

History 1377/sec. 05463: United States to 1877
University of Houston
Department of History

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Office hours: M 2-4:00, W 3-4:00. and by appointment.

Time: MW, 5:30-7:00
Location: AUD1-AH
Semester: Fall 2006

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Office hours: MW 4:30-5:20 and by appointment.

Overview:

Our class surveys the major social, cultural, and political developments occurring between the exploration of North America and the aftermath of the Civil War. As you will see, the American past is not a simple story of progress. The origins of the United States stretch back to a period when various forms of unfreedom were far more common than freedom. Over the course of the colonial period and into the nineteenth century, to cite one prominent example, slavery expanded to horrific ends shaping American life north and south. At the same time, a different and seemingly contradictory trajectory was unfolding as Anglo-American colonists blended English political traditions, their own local experiences governing in America, and some of the lessons of the eighteenth-century philosophical movement called the Enlightenment. From the Revolution to the founding of the United States, these Americans sought to redefine the meaning of freedom in important but still sometimes problematic ways. For example, slavery remained a potent and growing force in American life well into the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, American democracy slowly began to develop over the course of the century and through a bloody Civil War that was in part fought over different conceptions of what should constitute and who might enjoy American freedom. In each of these instances, Americans disagreed mightily and often violently over an array of important issues. Put more simply, the American past is populated by both heroes and villains, and often seems to have as many moments of glory as it does instances of injustice. This is what makes the past so fascinating and important to recall.

In addition to these sweeping concerns, we will pay special attention to the Native American, African, and European background to the emergence of the United States, and attend to the many ways in which ordinary women and men participated in the changing fortunes of the American Republic and shaped the nation's history. As we are covering a vast historical terrain, our coverage of the American past is selective rather than comprehensive.

Learning Outcomes:

In addition to surveying the important themes of American history from roughly 1492 to 1877, this course will introduce you to the practice of history. We will focus on critically interpreting both primary sources (documents from the period being studied) and secondary sources (historian's analyses of a period or event). Above all, you will learn that history is an analytical discipline. While facts and dates are indeed important, alone they do not allow us to understand the past in a meaningful fashion. Among other things, history is the art of mustering evidence to make an argument or arguments about the past in as compelling a manner as possible. Because the fragmentary evidence left from the past does not simply reveal the truth in unproblematic ways, historians argue vigorously and endlessly about which interpretations of the past are the most compelling—very interesting stuff indeed! This semester you will be thus joining an ongoing and constantly evolving debate about the American past. Engage the material in a meaningful way and this class will help you to read more carefully, think more critically, and write more eloquently.

A Brief Note on the Readings and an Impassioned Plea:

As the reading will be the basis of the in-class writing assignments and key to success on the exams, it behooves you to carefully read and review each week's assignment. If you do not complete the readings in a thoughtful fashion, you will do poorly in the class. To help you focus your reading, the professor will post reading questions each week for the class on WebCt. You do not have to hand in answers to the questions. They are instead intended to frame your reading for the purposes of the course assignments and exams.

While you may lack the instructor's near evangelical love of history, I expect you to take the study and writing of history seriously. I hope that you will gleefully engage in our assignments and discussions, as the analytical, writing and verbal skills we will cultivate in this class will serve you as a citizen and in whatever comprises your professional life. Honest.

Major Course Themes/Questions:

- How was the American past part of larger historical developments across the globe?
- How did American conceptions of freedom change from 1492 to 1877? How did European exploration and American colonization create new worlds for Africans, Native Americans, and Europeans?
- What did it mean to be an American at different moments in the past? How did the definition of what constituted an American change over time? And what were the important struggles to include non-elite groups as Americans?

Assignments:

- **Four reading quizzes (5% each/20% total of the final grade):** There will be four multiple-choice reading quizzes over the course of the semester. To assure that students keep up with the reading, these assignments will not be announced in advance and can be given on any day that readings are assigned.
- **Two in-class document analysis assignments (5% each/10% of the final grade):** These assignments will ask you to contextualize a given primary source taken from the course reader. The purpose of the assignments is to introduce you to the type of work that historians do to reconstruct the past. Evidence from the past is always problematic and must be carefully used. In each instance, you will examine the type of document (letter, newspaper, political tract, court record, and so on); the author's motivation (who wrote it and why); and the intended audience the writer hoped to reach (the public, a private individual, or a government official, among others). What do you trust or distrust about the document? What does it tell us about the individual or individuals who wrote it? What does the document reveal about the time and place in which it was written? How should we as historians read the document? Further instructions will be handed out or posted on the WebCT page for the class one week before the due date of the assignment. Students will complete the assignments in-class on Wednesday 8/30 and Wednesday 11/1.
- **Midterm (30% of the final grade) and Final Exams (40% of the final grade):** Both the midterm and the final will be comprised of multiple choice, identification, and essay questions. The exams will cover material from the lectures and all of the readings. The instructor will hand out review sheets before both exams. While the final exam will largely cover material since the midterm, it will include some essay questions on material from the entire semester.
- **Extra Credit (a maximum of 5% towards the final grade):** Students who so desire can complete one of two short-essays (2 to 4 pages) for extra credit. The instructor will only accept the assignments on the due dates listed below. The assignments will need to be given to Prof. Romero and submitted to turnitin.com on the WebCT page for the class. Students can earn a maximum of 5% towards the final grade. Note that essays that show little or no work will not be rewarded with any extra credit. Students wanting to complete these assignments need to come to Prof. Romero's office hours and request an assignment sheet for one of the following:
 - Opportunity One (due Monday 10/9): H.W. Brand's, "Founder's Chic" in the Course Reader, 133-146.
 - Opportunity Two (due Monday 11/13): Fredrick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Forth of July?" in the Course Reader, 243-265.

Exam Dates:

Midterm: Monday 10/16 at our normal class time.

Final Exam: Wednesday 11/29 at our normal class time.

PLEASE NOTE: No make-up assignments or exams will be given except in extraordinary cases that can be documented. If you have a documented family or medical emergency, please contact either the professor or teaching assistant BEFORE the assignment is due. You are responsible for getting notes for missed lectures from your classmates.

Required readings:

- [Textbook] Martin, *America and its People, vol. 1, custom edition for UH, 3rd ed.*
[Reader] United States History, custom reader for Todd Romero, Fall 2006
- ****Please note that these two books are bound together and sold at a discounted price in the UH bookstore. A separate reader and textbook would be even more expensive.**
- [Cabeza de Vaca]: Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca* (Nebraska, 2003)
- ["Myne Owne Ground"]: T.H. Breen and Stephen Innes, *"Myne Owne Ground": Race and Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1640-1676* (Oxford, 1982)
- [Cause and Comrades]: James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (Oxford, 1998)

Class Calendar:

****The reading assignments are in bold under the day they should be completed.**

M (8/21) Class Introduction and Old Worlds: Native America c. 1491

W (8/23) Old Worlds: Europe
Textbook: xxiv-xxv, 2-31.
Reader: 13-20.

M (8/28) New Worlds: Cortes, Champlain, and Newport
Reader: 1-12.

W (8/30) American Colonies
Textbook: 32-67.
Reader: 31-56.

****First in-class Document Analysis**

M (9/4) Labor Day—NO CLASS

W (9/6) American Colonies
Cabeza de Vaca, all.

M (9/11) Indians, Africans, and the Shape of Colonial Life
Textbook: 68-73.

W (9/13) Becoming Colonial: Catherine Tekakwitha
Reader: 21-29.

****Reminder: Monday September 18th is the last day to withdraw
or drop the course without a grade****

M (9/18) Slavery in an Atlantic World
Myne Owne Ground," read it all.

W (9/20) Early American Politics
Reader: 63-80.

M (9/25) Eighteenth-Century America
Textbook: 75-83.
Reader: 57-62.

W (9/27) The Seven Year's War or why 1763 is such an important date
Textbook: 83-99.

M (10/2) American Revolution
Textbook: 99-119.

W (10/4) American and Atlantic Revolutions
Textbook: 120-149.
Reader: 115-146.

M (10/9) America at 1789
Textbook: 151-179.
Reader: 113-146

****EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY!! See p. 2 of the syllabus.**

W (10/11) The Revolution of 1800
Textbook: 180-201.

M (10/16) Oh Joy! **THE MIDTERM**

W (10/18) The Market Revolution
Textbook: 203-245.

- M (10/23) Forging American Cultures
W (10/25) Moral Reform
 Textbook: 271-303.
 Reader: 197-218.
- M (10/30) Jackson's America
 Textbook: 246-260.
 Reader: 147-163.
- W (11/1) The Cotton Kingdom and the Slave South
 Textbook: 304-333.
 Reader: 219-235.
 ****Second in-class Document Analysis**
- M (11/6) An Empire of Liberty or Slavery?: Manifest Destiny
 Textbook: 334-359.
- W (11/8) An Empire for Liberty or Slavery?: Manifest Destiny
 Reader: 165-196.
- M (11/13) Crisis of the 1850s
 Textbook: 360-385.
 Reader: 239-265.
 ****EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY!! See p. 2 of the syllabus.**
- W (11/15) Civil War
 Textbook: 386-419.
- M (11/20) Civil War and Reconstruction
 For Cause and Comrades, read it all.
- W (11/22) Thanksgiving Break—NO CLASS
- M (11/27) Reconstruction
 Textbook: 420-451.
 Reader: 267-292.
- W (11/29) Ah, the end: Final Exam!!

Class Policies:

- Attendance is required.
- All students are required to bring their IDs to all classes and exams.
- Students are responsible for checking their email and the WebCT class site on a regular basis because the instructor will send reading questions and other important information to the class.
- If you are having any problems with the course, please come to the office hours of the teaching assistant or the instructor. We are very eager to help students and are committed to your success in the class.
- Be respectful of your fellow classmates and the course instructors. This means that **ALL CELL PHONES AND PAGERS MUST BE TURNED OFF DURING LECTURES**. Do not text message on your phones and only use your computers for taking notes. All computers should have their speakers muted. In the same vein, students must arrive on time and stay for the entire class period. If you have to arrive late or leave early for some extraordinary reason (act of God, medical emergency, the joyous arrival of a child, and so on), let the instructor know in advance and be as quiet as possible in entering or exiting the class. Students should not engage in any other behavior that disrupts class: talking during the lectures, passing notes, reading materials unrelated to the course, and the like. Out of respect for your classmates and the instructor, do not consume food in class. Take your dinner either before or after the class. As the instructor's entire life is premised upon the use and abuse of caffeinated beverages, feel free to bring drinks. **Persistent disruptive behavior will result in a failure for the course. The professor also reserves the right to drop disruptive students from the class**
- All assignments and exams will only be accepted on the due dates on the class calendar. In the case of extraordinary medical or personal circumstances, you must contact the instructor **before** the due date of the assignment or exam.
- While we are always happy to discuss ways to improve one's writing and performance on exams, the instructor and teaching assistant for this course are not in the business of haggling over grades. Grades in this class are the product of careful deliberation and are not negotiable. If you find that the instructor or teaching assistant—who are human—made an error (calculating your grade, missing a page of your bluebook, and so on), please bring the matter to our attention during office hours. All queries about grading should be approached with a courteous manner that reflects the student's sincere desire to improve the quality of his or her work. Rude or aggressive students will rarely achieve the ends they seek.
- As the instructor takes academic honesty very seriously and will enforce University policy with vigor, please familiarize yourself with the University's Academic Honesty Policy. In addition to enforcing University policy be aware that any instance of cheating in this class, will not only result in a zero grade for the assignment in question but will also result in a failure of the entire course. For the full text of the University of Houston Academic Integrity Policy see: <http://www.uh.edu/dos/hdbk/acad/achonpol.html>

Student Resources:

- **Learning Support Services:** The LAS offers drop in tutoring for many subjects, holds numerous workshops on developing better note-taking, reading, and study skills as well as assisting students with test taking strategies.
Location: 321 Social Work Building. Phone: (713) 743-5411. Web: http://www.las.uh.edu/LSS/tutor_hours.aspx
- **Writing Center,** The Writing Center offers writing tutoring to UH students.
Location: 217 Agnes Arnold Hall. Phone: (713) 742-3016 Web: <http://www.uh.edu/writecen/>
- **Center for Students with DisAbilities:** "The Justin Dart, Jr. Center for Students with DisABILITIES (CSD) office provides accommodations and support services to University of Houston students who have any type of temporary or permanent health impairment, physical limitation, psychiatric disorder, or learning disability. Students are assisted in developing independence and self-reliance so they can function competitively with others in both the college setting and the campus community."
Location: Justin Dart, Jr. Center for Students DisABILITIES CSD Building #568, Rm 110. Phone: (713) 743-5400. Web: <http://www.uh.edu/csd/>
- **Counseling and Psychological Services:** Provides counseling services and offers other services to students in need.
Location: Student Service Center, Room 226. Phone: 713-743-5454. Web: <http://www.caps.uh.edu/>

For a full listing of the numerous and useful services available to students, please see: www.uh.edu/youru/current.html