History 862
The Gilded Age, 1877-1914

Spring, 2012
Professor Louis Ferleger
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Department of History
Office: 302; office hours,
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Monday, 9-12; Tuesday,
Class: Monday, 3:30-6:30,
Room 304
9-12

This course examines the economic, social, political, and cultural transformation of the
United States from the end of Reconstruction until 1914. In particular, we will study how
the industrial revolution, the development of a national economy, foreign policy, and the
rise of the metropolis as well as the conflicts that emerge in American society during the
Gilded Age

Course Requirements:

Each class two seminar members will take responsibility for leading the discussion
during that class. Each seminar leader will prepare a 3-4 double-spaced page critique of
the required readings (to be emailed or dropped in my mailbox at least one day before
the class). Other seminar members are required to turn in (at the beginning of each
class or before) a two-page double-spaced reaction to the readings.

Grading: Your final grade will be based on participation, presentations, and assigned
papers (50%) and the final research paper (50%).

Monday, February 6, Presenters: Katie Moore and Robert Shimp

I. Gilded Age Foreign Policy

Required Readings:

Walter LaFeber, The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion (Cornell
University Press, any edition from 1963-1968 or later). (On reserve at Mugar - Call
Number: E661.7 F63)

John D. Buenker, editor, The Gilded Age and Progressive Era, 1877-1920 (Acton:

Marilyn B. Young, “American Expansion, 1870-1900: The Far East,” in Towards a New
Past: Dissenting Essays in American History, edited by Barton J. Bernstein (Vintage


**Monday, March 5, Presenters: Katie Moore and Clare Ploucha**

**II. Gilded Age Immigration and Labor**

*Required Readings:*


Monday, March 26, Presenters: Clare Ploucha and Rachel Tolano

III. Gilded Age Women and Education

Required Readings:


Stephan Thernstrom, Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City (New York: Atheneum, 1972). (On reserve at Mugar - Call Number: HN65.F64)


Monday, April 23, Presenters: Robert Shimp and Rachel Tolano

IV. Gilded Age Politics/Government Policy

Required Readings:


Louis Ferleger "Uplifting American Agriculture: Experiment Station Scientists and the OES in the Early Years After the Hatch Act," Agricultural History, 64:2, (Spring, 1990).


Monday, April 30: Research Paper Presentations

Thursday, May 10: Final Research Paper
Graduate Student email addresses:

Katie Moore kamo@bu.edu
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Rachel Tolano rtolano@gmail.com