

**HIS 315K** (39630) – The United States to 1865 – Fall 2013 – TTh 9:30 – UTC 2.112A  
**H. W. Brands** - GAR 3.306 – T 11-12, Th 8:30-9:30 – hwbrands@austin.utexas.edu

**Philosophy of the course:** The study of history conveys information and insight about the past. More broadly, and more importantly, it trains students to **read carefully, write clearly** and **think critically**. These three activities—**reading, writing, thinking**—will figure centrally throughout the course.

**Subject and themes:** The course will cover all aspects of American history from ancient times to the end of the Civil War. The basic themes of the course will be the **emergence of an American identity**, the **evolution of American self-government** and the **expansion of American territory**.

**Textbook and online access:** H. W. Brands et al., ***American Stories, 2nd edition, volume 1 with MyHistoryLab*** (ISBN: 978-0205081193). The book and access to MyHistoryLab can be purchased at the UT Co-op or online at pearsonmylabandmastering.com or pearsonhighered.com/etextmobile. The course ID for MyHistoryLab is **brands38879**.

## Assignments

**Chapter exams:** There will be one exam for each textbook chapter. These will be taken online in MyHistoryLab. They are open-book. The deadline is **Friday at 6 pm** of each week. The chapter exams will total to 40 percent of the semester grade.

**Class tests:** Three, in class. Students will write one essay per test, as indicated below. Students may bring one note card (3 by 5 inches) to class with notes. 20 percent total.

**Papers:** Three, on documents provided below. The papers will be submitted in class on the due dates. 20 percent.

**Classroom exercises:** Regularly during the semester, students will be given writing exercises in class. These will be graded on a pass/fail basis. They will be unannounced and there will be **no makeups** without approved excuse (documented illness, family emergency, etc.). 20 percent.

**Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all classes. Students will be called on by name, more or less at random. Absent students will have one classroom exercise grade deducted for each class missed.

**Makeup and late policy:** Late chapter exams will **not** be accepted without documented, legitimate excuse. Technical malfunction is **not** a legitimate excuse. Makeups for the class tests **may** be given, but only for excused absences. Late papers will incur penalties of 5 points per day, to 20 points.

**Grades:** A = 90s; B = 80s; C = 70s; D = 60s; F = below 60. No +/-.

**Computers, tablets, phones** must not be in evidence in class.

**Note-taking** is discouraged. The TAs will write down and post what students need to know from class. Students' undivided attention and participation is expected.

**Supplemental Instruction:** The class will include Supplemental Instruction discussion sections (SI). These optional sessions will reinforce course content and strengthen pertinent skills. Students who participate regularly in SI sessions almost always raise their grades.

**Academic accommodations:** The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-6441 TTY.

### **Schedule**

Aug 29	Ch. 1	
Sep 3-5	Ch. 2	
Sep 10-12	Ch. 3	
Sep 17-19	Ch. 4	
Sep 24-26	Ch. 5.	<b>Class test 1</b> on Sep 24
Oct 1-3	Ch. 6	
Oct 8-10	Ch. 7	<b>Paper 1</b> due Oct 8
Oct 15-17	Ch. 8	
Oct 22-24	Ch. 9	
Oct 29-31	Ch. 10	<b>Paper 2</b> due Oct. 29
Nov 5-7	Ch. 11	<b>Class test 2</b> on Nov 7
Nov 12-14	Ch. 12	
Nov 19-21	Ch. 13	
Nov 26	Ch. 14	<b>Paper 3</b> due Nov. 26
Dec 3-5	Ch. 15	<b>Class test 3</b> on Dec 5

**Essay test questions**

In each essay, organize your thoughts carefully. Make general statements and support them with evidence.

**Essay test 1**

Why was there an American Revolution? Why and how did it succeed?

**Essay test 2**

Why and how did American territory expand so dramatically in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries?

**Essay test 3**

Why was there a Civil War? Why and how did it turn out the way it did?

## **Document 1: Declaration of Independence** (introduction)

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. – That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. – That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. – Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States.

**Prompt:** What are the key concepts and phrases Jefferson employs here? Where did these come from? What was his objective in using them? Are there any tensions or contradictions between what he says and what he and his contemporaries practiced? What can we learn or use today from the Declaration?

500 words

## **Document 2: First Amendment**

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

**Prompt:** What are the key concepts or phrases here? Where did these come from? What was Madison trying to accomplish or prevent? In what ways, if any, have the issues changed since Madison's day?

### Document 3: Gettysburg Address

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.

**Prompt:** What are the key phrases and concepts in the address? What motivated Lincoln's speech? What was he trying to accomplish? Is there anything surprising or provocative here? What can we learn or use today from his words?

500 words