

*America Between the Wars*  
"Good Times  
and  
Hard Times"

*Alex Bloom*  
(617) 787-0237  
abloom@wheatonma.edu

**Reading**

Michael Parrish, *Anxious Decades: America in Prosperity and Depression*,  
 Sherwood Anderson, *Winesberg, Ohio*  
 Meridel LeSueur, *Salute to Spring*

In addition, there are occasional assigned reading assignments from original documents available online. These are identified with (\*ID) under the weekly reading assignments and listed, with their links, after the syllabus.

**Course Outline**

(Reading)

Jan	23:	Introduction The War Legacy	
	30:	A Return to Normalcy: The Harding Years Calvin Coolidge and the Era of Business	Parrish, pp. 3-70, (*ID*)
Feb	6:	Life in the Jazz Age Film: "Blood and Sand"	Parrish, pp.71-81, 135-161, 164-182, (*ID*)
	13:	Holding Back Modernity	Parrish, pp.94-121, 126-134, 200-203
	20:	An Urban Renaissance A Small-Town Critique	Parrish, pp.121-126; Anderson (pages TBA), (*ID*)
Feb	27:	Herbert Hoover and the Great Depression	Parrish, pp. 204-264, (*ID*) (Depression Interview due)
	—		
Mar	12:	<b>Midterm Examination</b>	

- Mar 19: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Coming of the New Deal Parrish, pp. 270-316, (\*ID\*)
- 26: The New Deal in Action Parrish, pp. 332-354, 359-385  
Film: "New Deal New York"
- Apr 2: Alternatives: The Radicals Parrish, pp. 317-322, 421-427;  
The Fusion of Literature and Politics LeSueur
- 9: Alternatives: The Prophets Parrish, pp. 161-164, 322-332,  
Labor Struggles— (\*ID\*)  
Film: "Mean Things Happening"
- 23: Living in Depression America Parrish, pp. 354-359,  
Racial Realities in Hard Times— 406-420, 431-436  
Film: "To Be Somebody"
- 30: Foreign Concerns: Spain and Munich Parrish, pp. 265-269,  
World War II and the Origins of the Cold War 437-457, 458-476, (\*ID\*)
- May 7: **Final Examination**

## Online Document Readings & Videos

### January 30

1. Calvin Coolidge, "The Business of America is Business"  
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4991/>
2. Bruce Barton, "The Man Nobody Knows"  
<http://www.materialreligion.org/documents/july97doc.html>

### February 6

1. Dorothy Dunbar Brumley, "Feminist—New Style"  
<http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/mmh/clash/NewWoman/Documents/newstyle.htm>
2. Edward S. Martin, "New Freedom and New Girls"  
<http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/mmh/clash/NewWoman/Documents/newfreedom.htm>
3. Sheila Kaye-Smith, "The New Woman"  
<http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/mmh/clash/NewWoman/Documents/newwomen.htm>

February 20

### February 20

1. Claude McKay, "If We Must Die"  
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5130>
2. Marcus Garvey, "Back to Africa"  
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5124>
3. Langston Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers"  
<http://www.poetryarchive.org/poetryarchive/singlePoem.do?poemId=1553>

**February 27**

1. Herbert Hoover Predicts Prosperity  
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5063/>
2. The Bonus Army  
<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/pfbonusarmy.htm>

**March 19**

1. The CCC: "It's a Great Life"  
<http://newdeal.feri.org/ccc/ccc009.htm>

**April 9**

1. Father Coughlin  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzLMRAz5G\\_4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzLMRAz5G_4)
2. Huey Long  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hphgHi6FD8k>
3. The Townsend Plan  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B10O4qUR7tY>

**April 30**

1. Letters from The Spanish Civil War  
<http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/scw/letters.htm>

**Classroom Laptop Use**

Students may use a laptop computer in regular classes provided it is used only for class-related work and **not** used to check e-mail, surf the web, or engage in other out-of-class activities during class time. The same holds true for smart phones, notebooks, and other devices, including sending text messages during class. Students violating this rule will be barred from bringing a laptop or any other electronic device to class. If violations of this occur more than twice in this class, **all** laptops and electronic devices will be barred from the class entirely. Students may only use laptop computers during examination, but only with the permission of the instructor.

### Interview about Depression Life

You should ask questions about issues in the following areas, but do not feel that it is necessary to go through the list question by question. Help the subject to begin talking and then see how his or her answers deal with the questions below. It is much better to let personal responses flow. If an area is missed, you can go back and ask about it at an appropriate time.

1. What experiences do you recall from the 1930s?  
What kind of work did you or your parents do?  
Was it affected by the depression?
2. Do you remember Roosevelt?  
What were your impressions of him?  
Your parents' impressions?  
Your friends' impressions?  
What are your impressions now?
3. Did your family situation change as a result of the Depression?  
What personal impact did this have on you?  
Your parents? Your siblings? Your children?
4. What do you remember of 30s culture? books? movies? plays? music?
5. Was anyone in your family involved in labor activities?  
radical politics?  
other political work?  
social services?
6. Did you or anyone in your family work for or receive aid from a New Deal agency?
7. How do you think sex roles were affected by the Depression?  
Compare the 30s, the 50s, and now.
8. Were there good things which you think came out of the Depression?
9. How did life in the 1930s influence your life in the years since World War II? career? family? personal habits? thinking about money? security? whatever?

Add questions of your own, based on the person, his or her occupation, information you know from personal experience, residence, and events then or since that seem important.

When you have discussed these, integrate the answers, the subject's personal history, and your observations into a one-to-two page paper that both describes the individual and offers some of your insight into the impact of the depression on people's lives.

This is due, in class, on **February 27** and will serve as the basis for several discussions on the impact of the Depression and life during then 1930s.