

Cambridge University Press
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Edited by Christopher Bigsby
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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
MODERN AMERICAN CULTURE

The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Culture offers a comprehensive, authoritative, and accessible overview of the cultural themes and intellectual issues that drive the dominant culture of the twentieth century. This companion explores the social, political, and economic forces that have made America what it is today. It shows how these contexts impact upon twentieth-century American literature, cinema, and art. An international team of contributors examines the special contribution of African Americans and of immigrant communities to the variety and vibrancy of modern America. The essays range from art to politics, popular culture to sport, immigration and race to religion and war. Varied, extensive and challenging, this Companion is essential reading for students and teachers of American studies around the world. It is the most accessible and useful introduction available to a exciting range of topics in modern American culture.

CHRISTOPHER BIGSBY is Professor of American Studies at the University of East Anglia. He has published some thirty books on British and American literature and is also a novelist and broadcaster.

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CHRONOLOGY

- 1900 William McKinley elected for a second term. One-dollar Brownie camera on sale.
- 1901 McKinley assassinated, Theodore Roosevelt assumes the Presidency.
- 1903 Panama grants canal rights to the United States. Henry Ford sells first Model A for 850 dollars. Boston beats Pittsburgh in the first Baseball World Series. Wright Brothers aircraft makes twelve-second flight. W. E. B. DuBois writes *The Souls of Black Folk*.
- 1904 Theodore Roosevelt re-elected. Steerage fare from Europe to America 10 dollars.
- 1905 W. E. B. DuBois participates in the Niagara Movement. William Benjamin Smith writes *The Color Line*.
- 1906 San Francisco School Board segregates Asian schoolchildren. San Francisco earthquake.
- 1908 Race riots in Springfield, Illinois. William Howard Taft elected. First Ford Model T produced.
- 1909 Robert Edwin Peary reaches North Pole.
- 1910 NAACP founded.
- 1911 Standard Oil broken up.
- 1912 Woodrow Wilson elected. Sinking of Titanic.
- 1913 Sixteenth Amendments allows income tax.
- 1914 First World War begins in Europe. Panama Canal opens.
- 1915 *Birth of a Nation* released. Death of Booker T. Washington. Sinking of the Lusitania.
- 1916 Wilson re-elected.
- 1917 United States enters First World War. Russian Revolution begins.
- 1918 Wilson's fourteen-points peace plan.

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- 1919 May Day Bombing and the Red Scare. Eighteenth Amendment authorizes prohibition of alcohol.
- 1920 Majority of Americans now live in cities. Nineteenth Amendment gives votes to women. Warren G. Harding elected.
- 1921 Sacco and Vanzetti convicted of murder.
- 1922 Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt* published.
- 1923 Calvin Coolidge assumes the Presidency following the death of Harding. Supreme Court rules on *Adkins v. Childrens' Hospital*. W. G. Cash writes *The Mind of the South*.
- 1924 Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* released.
- 1925 Calvin Coolidge declares that "the business of America is business."
- 1926 Ernest Hemingway publishes *The Sun Also Rises*.
- 1927 Lindbergh flies Atlantic.
- 1929 Young Plan reduces German reparations. Wall Street crashes and Great Depression begins.
- 1930 US population 122 million. Grant Wood paints *American Gothic*.
- 1931 Scottsboro Boys case in Alabama. Empire State Building opens.
- 1932 Franklyn Delano Roosevelt elected. New Deal initiated.
- 1933 Agricultural Adjustment Act. National Industrial Recovery Act (N.I.R.A.). Tennessee Valley Authority. United States recognizes USSR.
- 1934 Huey P. Long starts Share Our Wealth Society. Bonnie and Clyde killed.
- 1935 The "Dust Bowl." Huey Long assassinated. N.I.R.A ruled unconstitutional.
- 1936 F. Roosevelt re-elected. Agricultural Adjustment Act ruled unconstitutional. Failure of Roosevelt's "Court Packing" plan to increase size of Supreme Court.
- 1937 Hindenburg explodes.
- 1939 Outbreak of Second World War. New York World's Fair. John Steinbeck publishes *The Grapes of Wrath*.
- 1940 F. Roosevelt re-elected. Ernest Hemingway publishes *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.
- 1941 Pearl Harbour. United States joins Second World War. Lend-Lease Act. Executive Order 8802 prevents racial discrimination in defense industry.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1942 Internment of Japanese Americans. Manhattan Project to develop atom bomb begins. Congress of Racial Equality. Battle of Midway founded.
- 1943 Race riots in more than forty-five cities. Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma*.
- 1944 D-Day landings. Gunnar Myrdal writes *An American Dilemma*. F. Roosevelt wins fourth term.
- 1945 Death of F. Roosevelt. Harry S. Truman becomes President. Atom bombs dropped at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. UN Charter signed.
- 1946 George Kennan's "Long Telegram," an analysis of the Soviet Union. Churchill delivers "Iron Curtain" speech. G. I. Bill passed. Baby boom begins. Dr. Spock's *Baby and Child Care* published. Truman establishes President's Committee on Civil Rights.
- 1947 Establishment of Truman Doctrine, which promises support for countries threatened by communism. Marshall Plan established to rebuild European economies. HUAC hearings, including the "Hollywood 10." Construction begins on mass-produced "Levittowns." Jackie Robinson breaks baseball's color line. Chuck Yeager breaks sound barrier.
- 1948 The United States recognizes Israel. Berlin airlift. Executive orders desegregate armed forces and federal government.
- 1949 NATO founded. Russia explodes first Soviet A-bomb. Truman re-elected. Mao Tse Tung wins power in China. Arthur Miller stages *Death of a Salesman*.
- 1950 Korean War begins. Senator Joseph McCarthy makes first accusations.
- 1951 Truman dismisses General MacArthur.
- 1952 Hydrogen bomb tested. Dwight D. Eisenhower elected.
- 1953 Korean War ends. Death of Stalin. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg executed for espionage. *Playboy* magazine launched.
- 1954 Supreme Court rules on *Brown v. Board of Education*. Army-McCarthy hearings begin. Senate condemns McCarthy.
- 1955 Warsaw Pact established. G. L. Mehta – Indian Ambassador – refused service in restaurant. Rise of White Citizens' Councils. Montgomery bus boycott.

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- 1956 Uprising crushed in Hungary. Launch of Interstate system. Suez crisis. Eisenhower re-elected. First appearance of Elvis Presley. *Invasion of the Bodysnatchers* released in cinemas.
- 1957 Sputnik launched. Martin Luther King elected leader of Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Little Rock crisis as Governor Orval Faubus attempts to prevent the desegregation of Central High School. Civil Rights Act.
- 1958 NASA created. US troops deployed to Lebanon.
- 1959 Castro comes to power in Cuba.
- 1960 Greensboro sit-ins. John F. Kennedy elected. Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee created. Birth-control pill becomes available. Freedom rides.
- 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba.
- 1962 Cuban missile crisis. Port Huron statement of Students for a Democratic Society. John Glenn orbits Earth in Friendship Seven.
- 1963 Kennedy assassinated. Lyndon Johnson becomes President. March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.
- 1964 China explodes first A-bomb. Civil Rights Act. Gulf of Tonkin resolution following a supposed attack on the American destroyer *Maddox* by Vietnamese forces. Johnson elected. First American appearance of the Beatles.
- 1965 Johnson sets out plan for "Great Society." Watts Riot Voting Rights Act. Operation Rolling Thunder and troop escalation in Vietnam. Malcolm X assassinated.
- 1966 Black Power and Black Panthers appear. National Organization for Women established. Fulbright hearings on Vietnam.
- 1967 Summer of Love in Haight-Ashbury, San Francisco. Race riots in Newark, Detroit, and over 125 other cities.
- 1968 Tet Offensive. Martin Luther King assassinated. Robert Kennedy assassinated. Antiwar protests. Richard Nixon elected.
- 1969 Woodstock festival. Apollo 11 lands on Moon. Indian occupation of Alcatraz. Nixon administration begins affirmative action plan. My Lai massacre.
- 1970 Invasion of Cambodia. Kent State and Jackson State shootings.
- 1971 Pentagon Papers.

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- 1972 Nixon visits China and Soviet Union. Watergate break-in.
- 1973 Paris agreement ends US involvement in Vietnam. Supreme Court rules on *Roe v. Wade*, permitting abortion. Vice-President Spiro Agnew resigns, Gerald M. Ford becomes Vice-President.
- 1974 Nixon resigns, Ford becomes President.
- 1975 Unemployment hits 8.5 percent. Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. Last Americans leave Saigon.
- 1976 Jimmy Carter elected.
- 1977 Elvis Presley dies.
- 1978 Supreme Court rules on *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*: fixed racial quotas declared unconstitutional. Proposition 13 places cap on property taxes in California.
- 1979 Three Mile Island disaster at nuclear power plant. Camp David accords between Israel and Egypt. American hostages taken in Iran. Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.
- 1980 Ronald Reagan elected. Iranian hostages released.
- 1981 AIDS first noted in US. Interest rates rise to 21.5 percent. “Reaganomics” approved by Congress.
- 1982 Unemployment reaches 10 percent – highest since Great Depression. Ratification of ERA fails.
- 1983 Strategic Defense Initiative proposes a missile defense system. US Marines killed in Lebanon. United States invades Grenada.
- 1984 American aid to Contras in Nicaragua. Economic recovery. Reagan re-elected. Mikhail Gorbachev begins reform.
- 1986 Iran–Contra scandal (in which the proceeds of arms sold to Iran were used to finance the right-wing Contra guerrillas in Nicaragua). Space shuttle Challenger explodes.
- 1987 Palestinian Intifada begins.
- 1988 George Bush Sr. elected.
- 1989 Berlin Wall falls. United States invades Panama.
- 1990 Collapse of communist regimes. Iraq invades Kuwait.
- 1991 Gulf War begins. USSR dissolves. Pan-American World Airways ceases flying.

CHRONOLOGY

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| 1992 | Riots in Los Angeles after verdict in Rodney King trial. Troops sent to Somalia. William Jefferson Clinton elected. |
| 1993 | Congress approves North American Free Trade Agreement. US Marines killed in Somalia, United States withdraws. |
| 1994 | Republicans claim majorities in House and Senate. Genocide begins in Rwanda. United States intervenes in Haiti. |
| 1995 | Oklahoma City bombing. |
| 1996 | Welfare Reform bill. Clinton re-elected. |
| 1998 | House votes to impeach Clinton. |
| 1999 | Senate acquits Clinton. NATO airstrikes in Kosovo. Anti-globalization protests at World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle. |
| 2000 | Longest economic expansion in nation's history. Supreme Court rules in favour of George W. Bush in disputed election. |
| 2001 | September 11 attacks on the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York and on the Pentagon. Patriot Act. Enron scandal. United States intervenes in Afghanistan, Taliban regime falls. |
| 2003 | United States invades Iraq. |
| 2004 | George W. Bush re-elected. |
| 2005 | Retirement of Sandra Day O'Connor, first female Supreme Court Justice. Death of Chief Justice Rehnquist. New Orleans flooded as a result of Hurricane Katrina. Continuing occupation of Iraq. |