

# History 151: US History to 1877

Spring 2026

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## Course Overview

This course explores the **social, cultural, economic, and political development** of what became the United States from **pre-European contact through the Civil War and Reconstruction**.

Using an **Atlantic World** framework, we examine:

- Interactions between Native peoples, Europeans, and Africans
- The origins and evolution of **chattel slavery**
- The role of religion, technology, war, and capitalism
- The emergence of American identity and national aspirations
- The purpose and meaning of history itself

The course aims to provide students with the analytical tools to understand how the world we live in today developed from these early foundations.

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## Instructor Information

- **Instructor:** Dr. Mary F.V. Barford
  - **Teaching Assistants:** Leah Moyer, Kateri Mason
  - **Email:** mbarford@purdue.edu | lmoyer@purdue.edu | mason286@purdue.edu
  - **Class Time:** MWF, 1:30–2:20 PM
  - **Location:** MATH 175
  - **Office Hours:** By appointment (please reach out—I am always happy to meet)
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## Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze the ways interactions among diverse peoples shaped American culture, politics, and society.
  2. Understand how the early American past informs the present.
  3. Think in complex, nuanced ways—recognizing contradictions, deeper meanings, and distinctions between aspirations and lived experiences.
  4. Identify and describe key events, themes, and movements shaping American history through 1877.
  5. Use historical methodologies to analyze evidence, consider multiple perspectives, and contextualize human experience across time.
  6. Engage with curiosity and appreciate the importance of history.
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## Required Texts and Materials

- **Shi, David E., Daina Ramey Berry, Joe Crespino, and Amy Murrell Taylor.**  
*America: A Narrative History* (Brief Edition), Volume I, 13th ed.  
W.W. Norton, 2025  
ISBN: **978-1-324-08474-7**

Additional readings, PDFs, visuals, and materials will be provided through **Brightspace**.

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## Grading Scale

(If you'd like, I can insert your exact scale here—just provide it.)

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## Course Format & Requirements

### Class Meetings

We meet **MWF** for lecture and discussion.

Each week includes:

- Assigned textbook readings
- At least **one weekly assignment** (in-class or Brightspace) worth **10–20 points**
- Occasional in-class work that cannot be made up except with an excused absence

Attending class is essential—missing occasional in-class tasks won't ruin your grade, but consistent attendance is crucial.

## Lecture Expectations

Lectures complement the readings but will **not duplicate them**.

Success requires both:

- Regular attendance
- Completion of weekly reading assignments

If you have an **excused absence**, you may email a TA for lecture notes.

## Assessment Overview

- **Weekly Assignments:** 200 points (approx., may vary)
- **Midterm Project:** 100 points
- **Final Exam or Final Project:** 120 points

You may choose from several assessment formats to match your learning style—for both midterm and final.

## Participation

Your willingness to contribute makes the course more rewarding. Participation is strongly encouraged.

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# Course Technology & Communication

- This course is hosted on **Brightspace**:  
<purdue.brightspace.com>
- Weekly announcements appear in class, on Brightspace, and via email.
- Check your Purdue email regularly.

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# Late Assignment Policy

Because the course is structured around weekly units, deadlines maintain steady progress.

**Late assignments are not accepted** unless:

- The instructor grants permission **before** the deadline, or
- You have a documented and approved exception

Exceptions are **case by case**.

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## Course Schedule

### Week 1 (Jan 12–18)

- Read Chapter 1
- Complete weekly activity

### Week 2 (Jan 19–25)

- Read Chapter 2
- Complete weekly activity
- *Note: Monday, Jan 19 is MLK Jr. Day (no class)*

### Week 3 (Jan 26–Feb 1)

- Read Chapter 3
- Complete weekly activity

### Week 4 (Feb 2–8)

- Read Chapter 4
- Complete weekly activity

### Week 5 (Feb 9–15)

- Read Chapter 5
- Complete weekly activity

### Week 6 (Feb 16–22)

- Read Chapter 6

- Complete weekly activity
- **Midterm assigned**

### **Week 7 (Feb 23–Mar 1)**

- Read Chapter 7
- Complete weekly activity

### **Week 8 (Mar 2–8)**

- Read Chapter 8
- **Midterm due March 6–8 at 11:59 PM**

### **Week 9 (Mar 9–15)**

- Read Chapter 9
- Complete weekly activity
- **Spring Break immediately follows (Mar 16–22)**

### **Week 10 (Mar 23–29)**

- Read Chapter 10
- Complete weekly activity

### **Week 11 (Mar 30–Apr 5)**

- Read Chapter 11
- Complete weekly activity

### **Week 12 (Apr 6–12)**

- Read Chapter 12
- Complete weekly activity

### **Week 13 (Apr 13–19)**

- Read Chapter 13
- Review Final Exam guidelines

### **Week 14 (Apr 20–26)**

- Read Chapter 14

- Complete weekly activity

## Week 15 (Apr 27–May 3)

- Read Chapter 15
- **Final exam TBA (Week of May 4–9)**

**Note:** This is a living schedule. Updates will be communicated via class announcements and Brightspace.

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## Advice for Success

- **Attend class**—lecture notes will not be shared.
  - Complete all readings, assignments, and exams on time.
  - Engage respectfully with diverse perspectives.
  - Arguments must be grounded in **reason and evidence**.
  - **Never cheat or misuse AI tools.**
    - Using AI to generate essays
    - Plagiarism
    - Self-plagiarism→ Any of these will result in **automatic course failure**.
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## Important Dates

- **Midterm Due:** March 6–8
  - **Final Exam:** TBA (Week of May 4–9)
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## Mental Health Resources

If you feel overwhelmed, stressed, depressed, or in need of support:

- **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)**  
Phone: 765-494-6995  
Available during/after hours, weekends, and holidays

- CAPS Office: 2nd Floor, PUSH
  - Additional online resources available through Purdue CAPS website
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## Basic Needs Security

If you are experiencing housing, food, or safety insecurity, Purdue has resources:

- **ACE Campus Food Pantry** (open to all Purdue community members)
  - **Center for Advocacy, Response & Education (CARE)**  
Provides support for survivors of sexual violence, dating violence, and stalking
  - **Dean of Students Office**  
Offers emergency and academic support
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## Final Note

**This syllabus is subject to change.**

Updates will always be communicated clearly.