This course offers an upper-level survey of major themes in American history between 1877 and 1917, the period that historians refer to as the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, the period when the US become a military power, when "Jim Crow" segregation took hold, when labor unions and the modern corporation began, when the advertising industry started, when popular culture as we know it came into being. The last two decades of the 19th century and the first two of the twentieth marked an abrupt shift in the life experiences of the American people. Daily life changed radically from 1877-1920, as the agrarian republic gave way to an urbanizing consumer society. Debates about "progress" characterized the period, as new technologies, new peoples, new forms of politics and culture, new conceptions of gender and sexuality, new modes of racism and racial identity, and new patterns of living transformed the United States. This course will explore the political, economic, diplomatic and cultural history of the Gilded age and Progressive eras, focusing on the ways American tried to make sense of, to order, to moralize and to shape rapid change. We will read both primary sources, such as Edward Bellamy's blockbuster utopian novel, Looking Backward, and secondary sources, including Destiny of the Republic, a fascinating account of the assassination of President James A. Garfield.