

HISTORY 151-3
AMERICAN HISTORY TO 1877

Spring 2011

Instructor: Micah Childress
Office Hours: by appointment

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Course Description and Objectives:

This course explores American history from the beginning of European settlement until the end of Reconstruction after the Civil War. The primary goal of this course is to introduce the major themes, events, and people in the period so as to give students a basic understanding of the American past. This course will also attempt to develop the student's ability to grasp some of the interpretive problems historians face and debate while explaining the past. Finally, this course seeks to enable students to develop critical thinking skills that they can apply in other classes as well as life beyond the classroom.

Course Reading:

- James Roark, et al, *The American Promise: A Compact History, Volume I: To 1877 (4th Edition)*
- Stephen Weisner and William Hartford, eds. *American Portraits: Biographies in United States History, Volume I (3rd edition)*

These titles are available for purchase at Follett's and University Bookstores. I also recommend checking Amazon.com or Half.com to get the best deal. If you purchase an older edition, you are responsible to compare your edition with the assigned additions to ensure you are reading the correct chapters.

I may assign additional readings from other sources, which I will make available on Blackboard; the dates of the lectures and exam are subject to change, but I will announce any such changes in class.

Course Outline and Reading Assignments:

1. Discovery, Exploration and First Settlements
January 13, 18
READ: Chapter 2 in Roark
Chapter 1 ("John Smith") in *Portraits*
2. Errand into the Wilderness: The Puritan Experience
January 20, 25
READ: Chapters 3 & 4 in Roark
Chapter 2 ("Anne Hutchinson") & Chapter 3 ("Mary Rowlandson") in *Portraits*
3. The Growth of Colonial British North America
January 27
READ: Chapter 5 in Roark
Chapter 4 ("William Penn") in *Portraits*
4. The Founding of a Nation: The American Revolution, 1763-1783
February 1, 3, 8
READ: Chapters 6 & 7 in Roark
Chapter 5 ("Benjamin Franklin") in *Portraits*

First In-class exam: February 10

5. We the People: The Origins of the American Constitution
February 15, 17
READ: Chapters 8 & 9 in Roark
Chapter 6 (“Daniel Boone”) in *Portraits*
6. Securing the Revolution: The Early Years of the American Republic
February 22, 24; March 1, 3
READ: Chapter 10 in Roark
Chapter 7 (“Tecumseh”), and Chapter 8 (“Phillis Wheatley”) in *Portraits*
7. The Age of Jackson, 1824-1844
March 8, 10
READ: Chapter 11 in Roark
Chapter 11 (“Sarah Bagley”), and Chapter 14 (“Elizabeth Blackwell”) in *Portraits*

Second In-class exam: March 24

8. The Fruits of Manifest Destiny, 1844-1854
March 29, 31
READ: Chapter 12 in Roark; READ: Chapter 13 (“Mary Richardson Walker”) in *Portraits*
9. A House Divided: Sectionalism, Slavery, and Secession
April 5, 7, 12
READ: Chapters 13 & 14 in Roark; READ: Chapter 12 (“Nat Turner”) and Chapter 15 (“Harriet Beecher Stowe”)
10. And the War Came: Civil War
April 14, 19
READ: Chapter 15 in Roark; READ: Chapter 16 (“John Brown”) and Chapter 17 (“William T. Sherman”) in *Portraits*
11. Picking up the Pieces: Reconstruction
April 21
READ: Chapter 16 in Roark
12. And the War Left: Changes in Culture in Postbellum America
April 26

Third In-Class Exam: TBA—May 2-7

Attendance:

Class attendance is not mandatory, but since the exams cover lecture material, attendance is strongly encouraged. You are responsible for all of the material covered in lectures and you will find it extremely difficult to pass this course without regular attendance (and quality notes). My lecture notes will not be made available, but I will put the PowerPoint slides on Blackboard. Students who miss less than two classes are eligible to jump up a half grade level (e.g. from C- to C, or from B+ to A-), thus students who attend frequently will be rewarded for their diligence; since this is a bonus system, a cut is a cut is a cut.

Exams:

There are three in-class exams for this class. The first is on **February 10**; the second in-class exam is on **March 24**. The third and final exam will take place during, **finals week (May 2-7)**. The time and place will be announced. None of the exams are *cumulative*: the first exam will cover the materials in Parts 1-4; the second exam will cover the material in Parts 5-7; and the third exam will cover the material in Parts 8-12. Each exam will contain identification terms (drawn from the lectures and/or the readings in *American Portraits*) and one essay question.

Grading:

As a firm believer in hard work and an earn-your-own-grade principle, there will be no curving of exams or assignments. There will not be any predetermined number of As, Bs, Cs, Ds, and Fs. Each student will be rewarded for his or her efforts. Each student controls his or her destiny in this class. If there is a problem or a question, you should come talk to me; however, a forty-eight hour moratorium on discussing (no e-mails, no phone calls, no office visits) the exam will be imposed directly after handing back the exams in order to encourage you to read the comments and examine my examination of your exam. ☺

In-Class Exams 3 @ 100 = 300
Total 300 possible points

Final Grade Breakdown:

- A: 282-300 (94-100%)
- A-: 270-281 (90-93%)
- B+: 264-269 (88-89%)
- B: 249-263 (83-87%)
- B-: 240-248 (80-82%)
- C+: 234-239 (78-79%)
- C: 219-233 (73-77%)
- C-: 210-218 (70-72%)
- D+: 204-209 (68-69%)
- D: 189-203 (63-67%)
- D-: 180-188 (60-62%)
- F: 179-0 (0-59%)

Cheating will not be tolerated; students involved in said activity will be reported immediately to the History Department, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Office of the Dean of Students.

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. The best way to contact me about changes to this course is via e-mail: mdchildr@purdue.edu