Course Description:
This course is a survey of American history that examines how the United States was transformed from thirteen rebellious colonies in 1776 to one of the most prosperous nations in the world by the dawn of the 20th century. Though one may assume that history primarily consists of mundane facts and dates, this course examines the history of the United States through the lens of transformative ideas—especially with regard to race and gender—that have helped define the everyday lives of individuals in American society. This class, embarking on a broad survey of critical periods ranging from the Revolutionary Era, the Civil War, and the Progressive Era, seeks to develop your ability to think critically about the significance and meaning of historical change in the United States. To create an appreciation for the complexity of historical subjectivity, we will also pay close attention to the personal stories of those who experienced periods of dramatic change.

Grading:
35% - Online participation
25% - Primary Source Review paper
05% - Research paper bibliography
35% - Final research paper

Required Readings:

Assignments:
Participation is a crucial element of your grade. As this is an online course, you must complete all assignments—including the Read, Watch, and Write & Discuss portion of each unit—to receive your weekly participation points.
— You must answer the required Blackboard questions by the last date of each unit. Answers to each question must be at least 400 words. I advise taking notes during the lectures and videos to help with these questions.

— You will write a critical review of a primary source. Your paper will examine and critique the author’s argument while reflecting critically on the importance of the source at large in American history. These papers are not simple summaries! You will receive a handout explaining exactly how this paper should be written and how it will be graded.

— The research paper must be on a pre-approved topic. I will happily accept rough drafts of your paper no later than five days before the due date and will offer comments to help you strengthen your work and aid you in improving your grade. You will receive two handouts explaining how this paper should be written and how it will be graded.

General Rules:
— Assignments are due on the day specified. You will lose one letter grade for each day an assignment is late.

— Plagiarism is a grave offense that can lead to your expulsion from this university. It is a gamble wholly unworthy of the risks.

— Please, do not hesitate to request to speak with me on the phone or meet in person. I am always willing to help you work to improve your grade. My objective is to see you strengthen your critical thinking and writing skills and earn a good grade in the process.

— Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all students, with or without disabilities, are entitled to equal access to the programs and activities of Fordham University. If you believe that you have a disabling condition that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, coursework, or assessment of the object of this course, you may be entitled to accommodations. Please schedule an appointment to speak with someone at the Office of Disability Services (Rose Hill - O’Hare Hall, Lower Level, x0655 or at Lincoln Center – Room 207, x6282).

Class Schedule:

ONLINE CLASS ORIENTATION (May 29-30)

MODULE 1

Week One (May 31-June 4): The Thirteen Colonies before 1776 and the Creation of the American Republic

READ

The American Story, pg. 109-129.
Thomas Paine, Common Sense, 249-264
Benjamin Franklin, "1766 Parliamentary Testimony"
LISTEN/VIEW
Video Introduction
Narrated Slideshow with downloadable slides.

WRITE AND DISCUSS
Blackboard Reflection #1:
1) Explain three major events in the years up to 1776 that influenced the American colonies’ decision to separate from Britain?
2) Using quotes from Common Sense, reflect on why Thomas Paine’s arguments mattered to ordinary Americans (name at least two reasons)

Week Two (June 5-11): From the Revolutionary War to the Federal Constitution

READ
The American Story, 129-138, 150-168
George Washington Newburgh Conspiracy speech
Excerpted Letters of John and Abigail Adams, Correspondence, 1776

LISTEN/VIEW
Video Introduction
Narrated Slideshow with downloadable slides.

WRITE AND DISCUSS
Blackboard Reflection #2:
1) What were two major reasons that enabled the United States to prevail over Britain in the Revolutionary War? (Make an argument!)
2) In your own opinion, do you think it was necessary for the United States to switch to the federal constitution?

MODULE 2
Week Three (June 12-June 18): The Age of Jefferson
RESEARCH PAPER TOPIC DUE

READ
The American Story, 150-168
Joseph Ellis, American Sphinx, 200-214
Thomas Jefferson First Inaugural Address

LISTEN/VIEW
Video Introduction
Narrated Slideshow with downloadable slides.

WRITE AND DISCUSS
Blackboard Reflection #3:
1) How would you describe Jefferson’s republican philosophy?
MODULE 3
Week Four (June 19-June 25): Jacksonian Democracy

READ
The American Story, 243-265
President Andrew Jackson Proclamation on South Carolina Nullification
President Andrew Jackson’s Farewell Address, March 4, 1837

LISTEN/VIEW
Video Introduction
Narrated Slideshow with downloadable slides.

WRITE AND DISCUSS
Blackboard Reflection #4:
Based on the lecture and reading, what is the meaning of Jacksonian Democracy in your opinion?

MODULE 4
Week Five (June 26-July 2): Slavery in the Early American Republic and a Nation Divided

READ
Walter Johnson, Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market, 19-44
Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom’s Cabin, 373-385
Solomon Northup, Twelve Years as a Slave excerpt

LISTEN/VIEW
Video Introduction
Narrated Slideshow with downloadable slides.

WRITE AND DISCUSS
Blackboard Reflection #5:
1) Explain the consequences of the internal slave trade in the United States? How did African American slaves resist this process?
2) Why did slavery create extreme tensions in the U.S. Congress in the fifty years prior to the American Civil War?

Week Six (July 3-July 9): The Civil War
PRIMARY SOURCE REVIEW DUE

READ
The American Story, 336-358, 360-376
A.A. & Mary Hoehling, The Last Days of the Confederacy, 99-125
President Lincoln’s Letter to Horace Greeley, August 22, 1862
Recollections of the Battle of Perryville 1882
LISTEN/VIEW
Video Introduction
Narrated Slideshow with downloadable slides.
Glory film clips (youtube.com)

WRITE AND DISCUSS
Blackboard Reflection #6
1) Reflect on the central role of slavery in causing the Civil War—what did ordinary northerners think about slavery and the conflict? What did ordinary southerners think about slavery and the conflict?
2) Detail the experiences of Richmond’s citizens as the Confederate capital was evacuated in the last days of the Civil War—what stands out most to you about their experiences?

Week Seven (July 10-16): Reconstruction
RESEARCH BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE
READ
The American Story, 385-403
14th Amendment Text

LISTEN/VIEW
Video Introduction
Narrated Slideshow with downloadable slides.

WRITE AND DISCUSS
Blackboard Reflection #7
1) Why did President Andrew Johnson and Radical Republicans disagree on Reconstruction?
2) Describe the postwar atmosphere freed African Americans faced during Reconstruction in the south?

MODULE 5
Week Eight (July 17-July 23): Native Americans in 19th century America

READ
Geronimo, Geronimo: His Own Story: The Autobiography, 113-191
James Monroe Inaugural speech excerpt

LISTEN/VIEW
Video Introduction
Narrated Slideshow with downloadable slides.

WRITE AND DISCUSS
Blackboard Reflection #8
1) Describe two critical events in the 19th century that would shape the lives of Native Americans in the United States?
2) Reflect on Geronimo’s experiences—what was his view of American soldiers?
MODULE 6
Week Nine (July 24-July 30): The Gilded Age and Industrial Transformation

READ
The American Story, 433-455

LISTEN/VIEW
Video Introduction
Narrated Slideshow with downloadable slides.
Edison tinfoil phonograph demonstration (youtube.com)
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAXhclPS3AE

WRITE AND DISCUSS:
Blackboard Reflection #9:
1) In your opinion, were individuals like Andrew Carnegie, John Rockefeller, and J.P. Morgan “robber barons” or geniuses of the free market (or both)? Why?
2) What was the most consequential technological innovation of the Gilded Age and why?

MODULE 7
Week Ten (July 31-August 6): The Progressive Era

READ
The American Story, 552-588
New York Times Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire front-page article

LISTEN/VIEW
Video Introduction
Narrated Slideshow with downloadable slides.

WRITE AND DISCUSS
Blackboard Reflection #10
1) What is progressivism and why was it so important in American history?
2) What does The New York Times article about that incident tell us about progressivism in this period?

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE BY AUGUST 8