

AMERICAN HISTORY II

Professor: Robert Alicea

[MUSIC PLAYING] Hi, I'm Robert Alicea. I'm going to be your instructor for Modern US History. I've been teaching at the university now for nine years. Altogether I've been teaching for 20. But before that I did something else. I was an industrial construction worker. I belonged to the International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers.

In September of 1975, I took an oath to defend this union by learning the craft. They promised me four years of employment, and for four years I went to school one night a week to learn the craft. I was judged by a jury on a final exam. And if they deemed that the quality of my work was journeyman quality, then I was permitted to quit [INAUDIBLE] labor and work anywhere in the country that needed help.

We were free, as we used to say, to go on down the road. Insulator journeyman work alongside of electricians, pipe fitters, iron workers, boilermakers, and together we construct large, industrial enterprises. We build powerhouses, conventional and nuclear. We build theme parks. We build space centers. We even work on universities.

In the mirror behind me, you see the logo of my trade, the salamander. And this is a boiler. It's a header, we call it. And it holds steam. Gets very hot, so insulate it with our materials and cover it with metal so that you can around without getting burnt.

But the boilermakers constructed that, the pipe fitters did the piping, and we covered all of that. And together, we build the big things. Things that most people take for granted because they never get to see them.

And these are the tools of my trade of insulation. And if you would, consider these as part of a transcript. Over four years you would become proficient in these tools, and you never know what you're going to need to reach into and grab from your tool bucket, if you would.

This particular tool right here is the one that we use to keep things straight.

And this is where I practice my craft. And where you come, even in a virtual sense, to acquire the specialized credentials necessary to practice your chosen occupation. And every course in your transcript is like a tool-- some are basic, a prerequisite, some are more advanced.

It is my fondest wish that once you learn how to use this tool, that is the appreciation and understanding of American history, you will keep it handy and apply it often as you go on down the road.

[MUSIC PLAYING]