

**Spring 2022**  
**HIST378: History of the American Dream**



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### **Course Description**

HIST378: History of the American Dream (3 Credits). This course examines the origins and development of the idea of the American Dream. The course researches the history of memory in the project of defining American national identity particularly over contested notions of liberty and equality. Topics might include the history of entrepreneurship and political economy, the history of consumerism and consumer activism, the history of workers and the labor movement, and the history of immigration and migration history. F, S, M, Su.

### **Course Specifics**

The course explores the idea of the American Dream as it evolved over time. The American Dream has been at the heart of what defines American identity. Yet even this sentence you just read assumes so much. What is “the American Dream”? Such an apparently immutable term can too easily escape historical examination. Does it define an imagined community of shared interests? A guarantee of a job? A big house in the suburbs and a new car in the driveway? Security in case of accidents, illness, old age? Freedoms of speech, press, religion? Has it been different at different times or for different people? Who gets it and how? Is it available to everyone? The course will evaluate how the idea emerged in the nineteenth century and evolved over the course of the twentieth century. Its history reveals a story of struggle over political, cultural, and economic expectations—of the promises of residency and citizenship, the contours of hope and reality. Was America a land of equality, as suggested by the Declaration of Independence? When and how did the idea of equal opportunity originate? Is democratic process part of this Dream or has it been an obstacle to its fruition? Have any competing visions of an American Dream emerged?

### **Course Objectives**

This course analyzes secondary sources and varying primary documents, including literature, music, paintings, cartoons, and film evidence, that engage the recurring themes in the American experience and try to assess if there really is a discernible “American Dream.”

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Identify, evaluate, compare, and differentiate between biased assertions and informed interpretations of the past.
2. Analyze and historically contextualize articulations of the American Dream.
3. Research ideas and data in relevant literatures and other sources.

4. Demonstrate college-level writing skills.

### Student Learning Outcomes Measured

\* In-class participation and in-class and take home assignments including quizzes, prepared discussion questions, and short review/response essays. This portion of the grade will partially be based on class participation, preparation, and attendance. Hence, absences and missed in-class assignments will negatively impact your grade. Worth **30%** of overall grade.

\* Two three to four-page analytical essays (750 to 1000 words): each worth **20%** (overall **40%**). Essays will be based on class lecture, discussion, and material reviewed. Due weeks seven and twelve.

\* Final Class Project worth **30%**. Two options:

#### **Option I: Extended Analytical Essay** (Assignment Prompt will be given on Tuesday April 14) **DUE: Friday, 1:00 p.m. May 1**

- An eight to ten page course synthesis essay addressing a specific question or theme. You will be required to reference the sources used throughout the semester as well additional secondary and primary sources specific to this assignment.
- Preparation for this assignment simply requires you to be diligent throughout the semester, take effective notes, and remain engaged throughout.

#### **Option II: An Original Research Paper** (Must meet specific benchmarks)

- Part I 5% Due Week 8, early March
  - **Two-page paper proposal, annotated bibliography**—highlighting and discussing the main primary source(s) and at least 5 secondary sources. Topic must be approved by the instructor. **You will be required to meet with me by no later than Week Five to discuss your paper ideas** and at least two more times to discuss paper updates such as your findings and progress. The meeting should occur in the first week of March or the week of March 16; and in early April.
- Part II 25% Due Week 14, Tuesday, April 21
  - **An eight to ten page research paper** and ten minute class presentation. The oral presentation will be conducted sometime during the final two weeks of class.
    - \*\* I will return the papers back to you by Tuesday, April 28. You can revise and resubmit by Tuesday, May 5.

\*\*Late work and essays lose 5% per day late.

#### *Grading Scale:*

A = 90-100; B+ = 88-89; B = 80-87; C+ = 78-79; C = 70-77; D+ = 68-69; D = 60-67; F = 59↓

#### Required Texts:

- Scott Sandage, *Born Losers: A History of Failure in America* (Harvard, 2005)
- Benjamin Hunnicutt, *Free Time: The Forgotten American Dream* (Temple, 2013),
- Keenga-Yamahatta Taylor, *Race for Profit: How Banks and the Real Estate Industry Undermined Black Home Ownership* (UNC Press, 2019)
- All the above readings are available electronically via Kimbel Library
- Additional readings will be available via Moodle or passed out in class. I will assign additional readings and film viewings or audio recordings throughout the semester, through email or in class (email messages will be posted on Moodle's Announcements). On occasion, some online readings will need to be printed and brought to class.

## Guide for Coastal Carolina Undergraduate Students

Coastal Carolina University has created a convenient website listing important web links to all sorts of University policies and resources. Please bookmark this page <https://www.coastal.edu/info/students/> for future reference for any questions you may have about academic issues, safety and security concerns, and general University services and support. The relevant link will likely be located there. Such areas as learning assistance service (including tutoring support for Math, Writing, etc.), code of student conduct and academic integrity, accessibility and disability services, student handbook, college catalog, and so much more may be found via this useful link.

**The Fine Print:** Professor Castillo retains the right to alter the course syllabus and requirements as deemed necessary for student learning at any point during the semester.

### Attendance and Participation

The expectation is that you will attend every class; that you will arrive on time; and that you be engaged during the class session (attention focused on lecture and class discussion). **Four or more absences will result in a reduction of your grade by one full-letter grade.** Remember that “unexcused absences in excess of 25 percent of the regularly scheduled class meetings” (6 sessions) will result in an F for the course. **FYI: Sleeping during class will be marked as an absence.**

I will expect documentation for excused absences. A letter must accompany the documentation (doctor’s note, obituary, death certificate, etc.) indicating the dates for the excused absence(s) and an explanation of your efforts to remain on track. For more discussion of the University attendance policy and what may constitute an excused absence, please reference this link: <http://www.coastal.edu/policies/pdf/acad-sena%2012%20attend.%208-2016.pdf>

**Note:** Students joining/adding the course after the first day of classes will have those missed days count as excused absences and will be required to make-up all missed readings/work.

However, it is critical to keep in mind *that even if an absence is excused*, missing class will have a detrimental effect on your grade given that the collective flow of work in a college semester seriously disables one from “catching-up.” The material covered in class is often unique and usually not replicable particularly when engaging a complicated text or covering original material.

Examples of unexcused absences (not inclusive): job interviews, busy with another class, overslept, sick (non-life threatening), extended vacation/travel, etc.

Examples of excused absences: official representation of CCU (such as athletics or a CCU club), death of a relative, religious holidays, etc.

These require proper documentation in a hard copy to be **submitted in a timely manner to the instructor (on date of return to class) in order for a student to make arrangements for make-up work.** University policy also states that “absences, excused or unexcused, do not absolve students from the responsibility of completing work promptly.” This means that for excused absences you are still held responsible for required reading or writing on the course schedule. (*See make-up policy below.*)

### A Critical Note on Course Participation

Class attendance is essential. You are required to complete the reading and/or film viewing, as listed on Moodle, indicated by email (hence check your email every day or Moodle Announcement messages), and/or in-class instruction, by the required date. Readings and other assignments will be added throughout the semester; class attendance is critical to remain on track.

Absences will result in “falling behind” and possibly undermining your semester. Success in this course depends on you 1) keeping a regular study schedule, 2) completing readings and assignments by their due dates, and 3) remaining consistent throughout the semester. This is an active learning course, similar to a science lab session, in that it will require consistent engagement and participation.

Your overall effort will be evaluated in several ways. Active engagement will positively influence your ability to participate in class lecture/discussion, the quality of your assignment work, and the quality of your essays. Participation in class discussion, in-class and take-home class assignments, and essays will all improve by simply remaining on schedule and staying connected with the class.

I urge you to communicate with me via email and in person to discuss the content of the course material, the progress of your learning or research, or any difficulties you may be having. It is critical that you keep me in the “loop.” Emails relating to procedural points, syllabus questions, or other administrative issues are welcomed—though, I encourage you to review the syllabus and Moodle before inquiring to see if the answer you are seeking may be found in those locations. I solicit your help in pointing out any discrepancies in the syllabus or on Moodle. We are in this together. Your insights may help correct any errors or lack of clarity. I rely on you to assist me in improving transparency.

Do not hesitate to come talk to me if you are feeling uncomfortable about any of the subjects or topics we discuss or other matters regarding the class. It can be challenging to engage certain issues. Rest assured that I am interested in your perspective. We at times feel uncomfortable when encountering new content or sensitive issues. We should work together to create a welcoming and open environment, one where basic rules of courtesy are followed and where each person is treated with dignity. This is the only way we can expand our appreciation about the diversity of the human condition and really begin the journey of deep, engaged learning.

**Retain Copies of Work:** It is a good practice in any course to keep copies of everything that you have handed in and holding onto to all work until you have received your final grade in the course. Mistakes happen. Items get lost and errors are made in recording grades. In such instances, a student cannot merely claim to have done the work. He/she must be able to produce it.

### **Missed Class Time/Make-Up Work**

**If you have an excused absence**, you will be able to make up missed work on condition that you submit proper documentation in the class upon your return **AND** you will need to meet with me during my office hours or via appointment within a timely fashion in order to be afforded the opportunity to make up the missed work. Readings and other class content will be discussed during our meeting.

If for any family or medical reason you find it absolutely necessary to miss a paper due date, you must contact me before the due date to obtain an extension. If an unanticipated excused absence occurs, documentation must be submitted to me **in the class session upon your return**. Failure to do this will result in forfeiture of any privileges of the excused absence.

### **Academic Integrity**

Coastal Carolina University Code of Academic Integrity sets standards for academic integrity for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. Academic misconduct will result, at the very least, in an F for the particular assignment, and possibly an FX for the course: failure as the result of academic misconduct.

To help you understand the nature of each of these infractions, please go to the following link:  
<https://www.coastal.edu/academicintegrity/code/>.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (i) borrowing words, sentences, ideas, conclusions, examples, and/or organization of an assignment without proper acknowledgement from a source (a book, article, electronic documents, or another student's paper)
- (ii) submitting another person's work in place of his/her own;
- (iii) allowing someone else to revise, correct, or edit an assignment without explicit permission of the instructor;
- (iv) submitting work without proper acknowledgement from websites, organization's files or other outside sources, whether purchased or not;
- (v) allowing another person to substitute for them any part of a course for them, including quizzes, tests, and final examinations;
- (vi) submitting any written assignments done with the assistance of another without explicit permission of the instructor;
- (vii) knowingly aiding another student who is engaged in plagiarism

Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to:

- (i) using unauthorized material or assistance of any kind for an assignment, quiz, test, or final examination;
- (ii) knowingly aiding another student who is engaged in cheating

Note that "cheating, plagiarism, or any other act of academic dishonesty **may result in the student receiving a 0.0 (FX) for the course.**"

**Disputing Grades.** If you believe one of your assignments was graded unfairly, please follow these steps: **1)** Do not try to speak with your instructor about your grade at the end of the class period in which the assignment was handed back; take at least 24 hours to read and think about the comments and grade. But do not wait more than a few days to follow steps 2-5; **2)** Reread the assignment and your written work; **3)** Read my comments and note my analysis; **4)** Write down the reason or reasons why you think the grade is inappropriate; **5)** Give these comments to the instructor and arrange a time to meet him.

### **Classroom Etiquette**

At all times, students must remain focused during the class session: sleeping, looking at your phone or Apple Watch, working on another course's assignments, looking at any online materials not being used in the specific course session, or any other distracting activities.

In addition, it is critical that each of us remain respectful of others' opinions. If you disagree with someone, you should express your alternative view using the evidence that led you to your interpretation, and therefore following a scholarly and analytical approach. Personalized comments, inappropriate language, and raised voices are not conducive to learning and will not be tolerated in the classroom. Here are some other basic rules of protocol:

*Be on time and do not leave early.* Our class sessions are fairly short and require prompt starts. Tardiness will result in a lower participation grade and will count as an absence if you are late two times (3 or more minutes). **Use the restroom, get a drink, or whatever before you enter the room.** Be sure to stay the entire class time. Leaving the class early will result in a lower grade for attendance/participation.

*Put away your cell-phone.* Our classes will require one's full attention. The bottom line is that multi-tasking is a myth. Looking at one's phone may be disrespectful to your classmates and your instructor if you are not looking at course readings (as listed on Moodle). Be sure to print any required readings to class (if indicated by your instructor) to avoid the need to use web access. Be sure to turn put your phone on airplane mode before the start of class.

*Computer use.* The use of laptops, tablets, or other devices is **allowed but only for course related uses**. Since there are several electronic readings, being prepared will entail being very organized and detailed oriented. This is a textually based course requiring critical reading and analysis. I will occasionally expect you to print out documents so that you can mark them up and use during class sessions. Note-taking may be done with pen and paper but it may be a good idea to type your notes after class or when note-taking for your readings (bring printed copies of your notes to class in such cases if you do not have access to a laptop/tablet) as a method for reviewing the material covered in class. Be sure to always note page number and/or other relevant information to locate passages from readings so as to reference them easily in class discussion.

### **Email and Moodle Etiquette**

It is required that you regularly access our Moodle page and check your email. I will make regular use of electronic communication so please remain alert for my messages. These messages will be posted on Moodle's Announcements as well. So I recommend to check Moodle regularly for such messages to avoid any email error. "I did not get that email" is therefore not an acceptable excuse.

Please compose your emails in a professional and respectful manner. Avoid acronyms or other short hand. Compose sentences. Do not write in all caps. Avoid using exclamation points. Use a subject in the subject line. Be sure to have a neutral sounding email. Provide a signature with your name and contact info. In essence, follow the basics of good etiquette.

Take time to read my emails carefully and be sure to respond to them. As important, be sure to respond to the content of the emails I send, especially if they are directed specifically to you—that is, be sure to address all parts of my queries. This form of communication is critical for your success. Failure to do be responsive to the content of my email will affect your participation grade negatively and it will seriously disable you from making the types of course or research adjustments necessary for success in the class.

Allow for at least 48 hours for a response from me not including weekends; and if the email is sent over the weekend or after 5:00 pm, be patient and expect a response during the normal school week (M-F) and sometime during the business day (9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.). I normally will respond fairly quickly (within a day) but circumstances may prevent me to do so. If you have not heard from me within 48 hours, please resend your email. Given it is email, there are occasional issues but please do forward your original message to me. Basically, do not hesitate to follow up; do not assume I am not responsive or that I will respond.

If an assignment requires an online submission, be sure to follow the file format expectation of the assignment (it will either be **Word** or **PDF**). The submission of an unreadable document by the due date, will be considered a late assignment or simply penalized as not submitted and earn a 0. It is your responsibility to assure that the correct document has been uploaded appropriately.

### **Inclement Weather and University Emergency Closing Policy**

If Coastal Carolina University is closed due to inclement weather or other emergency (be sure to sign up for **CCU Alert**), **you will be required to stay on track as outlined on the daily-weekly schedule**

**below (or email/class adjustments).** Expect an email subsequent Moodle assignment from me for a replacement homework assignment and/or exercise to replace the missed class time.

You are expected to take **ALL course materials** if we are forced to leave campus. Be sure to gather your personal belongings, including your computer, and be prepared to receive updated course plans in the event of an extended campus closing. This may entail various types of assignments, including but not limited to, additional readings, essays, readings-based questions, or other comparable work.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Coastal Carolina University is committed to equitable access and inclusion of individuals with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Individuals seeking reasonable accommodations should contact Accessibility & Disability Services (843-349-2503 or <https://www.coastal.edu/disabilityservices/>).

Please inform the instructor *at the beginning of the semester* (within the first two weeks of class) if you require any disability related special accommodations. Be sure that you have registered with Disability Services: <https://www.coastal.edu/disabilityservices/>. You will also need to submit the appropriate accommodation forms for each test with ample time so I will be able to assure you get these accommodations.

### **Religious Observances**

The Coastal Carolina University policy provides that students not be penalized because of observances of religious beliefs, but rather shall be given an opportunity, *whenever feasible*, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment missed due to individual participation in religious observances.

Please inform me the instructor **at the beginning of the semester** if you are going to miss any assignments due to religious observances by personally handing me a written notification of the projected absence within two weeks of the start of the semester.

## Lecture Topics and Assigned Readings (29 classes)

(May be subject to adjustments by the instructor)

### Foundations for the American Dream

#### Week One: Jan 13

Tue, Jan 14

Introductions: Course Requirements and Expectations

--Discussing the American Dream

--Reflection exercise: Defining the American Dream.

Thur, Jan 16

What is the American Dream?

Discussion of personal reflections

--Begin viewing and completing for homework documentary:

*Requiem for the American Dream* (2016)

#### Week Two: Jan 20

Tues, Jan 21

Hierarchy, Order, and Equality

--John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity"

--Declaration of Independence

--1790 Naturalization Act

Thurs, Jan 23

Hierarchy, Order, and Race

--Theodore Allen, *Invention of the White Race* excerpts

### Shaping the American Dream: Success and Failure

#### Week Three: Jan 27

Tues, Jan 28

Visions of Equal Opportunity

Sandage, *Born Losers*, Prologue and Chapter One

--Thomas Jefferson, excerpts from his *Notes on Virginia* (1787)

--Recommended: Alexander Hamilton, *Report on Manufacturers* (1791)

Thurs, Jan 30

Visions of Equal Opportunity and the Work Ethic

Sandage, *Born Losers*, Chapters Two-Three

--Benjamin Franklin, *The Way to Wealth* (1758)

--Thomas Skidmore's vision



**Week Four: Feb 3**

Tues, Feb 4

--Sandage, *Born Losers*, Chapters Four-Five

Thurs, Feb 6

--Sandage, *Born Losers*, Chapters Six-Seven

**Week Five: Feb 10**

Tues, Feb 11

--Sandage, *Born Losers*, Chapter 8 and Epilogue

Thur, Feb 13

Higher Progress

--Benjamin Hunnicutt, *Free Time*, Preface, Introduction, and Chapter One

**The Struggle over Time: Higher Progress or Myth of the Happy Worker?****Week Six, Feb 17**

Tues, Feb 18

Higher Progress

--Benjamin Hunnicutt, *Free Time*, Chapter Two and Three

Thurs, Feb 20

Time, Work-Discipline, Industrial Capitalism—Opportunity in Industrial America

-E. P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past & Present*, no. 38 (Dec 1967): 56-97.

**Week Seven: Feb 24**

Tues, Feb 25

Discuss Papers

**\*\*\* Analytical Paper One Due \*\*\***

Thurs, Feb 27

The Right to Be Lazy!

Paul Lafargue, "The Right to be Lazy!" (1883)

John Commons, "The Right to Work" (1898)

**Week Eight: March 2**

Tues, March 3

The Working Class, Leisure, and the Work Ethic

--Hunnicutt, *Free Time*, Ch. 4 & 5

Thurs, March 4

Working Class American Dream  
 --Hunnicut, *Free Time*, Ch. 6 & 7

### **Week Nine, March 9**

Spring Break!! No Classes!!  
 Relax, get ahead, make progress...

### **Week Ten, March 16**

Tues, March 17  
 The Labor-Management Accord?  
 --Hunnicut, *Free Time*, Ch. 8 and 9

Thurs, March 19  
 Working 9 to 5 is that All that Defines a Living?  
 --Hunnicut, *Free Time*, Ch. 10

## **Dreaming the Dream: Consumerism, Debt, Home Ownership**

### **Week Eleven, March 23**

Tues, March 24  
 Credit & Debt Train to the American Dream  
 --Louis Hyman, selections from *Debtor Nation* (Princeton, 2011)

Thurs, March 26  
 Home-Owning & Unfair Housing  
 --Keenga-Yamahatta Taylor, *Race for Profit*, Introduction & Ch. 1

### **Week Twelve, March 30**

Tues, March 31  
 Discuss Papers  
 \*\*\* **Analytical Paper II Due** \*\*\*

Thurs, April 2  
 \*\*\* **No In-Class Session: Online Redirection** \*\*\*  
 --Keenga-Yamahatta Taylor, *Race for Profit*, Ch. 2 & 3

### **Week Thirteen, April 6**

Tues, April 7  
 --Keenga-Yamahatta Taylor, *Race for Profit*, Ch. 4

Thurs, April 9  
 --Keenga-Yamahatta Taylor, *Race for Profit*, Ch. 5

(FRIDAY APRIL 10: Student Holiday, No Classes)

## **Requiem for the American Dream?**

### **Week Fourteen, April 13**

Tues, April 14

Finance and Neoliberalism

--Keenga-Yamahatta Taylor, *Race for Profit*, Ch. 6 and 7

Thurs, April 15

--Finance and Neoliberalism

--Readings: TBA

### **Week Fifteen, April 20**

Tues, April 21

Class Presentations

--Readings: TBA

Thur, April 23

Class Presentations

--Readings: TBA

### **Week Sixteen, April 27**

Tues, April 28

Last Class and Discussion, Wrap-Up Session

(Wed, APRIL 29: Last Day of Spring Semester)

(Thurs, APRIL 30: Study Day)

**Final Exam Date: Thursday, May 7 at 8:30 a.m.**

**Final Paper Due: Monday, May 4 at 1:00 p.m.  
Through Moodle's Turnitin as a Word document  
(See Paper Prompt)**