

# History 151

US History to 1877

Spring 2026

## Course Overview

This course examines the social, cultural, economic, and political development of what became the United States from pre-European contact through the Civil War and Reconstruction. Viewing American history in an Atlantic context, this course emphasizes the relationship between native peoples and European settlers, the origins, character, and evolution of chattel slavery, and the role of religion, technology, war, and capitalism in shaping American society. Understanding these crucial themes will reveal how the world we live in today came to be. As a cultural and intellectual historian, I will also be focused on identity formation, the refinement of overarching national aspiration, and the purpose of history itself.

## Instructor Information

- Instructor: Dr. Mary FV Barford, TAs: Leah Moyer, Kateri Mason
- Email: [mbarford@purdue.edu](mailto:mbarford@purdue.edu), [lmoyer@purdue.edu](mailto:lmoyer@purdue.edu), [mason286@purdue.edu](mailto:mason286@purdue.edu)
- Class time and location: MWF 1:30- 2:20 pm, Math 175
- Office Hours: by appointment – please contact me, I do want to chat!

## Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

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

1. Analyze the many ways in which the interaction of diverse peoples from multiple continents influenced the development of American culture, politics and society.
2. Understand the ways in which the early American past shapes the world we live in today.
3. Gain tools for thinking in complex ways, holding two opposing truths at once, looking for meaning beneath the surfaces of mere words, and recognizing aspiration as distinct from lived experience.

4. Recognize and describe key events, themes, patterns, and movements that shaped American history from pre-European contact to 1877.

5. Understand history exists from multiple perspectives and apply historical methodologies to analyze and contextualize historical evidence in order to explore the complexity of human experience across time.

6. Discover the importance of history, become captivated and engage with curiosity.

## GRADING SCALE

A+ = 96.5 – 100%

A = 92.5 – 96.5%

A- = 89.5 – 92.5%

B+ = 86.5 – 89.5%

B = 82.5 - 86.5%

B- = 79.5 – 82.5%

C+ = 76.5 – 79.5%

C = 72.5 - 76.5%

C- = 69.5 – 72.5%

D+ = 66.5 – 69.5%

D = 62.5 - 66.5%

D- = 59.5 – 62.5%

F= 0 – 59.5%

## Required Texts and Materials

- Shi, David E., Daina Ramey Berry, Joe Crespino, and Amy Murrell Taylor. *America: A Narrative History (Brief Edition), Volume 1*. 13th ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2025

**ISBN: 978-1-324-08474-7**

## Course Format and Requirements:

- We will meet MWF for lecture/discussion. Each week you will have at least one assignment along with the reading for the week. It may be an assignment we complete in class or it may be an assignment posted in Brightspace. These assignments will be 10-20 points each. If you miss an in-class assignment it cannot be made up unless you have an excused absence. Missing one or two will not severely impact your grade, but it is important to the course that you attend class.
- Lectures will be thematically aligned with the reading for each week, but not cover the exact same material, so it is important to come to class AND do the weekly reading assignments. I will not be taking attendance, but it is not likely you will do well in this course without attending class consistently. If you do have an excused absence, you can email one of the TAs for lecture notes.
- Your grade will be based around our weekly assignments, a midterm project and a final. I am very interested in offering options for midterm projects and for the final as well. Some students prefer to write, while others prefer to take tests. I want every student to be able to engage with the format that best allows them to shine.

- Your participation in class will make the course so much more enjoyable for all involved. Please arrive with a willingness to participate (at least on most days!)

Weekly assignments: 200 total points- subject to variation

Midterm: 100 points

Final: 120 points

- This course is on BrightSpace (BS) at [Purdue.brightspace.com](https://Purdue.brightspace.com)
- Announcements will be made in class and posted in Brightspace. Time-sensitive announcements will also be emailed.

**Late Assignment Policy:** As an active learning class, your participation in course activities is essential for your success in this course. Because the course is divided into weekly units, assignments in this course have weekly deadlines. The purpose of deadlines is to maintain your consistent involvement in the course and to limit procrastination. Because of the importance of regular participation, late assignments will not be accepted, except by permission of the instructor. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

## Course Schedule

DATES	ASSIGNMENTS	ADMIN
<b>Week One:</b> <b>(January 12<sup>th</sup>-18th)</b>	Read Chapter 1 Complete weekly activity	
<b>Week Two:</b> <b>(January 19<sup>th</sup>-25th)</b>	Read Chapter 2 Complete weekly activity	Monday, January 19 <sup>th</sup> is MLK Jr. Day – no class
<b>Week Three:</b> <b>(January 26<sup>th</sup> – February 1<sup>st</sup>)</b>	Read Chapter 3 Complete weekly activity	

<b>Week Four:</b> <b>(February 2<sup>nd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Read Chapter 4 Complete weekly activity	
<b>Week Five:</b> <b>(February 9<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Reading Chapter 5 Complete weekly activity	
<b>Week Six:</b> <b>(February 16<sup>th</sup>-22nd)</b>	Read Chapter 6 Complete Weekly Activity Midterm Assigned	
<b>Week Seven:</b> <b>(February 23<sup>rd</sup>- March 1<sup>st</sup>)</b>	Read Chapter 7 Complete Weekly Activity	
<b>Week Eight:</b> <b>(March 2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Read Chapter 8 Midterm due	<b>MIDTERM DUE</b> <b>March 6-8<sup>th</sup>, 11:59pm.</b> <b>More info will be announced.</b>
<b>Week Nine:</b> <b>(March 9<sup>th</sup>-15th)</b>	Read Chapter 9 Complete Weekly Activity	<b>Spring Break between Week 9 and Week 10- ENJOY !</b> (May 16 <sup>th</sup> -22 <sup>nd</sup> )
<b>Week Ten:</b> <b>(March 23<sup>rd</sup>-29th)</b>	Read Chapter 10 Complete Weekly Activity	
<b>Week Eleven:</b> <b>(March 30<sup>th</sup> – April 5th)</b>	Reach Chapter 11 Complete Weekly Activity	
<b>Week Twelve:</b> <b>(April 6<sup>th</sup> – April 12th)</b>	Reading Chapter 12 Complete Weekly Activity	

<b>Week Thirteen:</b> <b>(April 13<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Read Chapter 13 Read over Final Exam guidelines.	
<b>Week Fourteen:</b> <b>(April 20<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>)</b>	Read Chapter 14 Complete Weekly Activity	
<b>Week Fifteen:</b> <b>(April 27<sup>th</sup>- May 3rd)</b>	Read Chapter 15	<b>FINAL EXAM TBA</b> <b>Week of May 4-9th</b>

**\*\* Important:** This course is a living, shared experience, and this schedule is an outline to be filled in week by week. The schedule is always subject to change.

## Advice for Success:

- 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. Come to class.
- Do the reading, assignments and exams on time. No make-ups without my approval.
- Be respectful of others who may have a different point of view. This course covers material that is still hotly debated today. We all have the right here to free enquiry and expression within the structure of the course, but arguments must be made based in reason and evidence. No insults will be tolerated. It's wonderful to feel passionate about this subject matter, and I encourage that, but nothing can be made personal towards myself or other students.
- DO NOT CHEAT OR USE AI INAPPROPRIATELY – I cannot stress this enough. If you cheat, use AI to write essays for you, plagiarize, or submit work you have previously submitted for credit in another class, you will fail this course. Period.

## Important Dates

- Midterm Due: March 6-8th
- Final Due: TBD

## Mental Health

If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of mental health support, services are available. Such individuals should contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (765) 494-6995 and on the website during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or by going to the CAPS office of the 2nd floor of PUSH during business hours.

## Basic Needs Security

Primarily through the Dean of Students Office, Purdue has a range of ways to support students through times of struggle and insecurity. In addition to highlighting the availability of the Dean of Students, you may also want to familiarize yourself with some of the following resources:

- The ACE Campus Food Pantry (open to the entire Purdue community)
- The Center for Advocacy, Response & Education (open to the entire Purdue community)  
“provides support and advocacy for survivors of sexual violence, dating violence, and stalking.”

\*\* Course Syllabus may be subject to change