2014

143 American History to 1865

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This semester-long class provides an entry-level survey of American history from the initial period of European entry into the western hemisphere through the end of the Civil War. Ranging broadly over themes political, economic, social, and cultural, it aims to provide students with an introduction to early American history and to the process of studying the past. Given the constraints of the academic calendar, coverage will be selective and topical rather than comprehensive and linear. In other words, the course focuses on the major trends and ideas of our nation’s past, but will necessarily leave certain subjects out given the time limitations.

Coverage will include European colonization and settlement; interactions among Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans; society and culture in seventeenth-century New England and the Chesapeake; the imperial geopolitics of the eighteenth century; the Seven Years’ War and the American Revolution; the Confederation, the Constitution, and the early republic; Jeffersonianism and the War of 1812; Jacksonian Democracy and American Romanticism; territorial expansion and the Mexican War; and sectionalism and the Civil War. In addition to these chronological flashpoints, we will address more general thematic concerns such as concepts of the frontier, economic growth, patterns of dominance and resistance, gender and race relations, the rise of class consciousness, religion and American thought, and the relationship between politics and culture.

Assigned readings will include both primary sources (i.e., texts contemporary to the period we are studying) and recent historical writing. The American Pageant will serve as a general textbook for the course, providing a running narrative of important developments in American history. You should read this text carefully and keep up with the assigned schedule, as this book includes most of the key factual information for which you will be held responsible.

Lectures will be delivered on Mondays and Wednesdays, while Fridays will be reserved for group discussion. Attendance and participation in class discussions and in the lectures will count for 20% of the final course grade, as outlined below.

Students enrolled in the course will be required to take both a midterm and final examination, as specified below, and will also write a term paper of 6-8 pages. The paper should draw on the assigned readings and show understanding of course materials through the various stages of the semester. This is not a research paper and should include no information or source material that is not explicitly assigned on this syllabus. No electronic copies will be accepted. Although specific information about the examinations will be distributed later in the term, an overview of what is involved can be found toward the end of this syllabus. Instructions for the paper are also toward the end of this syllabus, and you are free to begin working on it whenever you like.
The grades of late papers will be lowered one level for each calendar day they are late (e.g., a B paper becomes a B- if turned in one day late, a C+ if two days late, etc.). **No electronic copies of assignments will be accepted for any reason.**

There will be no extensions or make-ups granted except for medical emergencies certified by a note from a physician’s office. Extracurricular, athletic, and employment-related activities do not justify extensions or make-ups of academic work. No extra credit is available.

The only legitimate excuse for missing a class or due date is a medical emergency verified through a note from a physician. Such a note must be presented to the instructor within one week of the missed class session or due date; after one week such a document will no longer be accepted. Family, friend, job, or pet obligations, including a family member’s or child’s illness; automobile breakdowns and other logistical snafus; and inclement weather, so long as the university remains officially open, are not legitimate excuses for missing class sessions or for not turning in assignments on time. Only your own medical emergency counts.

Grades in the course will be determined as follows:

- **Attendance and Class Participation:** 20%
- **Midterm Examination:** 25%
- **6-8-page paper:** 25%
- **Final Examination:** 30%

= 100%

For the 20 percent of the final grade designated for attendance and participation, I will use the following processes in making my assessments: 1.) an analysis of student attendance, based on the periodic sign-in sheets distributed during the lectures and discussions; 2.) recollections of the quantity and quality of student participation in class (e.g., Has this student spoken often enough so that the instructor knows his or her name? How often did the student raise his or her hand to make a comment? How cogent and impressive, in the judgment of the instructor, were those comments? How prepared, overall, did the student seem?); and 3.) notes about the frequency and quality of student oral engagement with the class topics. Students should remember that this portion of the grade is an art and not a science; I do not use a particular formula. With that in mind, students who aim to maximize this portion of their grade should attend every single class, except for medical emergencies as described above; participate actively, which means making frequent contributions to the discussion that show deep engagement with the readings and verbal fluency in articulating one’s analysis and perspective; and visit the professor during office hours in order to discuss assignments or issues raised by the course and thus to reinforce the evidence of one’s status as an active and enthusiastic learner. A relatively small course like this one provides ample opportunity for students to make a strong and positive impression.
Students are encouraged to consult with the professor during office hours or by appointment. Feel free to e-mail the professor in order to make an appointment outside of normal office hours. Please allow a full twenty-four hours for the instructor to respond to your e-mail message and do not expect him to be available at the last minute or with little notice.

The following books will be available for purchase at the Xavier bookstore. The primary sources will be available for purchase as a course readings packet. Readings drawn from this sourcebook are marked below with an asterisk. Students should complete the assigned readings before the week under which they are listed below.


**Studying the American Past; American Indians, European Settlers, and African Slaves**

* Central Questions: Why and how should we study American history? Why does this course matter? And where do we start?

M, Aug. 25: Introduction, course logistics, overview.
W, Aug. 27: Why study American history?
F, Aug. 29: Europeans explore the New World.

**READING:** *American Pageant*, chapter 1

**Planting English Colonies in the New World**

* Central Questions: Why did Europeans set out on journeys of exploration and colonization beginning in the fifteenth century? What made England’s voyages different?

M, Sept. 1: LABOR DAY; NO CLASS.
W, Sept. 3: Ordeal at Jamestown.
F, Sept. 5: Discussion
READING:  * Richard Frethorne’s Letter from Jamestown (1623)
* American Pageant, chapter 2

Colonial British North America

* Central Questions: What made the English colonies different from those of other European powers? Were they successful, and at what point?

M, Sept. 8:  Plymouth, Salem, and Massachusetts Bay.
W, Sept. 10:  Religion in early America.
F, Sept. 12:  Discussion

READING:  * John Winthrop, “A Modell of Christian Charity” (1630)
* American Pageant, chapter 3

Politics and Economics in the Seventeenth-Century British North American Colonies

* Central Question: What made the New England, Middle, Chesapeake, Southern, and Caribbean colonies different from each other?

M, Sept. 15:  Slavery and the slave trade; the colonial economy.
F, Sept. 19:  Discussion

READING:  * Indian captivity narrative of Mary Rowlandson (1682), selection
* American Pageant, chapter 4

Clashing Empires and Great Awakenings: The Eighteenth Century

* Central Question: Why did the European great powers fight over North America? What were the consequences of their wars?

W, Sept. 24:  The Seven Years’ War and imperial geopolitics.
F, Sept. 26:  Discussion
The Imperial Crisis of the 1760s

* Central Question: Why did the thirteen colonies take up arms against the metropolis (the mother country)?

M, Sept. 29: The logic of rebellion, 1763-75.
W, Oct. 1: The military course of the war.
F, Oct. 3: Discussion

READING: Edmund S. Morgan, Benjamin Franklin, pp. ix-46, 220-241
* Resolutions of the Stamp Act Congress (1765)

The American Revolution

* Central Question: Was the American Revolution a “conservative” political rebellion or a wide-ranging social upheaval?

M, Oct. 6: Social aspects of the crisis: was it a real revolution?
W, Oct. 8: The Peace of Paris and the Confederation.
F, Oct. 10: UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY; NO CLASS.

READING: The Declaration of Independence (1776)(in the back of your textbook)
American Pageant, chapters 7 and 8

The New Republic

* Central Question: How did the Founders devise our republican form of government?

F, Oct. 17: Discussion
The Turbulent 1790s

* Central Question: Was the growth of political parties a positive development in American politics?

F, Oct. 24: MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS TODAY (BLUE BOOKS REQUIRED)

American Pageant, chapter 10

Jeffersonianism and the War of 1812

* Central Questions: What caused the War of 1812? What were its consequences?

M, Oct. 27: Jeffersonian ideology.
W, Oct. 29: The War of 1812 and the “era of good feelings.”
F, Oct. 31: Discussion

READING: * Thomas Jefferson, excerpt from Notes on the State of Virginia (1781)
American Pageant, chapters 11 and 12

The Age of Jackson

* Central Question: What were the central challenges confronting the young nation after the War of 1812?

M, Nov. 3: The “market revolution.”
W, Nov. 5: Romantic reform.
F, Nov. 7: Discussion
READING: Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832), chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
*American Pageant*, chapters 13 and 14

“Manifest Destiny” and American Continental Expansion in the 1840s

* Central Question: What kind of imperial ideology drove American growth in the 1840s? Was it mainly racial, cultural, or both?

M, Nov. 10: “Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History”
W, Nov. 12: “To the Halls of the Montezumas”
F, Nov. 14: Discussion

READING: *John L. O'Sullivan, “The Great Nation of Futurity”* (1839), excerpt
*American Pageant*, chapters 15 and 17

The Coming of the Civil War

* Central Questions: What were the consequences of America’s continental expansion during the 1840s? Was the Civil War an “irrepressible conflict?”

M, Nov. 17: Varieties of antislavery: immediatism, colonization, and free soil.
W, Nov. 19: The political crisis of the 1850s.
F, Nov. 21: Discussion.
**TERM PAPER DUE IN CLASS TODAY**

READING: *Congressional speech by John C. Calhoun (1850)*
*American Pageant*, chapters 16, 18, and 19

Thanksgiving: A Civil War Holiday?

M, Nov. 24: President Lincoln’s Thanksgiving Proclamation, 1863.
W, Nov. 26: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY; NO CLASS.
F, Nov. 28: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY, NO CLASS.
READING:  
* Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address (1863)  
* Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural (1865)  
* John Greenleaf Whittier, “Massachusetts to Virginia” (1842)

The Civil War

* Central Question: How did the Civil War alter America’s social landscape in terms of race relations, gender roles, ideas, and politics?

M, Dec. 1: A limited war, 1861-63.  
F, Dec. 5: Discussion

READING: * Sullivan Ballou letter (1861)  
* American Pageant, chapters 20 and 21

Review

M, Dec. 8: Looking toward Reconstruction: whither America in 1865?  
W, Dec. 10: Summary and Conclusion  
F, Dec. 12: Review Session

FINAL EXAMINATION: TO BE ANNOUNCED
Write an essay of 6-8 pages that uses course readings, lectures, and discussions to answer ONE of the following questions. If you would like to write on a question not listed below, please obtain approval from the professor. Do not consult any materials that are not assigned for this class (i.e. no internet, no other books, etc.).

Make sure you have a clear thesis statement or argument—that is, that you are making one coherent point throughout the entire essay. Use evidence from the class to support your argument. See the “About the Essay” part of this syllabus for more information.

Essays must be double-spaced, in 12-point font, computer-printed or typed on one side of 8.5” by 11” paper, with 1” margins on all sides, and stapled. No electronic submissions are accepted. Proofread your work before turning it in, since grammar, syntax, and writing style will be part of the assessment.

No footnotes are necessary, since this is not a research paper. Instead, feel free to cite material using short names or dates or page numbers in parentheses (e.g., “Eyal lecture, 10/3/14”).

See the front of the course syllabus for the policy on late papers and extensions.

- Were the American colonies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries recognizably modern, forward-looking, progressive civilizations, or rather static backwaters, conservative societies that did not welcome the new? In other words, were they modern or not? How can we tell?

- Was the American Revolution “radical” or “conservative?” Why? What do you think were the most important factors motivating the revolt? Was it a real revolution?

- Who, in your judgment, was right in the partisan debates that developed in the 1790s between followers of Hamilton and Jefferson?

- Was the Civil War inevitable, or was it avoidable?
- Using the texts we read about and by Mary Rowlandson, Martha Ballard, and Frances Trollope, compare and contrast the situation of women in America between the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries? What changed and what stayed the same?

- Some historians argue that the United States became a democracy (or became more democratic) over time. Regarding the period covered by this class, do you agree, and why or why not?

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING EARLY OR LATE ASSIGNMENTS

1.) If you intend to submit your essay assignment either early or late, you should make the necessary arrangements directly with the professor. It is up to you to handle the logistical aspects of making sure that your professor receives your paper. Keep in mind that the professor may not be on campus or available every single day or at any given time. Planning ahead is your responsibility.

2.) Make sure you are familiar with the late policy for this course, described in the first few pages of this syllabus.

3.) An assignment is only considered “turned in” when the physical, hard copy is submitted to the professor. Electronic copies are not accepted under any circumstances, not even for proving that an assignment was completed at a given time. Only the physical copy counts.
MORE ABOUT THE ESSAY

The 6-8-page paper you write for this course will be judged according to the following criteria:

1.) Does the essay have a strong, identifiable thesis statement or main argument that is sustained throughout the assignment with one clear voice?

2.) Is the evidence marshaled to support this thesis statement relevant and well chosen? Is it the best evidence available in order to support the particular argument made in the essay? Is it persuasive? Does the writer adequately refute the counter-evidence?

3.) Is the quality of the writing acceptable? Is it up to the standards we expect in higher education (e.g., no typos or grammatical errors)? Is it, perhaps, even elegant or impressive, thus possibly pushing it up into the “A” range?

4.) Does the assignment show evidence of having been completed slowly and carefully, rather than hastily and carelessly (e.g., it follows all the instructions with regard to margins and font sizes, spelling corrections, regular spacing, etc.)? Does it at all seem as if the student waited until the last minute, did not plan properly, or ran out of time?

5.) Does the essay evince imagination and creativity, showing that the student is actively engaging the course material and trying to think about it critically?

If you need help with this or other assignments, do not hesitate to visit the professor in office hours or to make an appointment by e-mail.
ABOUT THE TESTS

I. Midterm Examination

The midterm exam will be taken during the normal class meeting time, as scheduled in the calendar above. It will be based on a set of short-answer identifications in which students will be given the name of a person, concept, place, or event, and asked to identify it in a few sentences or short paragraph. Students will be judged on their ability to identify the name given to them, their ability to place it within a rough chronology, and their ability to articulate its significance and relevance to the major themes of the course. The midterm exam will include all material covered by course lectures, readings, and discussions up until the day of the exam.

II. Final Examination.

The final examination, to be scheduled by the registrar’s office for December 2014, will be a two-hour examination that will include a combination of identifications (as in the midterm) and a longer essay that will cover the wide span of American history to 1865. The final will be cumulative, covering the entire semester’s worth of lectures, readings, and discussions.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE FORMAT OF THESE TESTS, INCLUDING STRATEGIES FOR STUDY AND REVIEW, WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU ORALLY IN CLASS AS THE TIME APPROACHES.
ON PLAGIARISM

Anyone who tries to reconstruct the past ends up drawing information and ideas from many sources: documents, artifacts, and the writings of other historians. Your course essay should be careful to state precisely where your information and ideas come from. This is good historical practice; it details the evidence behind your arguments. But it is also the right thing to do, for it acknowledges work done by others.

If you fail to acknowledge the work of others in your own writing, you in effect pass that work off as your own: you commit plagiarism.

XAVIER UNIVERSITY’S POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic Honesty

The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and material submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic record including letters of recommendation. All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student's own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another's efforts is prohibited as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one's own. Penalties for violations of this policy may include one or more of the following: a zero for that assignment or test, an "F" in the course, and expulsion from the University. The dean of the college in which the student is enrolled is to be informed in writing of all such incidents, though the teacher has full authority to assign the grade for the assignment, test, or course. If disputes of interpretation arise, the student, faculty member, and chair should attempt to resolve the difficulty. If this is unsatisfactory, the dean will rule in the matter. As a final appeal, the academic vice president will call a committee of tenured faculty for the purpose of making a final determination.

Detection & Consequences at Xavier

Xavier has a subscription to the Turnitin service. Faculty can submit papers to this service and a search will detect if the paper has been plagiarized.

AT XAVIER UNIVERSITY, PLAGIARISM CAN RESULT IN A FAILING GRADE, A FAILING COURSE, OR EXPULSION FROM THE UNIVERSITY.

If you have any questions or doubts whatsoever about plagiarism, please consult with the professor.