

**History 151-1**  
**United States History to 1877**  
Spring Semester 2009

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**Objectives:** This introductory course is intended to explore how the world we live in has come to be. It is my first working hypothesis that certain basic human motivations stimulate people and communities to organize their lives in particular ways, to take calculated actions, to construct institutions and cultural concepts, to define others as “like” or “unlike” themselves, and to tell stories about this whole process, stories we call “history.” It is my second working hypothesis that the way we have taught history for the last 100 years *does not* work very well

I have come to think of these basic motivations in terms of four broad themes: race, money, sex, and salvation. Accordingly, I have arranged our material around these four themes within three big chronological units: 1) the colonial era; 2) the American Revolution; 3) the republican experience through the Civil War. In the first and third periods we will look for evidence of how these motivations interacted in particular times and places, and how the results of those interactions were different from—or similar to—the world we live in today. The revolutionary era we will treat as a time of intentional destruction and re-creation.

In the end, it is my first objective to try to *expose* the way these fundamental motivations interact to construct and define our world. It is my second objective to suggest ways to *understand* these interactions in order to recognize how they may be shaping us in the present. It is not the names, dates, or battles of the past that interest me; *I want to look at how the world worked then and how our sense of history affects how the world works now.* It is my hope you may begin to find that history can be a resource for knowing your world.

**Strategies:** To accomplish these objectives I have selected a textbook and some additional readings, designed lectures, organized discussion sessions, and developed a series of writing assignments. Executed in good faith, these assignments, readings, and class sessions ought to introduce you to new information about the past and, more importantly, new ways of thinking about the past—and the present. However, these strategies are inherently interactive and require a significant commitment from you to read, write, study, puzzle, ask questions, and engage in discussion. For the process to be important to your education you ought not take my word for these things but should see and understand them yourself.

**Readings:** *US: A Narrative History*, by Davidson, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., vol. 1  
*Myne Owne Ground*, by Breen and Innes  
*My Brother Sam is Dead*, by Collier and Collier  
Additional selections posted on the course “Blackboard”

**Films:** I have selected three feature-length films to illustrate our units. Each of these films is rich in visual detail to help you begin to orient to the time and place we are going to. Also,

these stories are evocative of many of the themes we will encounter in lectures and readings. The films will be shown twice in the evening so you can choose which viewing fits your schedule.

**Quizzes:** You will write short (1 page) quiz papers either in class or for class Fridays when we have discussions. These will require you to find material in your texts that bears on the theme and period under discussion that week. You may be given a question to answer, or you may be asked to formulate your own question for discussion. You may be called upon to read your paper in class. Weekly papers are worth **5 points** each and must be **turned in at class time for full credit.** (There are 12 discussions, you must write 8 such papers.)

**Exams:** There are 2 unit exams and a final. These are in-class essay tests taken during the class hour. Unit exams count **50 points**, the **final 60**. The exams will test you over the reading assignments as well as lectures. Some points will come from short answer questions drawn from reading only.

**Grades:** Your final grade will be based on your percentage of earned points out of a total of 200 according to the following scale:

93-100%	= A	73-76	= C
90-92	= A-	70-72	= C-
87-89	= B+	67-59	= D+
83-86	= B	63-66	= D
80-82	= B-	60-62	= D-
77-79	= C+	< 60%	= F

**Attendance and courtesy:** You are expected to attend all class sessions, and you will find it difficult to do very well in this course if you do not. However, I do not take attendance and I give no points for being in class. In return for not treating you like middle-schoolers, I expect you to be quiet and attentive in class and respect the rights of others to a constructive learning environment. Turn off cell phones and all such handheld devices. I do not allow laptops in class; you will do better by taking notes. You can find lecture materials on the Blackboard after they are delivered—and you can check Facebook on your own time. **I will ask you to leave** if you are disturbing me or others in the room..

**Emergency Announcement:** *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. Here are ways to get information about changes in this course:*

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my office phone 494.4127

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## History 151 Calendar of Assignments

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<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Read: Davidson, chapter 1</b>
Jan 12	Introduction and orientation
Jan 14	Perspectives on Discovery and Conquest
Jan 16	Discussion: what do you care?
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Read: Davidson, chapter 2</b>
Jan 19	Martin Luther King Day
Jan 21	View film <i>Black Robe</i> , <b>either Jan 20 or Jan 21, 7-9 pm</b>
Jan 23	Discussion: <i>Black Robe</i>
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Read Davidson, chapters 3-5; Innes and Breen, <i>Myne Owne Ground</i></b>
Jan 26	Race 1-“Savages”
Jan 28	Race 2-“Slaves”
Jan 30	Discuss <i>Myne Owne Ground</i>
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Read Davidson, chapters 3-5; Blackboard docs, “Money”</b>
Feb 02	Money 1
Feb 04	Money 2
Feb 06	Discuss money and mercantilism
<b>Week 5</b>	<b>Read Davidson, chapters 3-5; Blackboard docs, “Sex”</b>
Feb 09	Sex 1
Feb 11	Sex 2
Feb 13	Discuss sex, family, and social structure
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>Read Davidson, chapters 3-5; Blackboard docs, “Salvation”</b>
Feb 16	Salvation 1
Feb 18	Salvation 2
Feb 20	Discuss salvation and the Awakening
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Read Davidson, chapter 6</b>
Feb 23	Exam I
Feb 25	The “black box” of revolution
Feb 27	Film <i>Mary Silliman’s War</i> , <b>either Feb 25 or Feb 26, 7-9 pm</b>
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Read Davidson, chapter 7; Collier/Collier, <i>My Brother Sam</i></b>
Mar 02	Republicanism 1
Mar 04	Republicanism 2
Mar 06	Discuss <i>My Brother Sam</i>
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Read Davidson, chapter 8; Blackboard docs, “Founding”</b>
Mar 09	Founding 1
Mar 11	Founding 2

Mar 13	Discuss the American Founding
	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Read Davidson, chapter 9</b>
Mar 23	Federalists and Jeffersonians
Mar 25	Liberty Is . . .
Mar 27	Exam II
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>Read Davidson, chapters 10-14; Blackboard docs, “Race Again”</b>
Mar 30	Race 3
Apr 01	Race 4
Apr 03	Discuss race and slavery in the new nation
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>Read Davidson, chapters 10-14; Blackboard docs, “More Money”</b>
Apr 06	Money 3
Apr 08	Money 4
Apr 10	Discuss money and the market revolution
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>Read Davidson, chapters 10-14; Blackboard docs, “Oh Behave”</b>
Apr 13	Sex 3
Apr 15	Sex 4
Apr 17	Discuss gender, freedom, and Graham crackers
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>Read Davidson, chapters 10-14; Blackboard docs, “Perfection”</b>
Apr 20	Salvation 3
Apr 22	Salvation 4
Apr 24	Discuss reform and abolitionism
<b>Week 15</b>	<b>Read Davidson, chapters 15-17</b>
Apr 27	To the Civil War and Beyond
Apr 29	View <i>Glory</i> in evening <b>either Apr 29 or Apr 30, 7-9 pm</b>
May 01	Discuss <i>Glory</i> , wrap-up
	<b>FINALS</b>