facultat de Geografia i Història	4	Second quarter
1902 - Formación para la cualificación específica en Geografía, Historia de España	Facultat de Geografia i Història	1	Second quarter

SUBJECT-MATTER

Degree	Subject-matter	Character
1005 - Degree in History	Contemporary history of the United States	ELECTIVES
1902 - Formación para la cualificación específica en Geografía, Historia de España	Historia del Mundo Contemporáneo	ELECTIVES

COORDINATION

BOSCH SANCHEZ MARIA AURORA

SUMMARY

The course analyzes the major political, social, economic and cultural processes in the United States History since its Independence in 1776 until the late Twentieth Century. This involves the study of the various stages of nation building of a new country, characterized by being the recipient of a heterogeneous and changing European emigration, which built a Federal Republican State that pretty soon it was considered worldwide a paradigm of democratic development. Also the new American Republic had a very fast economic development and territorial expansion to the west at the expense of Native Americans, while maintaining slavery in the southern states, and the exclusion of its political system of all "non-white" and women. Some of these contradictions were legally solved with the victory of the North in the Civil War and the affirmation of the Union. In the 1890s the United States was already the world's leading economic power and the country began to design a "New Imperialism".

The two World Wars confirmed US international leadership as the country transformed itself in a leading corporate capitalism economy, a mass consumer society, and the State and politics changed deeply in the thirties and forties emphasizing Federal State economic intervention through the New Deal policies. The expansion of the American Welfare State, the civil rights movement and the "rights revolution"



characterized the early sixties as the Cold War had its worst moments with the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Vietnam War. Since 1968, in the midst of the Vietnam debacle, started the conservative backlash as well as the conservative control of the Republican Party. With The presidency of Ronald Reagan in the eighties the conservative movement reached the executive power as well as the ideological hegemony in the country. The last two decades of the twentieth century witnessed the largest wave of immigration in the country's history, and the longest economic growth since the 60s. Also the fall of the Soviet Empire in the early 1990s made the US the only major military power. After September 11th, 2001, the Republican Party and President George W. Bush implemented its conservative program in foreign and domestic policy.

The election of Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012, the first African American president in US history, in the middle of the "Great Recession" raised enormous expectations for change in the American society and the political system. Although The "Obamacare" and the economic recovery are important achievements of the Democratic President, they were not enough to seal the wounds of the Great Recession, nor to create permanent loyalties towards the Democratic Party. Economic recovery was uneven, racial problems persisted, deportations increased without slowing illegal immigration. As in other countries, in the 2016 Presidential Election the anti-elite rebellion was evident, but in the United States within the two major parties. It was the victor in the Republican Party, the millionaire Donald Trump, who from his single mandate in the presidency represented a radical change in the foreign and domestic policy of the United States. Trump confronted their traditional US allies in foreign policy and , fomented at any cost the polarization into the American society, using the systematic lie spread compulsively on social media and, above all, putting democratic institutions to the limit, denying the victory of Democrat Joe Biden in the 2020 elections - "The Big Lie" and encouraging the assault on Congress on January 6, 2021, which prevented the legislature from certifying the election of Biden as president of the United States. Subsequent decisions in 2022 by a Supreme Court modeled on his mandate are reversing rights acquired in the 1960s and 1970s.

PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE SAME DEGREE

There are no specified enrollment restrictions with other subjects of the curriculum.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

COMPETENCES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

1005 - Degree in History

Be able to comment, annotate or edit texts and documents correctly according to the critical canons of the discipline.

Be able to communicate and argue orally and in writing in one's own language using the terminology and techniques of the profession.

Be able to learn autonomously.

Be able to make abstractions, to analyse and to synthesise.

Be familiar with the methods and issues of the different branches of historical research: economic, social,



political, cultural, gender-related, etc.

Demonstrate organisational and planning skills.

Have critical knowledge of the different historiographic perspectives in the different periods and contexts.

Know universal or world history.

Show awareness of and respect for views deriving from other cultural or national backgrounds.

Show commitment to the principle of equal opportunities for men and women.

Show critical awareness of the relationship between current events and processes and the past.

Value and respect diversity and multiculturalism.

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS

1.

2.

3.

4.

WORKLOAD

PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Theory	30,00
Other activities	15,00
Classroom practices	15,00
Total hours	60,00

NON PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES



Activity	Hours
Attendance at other activities	15,00
Individual or group project	0,00
Independent study and work	20,00
Preparation of lessons	0,00
Preparation for assessment activities	55,00
Resolution of case studies	0,00
Total hours	90,00

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

A. Three hours of class per week

The three hours will be distributed as following:

1) Lectures (30 hours/course): the professors will stress the main aspects of the course, synthesizing the contents and will advice about the best bibliography for the Student to be able to prepare the final exam.

2) Practical classes (15 hours/course): The objective is to help the students with the reading, analysis and understanding of the documents and the bibliography.

B. Assistance to seminars and other complementary activities

The Student, apart for the **assistance to the lessons** , will do another complementary activities and a written memory of it, that every professor will specify for each group (**See ANEXO XII.**)

C. Unscheduled tutoring assistance

The students may attend the tutorial hours that teachers have established in order to consult on any aspect or concerns related to the course.

TIMETABLE OF THE COURSE

The calendar of activities, scheduled tutorials, essays submission and/or reading controls, will be provided to the students by the teacher of each group at the beginning of the course (See ANNEX XII.)

**EVALUATION**

It will be evaluated:

1º Monitoring of the lectures and practical classes. This control takes place through the exercises and texts comments made in the practical classes or workshops, in which student participation in the debate established will be assessed.

2ª the individual written essays

3º the assistance to complementary activities (talks or seminars), of which the student will have to submit a report for the final evaluation.

4º the final exam, which will be assessed both the exposure of theoretical knowledge and practical application. The student must obtain a minimum score of 5 points out of 10 to account for other qualifications.

The exact percentage representing each of these items in the final grade is as follows:

Written Final Exam	60%
Reading controls and evaluation of individual essays	25%
Complementary Activities	15%



TOTAL	100%
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For the second period of exams in July:

1. In the reset final exam the student must obtain a minimum score of 5 points out of 10 to account for other qualifications.
2. The grades from Individual essays and reports of other activities will be kept from the first period of exams.

The individual essays and reports from the complementary activities will be included in the final grades of the second period of exams, when they have been delivered during the course within the time limits.

Excepting Erasmus students, grammar and spelling mistakes will score negatively on the qualification of all written tests and academic works. Their accumulation may lead to a failing grade in the course.

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REFERENCES

- Adams, W.P., Los Estados Unidos de América, Madrid, siglo XXI, 1980
- Bender, Thomas, Historia de los Estados Unidos. Una nación de naciones, Siglo XXI editores, Buenos Aires, 2011
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- Guardia, Carmen de la, Historia de Estados Unidos, Madrid, Silex ediciones, 2009
- Jones, Maldwyn A., Historia de Estados Unidos 1607-1992, Madrid, Cátedra, 1995



- Morison, S.E., Commager, H.S., Breve historia de Estados Unidos, 1607-1992, Fondo de Cultura Económica, México, 1993
- Zinn, H., La otra historia de los Estados Unidos, Hondarribia, Otras Voces, 1998.
- Foner, Eric, Historia de la libertad en Estados Unidos, Barcelona, Península 2010