

US History to 1877 — Spring 2026

Instructor: Professor Devan Lindey

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Office Hours: By Zoom Appointment

Course Format: Asynchronous (no required in-person meetings)

Instructor Note: I reserve the right to adjust this syllabus with reasonable notice.

Course Epigraphs

These quotes reflect core themes of the course:

- *"The past is never dead. It's not even past."* — **William Faulkner**
 - *"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."* — **John Muir**
 - *"The great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us... history is literally present in all that we do."* — **James Baldwin**
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Course Description

This course introduces major **social, political, economic, and cultural developments** in United States history from **Indigenous America through 1877**.

We will move chronologically and explore how themes such as identity, power, conflict, democracy, expansion, and resistance shaped the early United States.

Weekly modules combine **textbook readings, primary sources, and recorded lectures**.

Learning Outcomes

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

1. Identify major events and trends in U.S. history through 1877.
2. Craft historical arguments using appropriate evidence.
3. Evaluate historical sources and connect them to broader course themes.

4. Strengthen written communication skills.
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Course Materials

Required Texts

All required readings are **free and online**:

- **The American Yawp, Volume I**
<<https://www.americanyawp.com/>>
 - **The American Yawp Documentary Reader**
<<https://www.americanyawp.com/reader.html>>
 - Additional readings and materials will be posted on **Brightspace**.
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Course Structure and Delivery

You will learn through **three types of required weekly materials**:

- **Textbook Chapters** (context + big picture overview)
 - **Primary Sources** (voices of past peoples; used for assignments & quizzes)
 - **Recorded Lectures** (explanations, reinforcement, and thematic connections)
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Email Courtesy

Please include:

- A **clear subject line**
- A polite greeting
- Complete sentences and appropriate tone
- Your full name and course (e.g., "US History to 1877")

I am happy to help!

Assessments Overview

Your grade comes from quizzes, discussions, evaluations, and a multi-step **final creative project** (“Unessay”).

Assignment Types

- **Quizzes:** Short multiple-choice assessments to check comprehension.
 - **Course Evaluations:** Two short (1–2 page) reflective assignments.
 - **Oregon Trail Assignment:** Play the historical game to explore westward expansion.
 - **Discussion Boards:** Introductions, brainstorming topics, and thematic discussions.
 - **Annotated Bibliography:** Five scholarly sources with annotations.
 - **Progress Report:** Checkpoint for the final project.
 - **Unessay Project:** A creative demonstration of your understanding (story, art, podcast, game design, recipe, poetry, etc.).
 - **Showcase:** Share your completed Unessay publicly in our class forum.
 - **Ponder with the Professor:** Submit anonymous questions near semester end.
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Assignments and Expectations

Quizzes

7 quizzes at 10 points each. Designed to help you stay on track.

Discussion Boards

- **Initial posts:** 300+ words (recommended by Wednesday).
- **Responses:** Two replies, 100+ words each.
- **Citations:** Use italicized document name in parentheses.
Example: *“We the people...”* (**U.S. Constitution**).

Annotated Bibliography

- 5 Chicago-style citations
- 1 paragraph per source describing:
 - content
 - connection to your Unessay project

Unessay Project

You choose the format. Creativity encouraged. Must connect clearly to course themes and demonstrate historical understanding.

Late Work Policy

- Late papers lose **10% of the assignment grade per day**.
- Communicate early if you need an extension.

Grade Breakdown (Total: 240 points)

Category	Points
Course Evaluations (2 × 10)	20
Introduction Discussion	10
Brainstorm Discussion	10
Other Discussions (2 × 10)	20
Check-Ins (2 × 5)	10
Annotated Bibliography	20
Progress Report	10
Showcase	10
Quizzes (7 × 10)	70
Oregon Trail Assignment	10
Unessay Project	50

Grading Scale

A+ = 98–100

A = 93–97

A- = 90–92

B+ = 88–89

B = 83–87

B- = 80–82

C+ = 78–79

C = 73–77

C- = 70–72
D+ = 68–69
D = 63–67
D- = 60–62
F = 0–59

Course Schedule (Accessible Table)

Dates → Topics → Readings → Assignments Due

- **3/9–3/16**
Indigenous America & European Contact
Chapters 1–3
→ Course Evaluation, Introductions, Quiz 1, Brainstorm Discussion
- **3/16–3/21**
Spring Break (No assignments)
- **3/22–3/29**
Colonial Society → The United States
Chapters 4–6
→ Quiz 2, Check-In, Discussion Board
- **3/29–4/5**
Early Republic & Market Revolution
Chapters 7–8
→ Quiz 3, Annotated Bibliography
- **4/5–4/12**
Democracy, Religion, Reform
Chapters 9–10
→ Quiz 4, Check-In 2
- **4/12–4/19**
Cotton Revolution & Manifest Destiny
Chapters 11–12
→ Oregon Trail, Progress Report, Quiz 5
- **4/19–4/26**
Sectional Crisis & Civil War
Chapters 13–14
→ Quiz 6, Discussion Board, Showcase begins
- **4/26–5/3**
Reconstruction
Chapter 15
→ Second Evaluation, Showcase continues, Quiz 7

- **5/4–5/9**
Finals Week
→ **Unessay Due (date TBD)**
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Discussion and Response Rubric (Accessible Summary)

Insightfulness (20%)

- 0%: No argument
- 50%: Vague or oversimplified
- 70%: Some insight, weak connections
- 90%: Good arguments, minor gaps
- 100%: Clear, relevant, strong insight

Evidence (20%)

- 0%: No or incorrect examples
- 50%: One good example, others weak
- 70%: Some relevant evidence
- 90%: Good examples, limited explanation
- 100%: Strong, well-connected evidence

Writing & Word Count (20%)

Ranges from inappropriate or insufficient (0%) to clear, academic, error-free writing (100%)

Citation (20%)

Ranges from plagiarism (0%) to full and proper citation (100%)

Peer Feedback (20%)

Ranges from no feedback (0%) to two insightful replies (100%)

University Policies (Accessible Summaries)

Protect Purdue Plan

Follow all campus health and safety requirements (masks, distancing, hygiene).
Non-compliance may affect class participation and be reported to the Dean of Students.

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism and cheating result in serious consequences, including possible failure of the course and reporting to the Dean of Students.

Nondiscrimination Statement

Purdue values diversity, inclusion, and equitable treatment. Resources available on Brightspace.

Accessibility

If you have or suspect a disability:

- **Email:** drc@purdue.edu
 - **Phone:** 765-494-1247
- I welcome discussions about accommodations.

Mental Health Resources

- **CAPS:** 765-494-6995
- **WellTrack:** self-help wellness platform
- **Wellness Coaches:** Free sessions via BoilerConnect
- **Dean of Students:** 765-494-1747

Emergency Preparation

- Follow Purdue ALERT messages
- Keep phones available for emergency communication
- Report symptoms of illness to Protect Purdue Health Center (765-496-INFO)