

The 1920s and the Making of Modern America

Type of Course: Hybrid

Instructor: Juan R. García, Professor Emeritus

Meeting Times and Day: Tuesdays 10:00 am to 12 noon.

The 1920s was a period that witnessed dramatic changes in the U.S. and internationally. These changes triggered a series of culture wars around the role of women, tensions between urban and rural America, reformers, traditionalists and modernists, and science and religion. This course will examine the cultural, economic, and social changes that occurred during this vibrant period in American History, and the responses they engendered. It will also delve into the personalities and issues that helped shape the decade.

Homework and Assignments: There is no homework for this course. Each week readings will be posted that either delve deeper into the material covered in the lectures or provide supplemental information about topics that are not covered in the course because of time. All these readings are optional and do not require reading to understand the lecture content.

Lecture topics (subject to change).

Week 1: September 24

1. The Election of 1920: A Return to Normalcy.
2. The Republican Ascendancy: Politics and the 1920s.

Week 2: October 1

1. “The Business of America is Business”: The New Economic Order
2. “Any color as long as it’s black.” :The Rise of a Consumer Culture

Week 3: October 8

1. Closing the Gate: Immigration and Eugenics
2. 100% Americanism: The Rise and Fall of the Ku Klux Klan

Week 4: October 15

1. “Joe Sent Me”: Prohibition
2. The 19th Amendment and the New Woman

Week 5:

1. “You can’t make a monkey out of me!”: Science vs Religion
2. “ We return fighting.” :The New Negro and the Harlem Renaissance
3. 1929: Playing with Bulls and Bears