

# COURSE OUTLINE

## **1. Course Number and Title:** Hist4110, The Progressive Era

Prerequisites: None

Credits: 3 hours

**2. Course Description:** The Progressive Era was the beginning of the growth in the role of the U. S. government in the 20th-century. During this era, America saw the beginnings of federal regulation of business through the regulatory commissions and antitrust laws, the income tax, the Federal Reserve Board, federal regulation of alcohol, drafting men to fight overseas, and more. The enactment of these policies in the same period is not an accident. All of them increased the role of government in society and were intended to do so, as the outcome of the rise of statist political philosophies across the Western world. Statist political ideas and movements, especially those of the egalitarian variety, gathered momentum in the period 1870-1900 and became strongest in the period from 1900 to World War I, challenging the Founders' doctrine of limited government.

This course will delve into the era's history. Students will look at various types of Progressives, the growth of Progressive ideology, and its opposition to the philosophy of limited government.

**3. Course Goals:** The goals of this course are to acquaint students with the major policy changes of this era and to help students to assess the importance of various proposed causes of these changes, especially the major ideologies or political philosophies that supposedly influenced the political actors in this era.

**4. Course Learning Outcomes** Students will demonstrate their understanding of the course subject matter by being able to do the following:

1. Describe and analyze the major changes in policies (legislative and otherwise) and attitudes (moral, legal, economic and political) from those of the period preceding to those advanced during the Progressive Era.
2. Assess the degree to which Progressive Era changes in attitudes and policies constituted a break with those of the Founders.
3. Discuss and evaluate proposed causal explanations for these changes, especially explanations in terms of ideology (political philosophy).
4. Analyze the policies and attitudes of the Progressive Era so as to determine which major intellectual movements informed policies and attitudes of the Progressive Era.

5. Describe and analyze policies regarding control of big business and expansion of the money supply during the years 1887 to 1900 that can be seen as preludes to the policies of the Progressive Era.

6. Describe and analyze Theodore Roosevelt's attitudes and policies, especially those concerning antitrust, railroad regulation, food and drug regulation and conservation, so as to assess them as to (a) whether his policies were intended to favor big business, small business, consumers or others, or some combination of them, or none; (b) whether they were intended to promote competition or not; and (c) whether their actual effects were the same as their intended effects in each of those respects.

“

7. Describe and analyze Progressive Era-instigated electoral policies, such as primaries, “direct democracy, voter registration and secret ballots, as to whether (a) whether they in fact promoted democracy, (b) whether they were even intended to do so, and (c) to what extent they constituted a break with the philosophy of the Founders

8. Describe and analyze William Howard Taft's attitudes and policies, especially those concerning antitrust, railroad regulation, food and drug regulation and conservation, so as to assess them as to (a) whether his policies were intended to increase or decrease the role of government in society; (b) whether they were intended to favor big business, small business, consumers or others, or some combination of them, or none; (c) whether they were intended to promote competition or not; (d) whether their actual effects were the same as their intended effects in each of those respects; and (e) as to whether Taft was a “conservative”, and in what sense and to what degree.

9. Describe and analyze Woodrow Wilson's positions on the “Trust Issue” (regulation of business and antitrust policy), as to whether (a) whether his policies were intended to increase or decrease the role of government in society; (b) whether they were intended to favor big business, small business, consumers or others, or some combination of them, or none; (c) whether they were intended to promote competition or not; (d) whether their actual effects were the same as their intended effects in each of those respects; and (d) they changed from the election of 1912 to the enactment of the Clayton Antitrust Act and establishment of the Federal Trade Commission.

10. Describe and analyze Wilson's fiscal and monetary policies, so as to assess them as to their intellectual foundation and their economic effects

11. Describe and analyze the non-economic domestic policies of the Wilson years, such as racial and ethnic policy and drug and alcohol policy, so as to

assess whether it was incompatible with, compatible with or even entailed by the Progressive views of Wilson and other political actors of the era.

12. Describe and analyze later economic policies of Wilson's first term, from 1915-6, such as those relating roads, agriculture, social welfare programs and labor legislation, so as to assess them as to whether they a break with his "New Freedom" policies of 1913-4 or a continuation of them

13. Describe and analyze Wilson's policy with regard to World War I, both before our involvement and during it, so as to assess whether it constituted the end of the Progressive Era or its culmination.

## **5. Course Concepts**

1. Political and philosophical 19th century precursors to the Progressive era.
2. 1<sup>st</sup> Prelude: 1870-1887 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Prelude 1887-1901.
3. Theodore Roosevelt's administrations and shifts in his attitude to business legislation.
4. William Howard Taft's administration and national electoral changes.
5. Woodrow Wilson's administration 1912-16: antitrust and the Federal Trade Commission.
6. Wilson administration: The Federal Reserve, Underwood Tariff.
7. Wilson administration: Drug and alcohol policies, and racial and ethnic policies.
8. Wilson administration: federal income tax; rural issues: highways and farm loans; labor and social welfare issues.
9. The foreign policies of Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson, and the election of 1916.
10. Wilson administration: from World War I to the election of 1920: a repudiation of the Progressive era philosophy.

## **6. Required Texts/Articles**

Kolko, Gabriel. *The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History*. New York. The Free Press, a division of McMillan, 1963. ISBN 0029166500. \$19.00; Kindle (\$14.00). Students may rent this book from Yorktown at a cost of \$18.00 (includes shipping).

Link, Arthur S. *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era, 1900-1917*. New York. Harper Torchbooks: The University Library, 1954. ISBN 006133023X. (Available

used: \$1:00-\$5.00) Students may rent this book from Yorktown at a cost of \$18.00 (includes shipping).

Mowry, George Edwin *The Era of Theodore Roosevelt and the Birth of Modern America*, New York. Harper Torchbooks: The University Library, 1958 ISBN 0061330221. (Available used: \$1:00-\$5.00) Students may rent this book from Yorktown at a cost of \$18.00 (includes shipping).

Powell, Jim *Bully Boy: The Truth About Theodore Roosevelt's Legacy*. New York. Crown Forum, 2006. ISBN 0-307-23722-2. \$10.00; Kindle (\$14.00)

Boudreaux Donald J.; DiLorenzo, Thomas J.; and Parker, Steven. 1995. "Antitrust before the Sherman Act," In *The Causes and Consequences of Antitrust: The Public Choice Perspective*. Edited by Fred S. McChesney and William F. Shughart III. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 0-226-55634-4 (cloth) 0-226-55635-2 (paper), pp. 255-269. Provided in Izio.

Gilligan, Thomas W.; Marshall, William J.; and Weingast, Barry R. "The Interstate Commerce Act of 1887," *Journal of Law and Economics* 32: pp. 34-61. Provided in Izio.

Grandy, Christopher. "Original Intent and the Sherman Antitrust Act: A Re-examination of the Consumer-Welfare Hypothesis," *The Journal of Economic History* 53: 359-376. Provided in Izio.

## **7. Recommended Reading [Located in Lectures/Texts]**

## **8. Resources [Located in Resources]**