

HISTORY 15100-001
AMERICAN HISTORY TO 1877
FALL 2009

Professor Michael A. Morrison
Office: University Hall 123

Office Hours:
Wednesday: 2-3 p.m.
& by appointment

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Course Description:

This course explores American history from the beginning of European settlements to the end of the Reconstruction of the Union. It has three interrelated objectives. The first is to introduce some of the major themes, events, and personalities in the period so as to give the student a basic framework of the American past. Second, it attempts to develop the student's ability to understand some of the interpretive problems historians encounter and debate in explaining the past. Third, our goal is to develop critical thinking and other related skills that students can deploy in other classes and in their own personal and professional lives.

“The only thing new in the world is the history you don't know.”
—Harry S. Truman

Required Reading:

Alan Brinkley, *American History: A Survey, Volume I: to 1877* (13th edition)
Stephen Weisner and William Hartford, eds. *American Portraits: Biographies in United States History, Volume I* (3rd edition)

The assigned readings are available for purchase at Follett's and University Bookstores. You might also find used copies at various online vendors. The text (*American History*) and reader (*American Portraits*) are also available on reserve in the Undergraduate Library.

Course Outline and Reading Assignments for lectures:

1. Discovery, Exploration and First Settlements
August 24-August 28
READ: Chapters 1 (entire) and 2 (pp. 37-40) in *American History*
Chapter 1 (“John Smith”) in *American Portraits*
2. Errand into the Wilderness: The Puritan Experience
August 31-September 2
READ: Chapter 2 (pp. 44-51) in *American History*
Chapters 2 (“Anne Hutchinson”) and 3 (“Mary Rowlandson”) in *American Portraits*
3. The Growth of Colonial British North America
September 4-9
READ: Chapter 2 (pp. 51-63) and Chapter 3 (entire) in *American History*
Chapter 4 (“William Penn”) in *American Portraits*
4. The Founding of a Nation: The American Revolution, 1763-1783
September 11-21
READ: Chapter 4 (entire) and Chapter 5 (pp. 131-134) in *American History*
Chapter 5 (“Benjamin Franklin”) in *American Portraits*

First In-class exam, Friday, September 25th

5. We the People: The Origins of the American Constitution
September 28-October 2
READ: Chapter 5 (pp. 153- 160) and Chapter 6 (pp.163-171) in *American History*
6. Securing the Revolution: The Early Years of the American Republic
October 5-October 19
READ: Chapter 6 (pp. 171-182) and Chapters 7 (entire) and 8 (entire) in *American History*
Chapter 6 (“Daniel Boone”), Chapter 7 (“Tecumseh”), and Chapter 8 (“Phillis Wheatley”) in *American Portraits*
7. The Age of Jackson, 1824-1844
October 21-October 26
READ: Chapter 9 (entire), Chapter 10 (entire), Chapter 12 (pp. 319-333) in *American History*
Chapter 10 (“Andrew Jackson”), Chapter 11 (“Sarah Bagley”), and Chapter 14 (“Elizabeth Blackwell”) in *American Portraits*

Second In-class exam, Friday, October 30th

9. The Fruits of Manifest Destiny, 1844-1854
November 2-November 9
READ: Chapter 13 (pp. 343-362) in *American History*
Chapter 13 (“Mary Richardson Walker”) in *American Portraits*
10. A House Divided: Sectionalism, Slavery and Secession
November 11-November 23
READ: Chapter 11 (entire), Chapter 12 (pp. 334-340), and Chapter 13 (pp. 362-368) in *American History*
Chapter 12 (“Nat Turner”), Chapter 15 (“Harriet Beecher Stowe”) and Chapter 16 (“John Brown”) in *American Portraits*
11. And the War Came: Civil War
December 30-December 11
READ: Chapter 14 (entire) in *American History*
Chapter 17 (“William T. Sherman”) in *American Portraits*

Third In-Class Exam: TBA—Finals Week

ATTENDANCE:

I will not take attendance at the lectures. You are responsible for all of the material covered in lectures, however, and you will find it difficult in the extreme to pass this course without regular attendance. I will not make my lecture notes available.

EXAMS:

There are three in-class exams for this class. The first is on **Friday, September 25th**; the second in-class exam is on **Friday, October 30th**. The third and final exam will take place during, ah, **finals week**. The time and place will be announced. None of the exams is *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 8-11.

Each exam will contain three identification terms (drawn from the lectures and/or the supplemental readings in *American Portraits*) and one short essay question. To help you prepare for the tests, you will

receive a list of identification terms and essay question options. The identification terms and essay question on each exam will come *word-for-word* from that study sheet. To help you prepare for the exams, ***there will be a review session the Wednesday*** before each of the exams.

INFORMAL ESSAYS:

Over the course of the semester, you will write **three** (3) informal two-page essays responding to questions based primarily on the reading material. The essays are due in class on the date indicated. You decide which three of eight dates you will submit essays. Note: essays must be submitted in hard copy in class—no email submissions and/or late submissions will be accepted. There also will be no backtracking. Each essay is worth 0-20 points. I want to emphasize that these are informal writing assignments. The purpose of these two-page essays is not to improve your writing skills but to stimulate thinking about issues, questions, and problems raised by your study of American history from colonial times to the Civil War. So you will be judged not on things like spelling, organization, and grammar but instead on things like the process and quality of thought. Read-and-respond questions for the informal essay options begin after the grading summary below.

TEACHING ASSISTANTS:

Two of the greatest learning resources in this class are the teaching assistants. The advanced graduate students assigned to this class are Micah Childress and Alisha Hillam. Micah and Alisha have had a great deal of experience working with undergraduates, and they are outstanding members of our graduate program. Most important, Micah and Alisha are here to help students do the very best that they can in History 151. Make use of their many, many talents.

Micah Childress

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& by appointment

Alisha Hillam

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& by appointment

GRADING:

Believing both in the Protestant work ethic and laissez-faire market principles, there will be no curving in this class. Nor will there be any predetermined number of As, Bs, Cs, Ds, and Fs. Each student will be rewarded for her or his efforts, and no one will be penalized for working hard and playing by the rules. Each student controls her or his destiny (grade-wise, that is) in this class.

In-Class Exams	3@80=240 points
Informal Writing	3@20=60 points
Total:	300 points possible

The final grade will be determined thusly:

A: 300-270

B: 269-240

C: 239-210

D: 209-180

F: 179-0h 0h

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: my email address: mmorrison@purdue.edu, and my office phone: 494-4140.

“Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe.”—H. G. Wells

INFORMAL ESSAYS

Over the course of the semester, you will write three short essays. The essays are due in class on the dates listed below. You decide which three of eight dates you will submit essays, but keep in mind that there will be no extensions granted or backtracking allowed. Each essay should be about 2 pp. or 550 words. It may be typed or (neatly) hand-written. Each one is worth 0-20 points.

These are informal writing assignments. The purpose of these essays is not to improve your writing skills but to stimulate thinking about issues, questions, and problems raised by your study of American history from colonial times to the Civil War. The goal is for you to discover, develop, and clarify your own ideas. You should do the appropriate reading and reflecting; then write in response to the question for 30-35 minutes. You will not be judged on things like spelling, organization, and grammar. But we will be looking for evidence that you are thinking seriously about history. Your essays should show that you are wrestling with concepts explained in the reading, in lectures and films shown in class, and that you have done your reading and reflection before attempting your essays. For the most part, you will be rewarded for the process of thinking rather than the act of composing.

INSTRUCTIONS: SELECT ANY THREE OF THE FOLLOWING EIGHT ESSAY OPTIONS.

Essay Option 1: Due Wednesday September 2

You are a newly arrived and somewhat lonely settler in Virginia and have relatives back in England who are thinking about joining you in the New World. You miss them and would like to have their good company, but you also have come to know well how different life is in Virginia, especially having witnessed Bacon's Rebellion. Write a two-page letter to your loved ones describing life as you have come to know it in the colony. You may assume that your letter will greatly influence their decision whether to stay in England or make the trek to the New World.

Essay Option 2: Due Wednesday September 9

If you are a male, assume that you are an attorney and write a two-page defense of Anne Hutchinson. If you are female, you are the prosecutor in the trial and write a two-page indictment of her. In either instance, base your arguments on the material in the text and reader and ground your case on the culture of Puritan New England.

Essay Option 3: Due Wednesday September 23

Assume that you have the heavy if unhappy responsibility to be King George III's political advisor. The colonists have sent along documents including the *Resolution for Independence*, an excerpt from Paine's *Common Sense*, and a copy of the Declaration of Independence found in the text, American History. Your responsibility is to draft a two-page rebuttal to the general points made in those documents. King George will incorporate your arguments into a speech to Parliament in which he will declare his thirteen colonies in revolt and call on the House of Commons and House of Lords to support a military effort to put down the rebellion. If he fails because your rebuttal is not persuasive, you will find yourself chained up in the Tower of London among the rats, waiting to be broken on the rack and trying in vain to make your peace with your God.

Essay Option 4: Due Wednesday October 7

Assume that you are an Antifederalist campaigning for the ratification convention in your state. You have read the new Constitution and listened to all of the bogus arguments made for it by antidemocratic spokesmen such as James Madison in his Federalist Number 10. Write a two-page political broadside detailing your objections to this new government. Remember the success of your candidacy depends on the persuasiveness of your case.

Essay Option 5: Due Wednesday October 14

If your last name begins with the letters A-K, you are a Federalist defending the policies of Alexander Hamilton. Your task isn't so much to explain or analyze *his* policies but to trash the policies of that nitwit, Thomas Jefferson. Why is his "vision" so dumb and disastrous for the country? If your last name begins with the letters L-Z, you are a Jeffersonian Republican. You must now respond to those snott-nosed, closet royalists who support Hamilton. Why is he (Hamilton) such an evil man and his policies equally vile?

Essay Option 6: Due Wednesday October 28

The rise of Jacksonian democracy and the Democratic Party is widely hailed as the "Age of the Common Man." Perhaps. Assume that you (men and women in the class) are either Sarah Bagley or Elizabeth Blackwell and you are on your deathbed. Write a short letter to your children (who will read it once you've gone to your final reward, have joined the "choir invisible," and are now taking an eternity-long "dirt nap") reflecting on your life as a woman in this age of *equality*.

Essay Option 7: Due Wednesday November 18

You are a flaming abolitionist who does not give a hoot in hell whether the Union survives or not—slavery must go. Having just read a Garrison's *Liberator* on the horrors of the institution, you are now convinced that slavery is a crime against humanity. Write a short, two-page letter to your local antislavery newspaper promoting Garrison's antislavery cause. Remember that the editor (i.e., the teaching assistant) does not like long, rambling letters and that you only have a couple of pages of paper to make your case: make it a short, emotional appeal.

Essay Option 8: Due Monday November 23

Two weeks ago you were viciously attacking slavery and, by extension, the South. This week assume that you are Col. Horatio Beauregard, a bourbon-guzzling, slaveholding candidate for the United States House of Representatives. The slavery extension question has all of the voters in your district in a tizzy. Draft an outline of a speech defending the South's (and southerners') right to take their slaves into the commonly owned territories of the West. Remember this is no easy task a) since you are a slaveholder most of your constituents think that at best you are an arrogant jackass and at worst perhaps the antichrist; and b) they don't own any slaves, they don't intend to own any slaves and so why should they care a hoot about this issue. Persuade them—I dare you.

