

HIS 315K U.S. History, 1492-1865

Fall 2013

SAC 1.402, T-TH 9:30-11:00

Instructor: Aragorn Storm Miller

Office: GAR 3.226

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 10:00-1:00, and by appointment

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Course Description

In four centuries the North American continent transformed from the domain of diverse and sophisticated indigenous societies to an area dominated by the United States, itself a product of diverse cultural hearths and imperial rivalries. This course examines the dominant themes, crises, conflicts, and resolutions associated with the emergence and consolidation of the United States. We begin with a discussion of European colonization of North America and the process by the British North American colonies sought and gained independence. From there we consider the debates over governance and the contested meanings of freedom, prosperity, and national identity, as the new nation grappled with independence on the fringes of a vast continent and hostile Atlantic world. Finally we examine the ways in which rapid increases in westward expansion, economic development, and sectional divisions, catalyzed a civil war.

The goal of this course is to help students to master content and facts, and to develop the ability to interrogate competing interpretive positions and make informed judgments about history. In short, students will learn to think like historians. We will pay special attention to ideas of contingency and individual agency in the creation and stewardship of the United States. Students will work with dates, places, and names well known in the study of U.S. history, but shall take conventional narratives—of a steady and confident rise to power, of unity at home in the face of homogeneous opponents outside the gates—to task along the way. Perhaps most importantly, students will learn a skill set enabling them to make sophisticated arguments about U.S. and North American history in general, and to judge these issues in the modern day and beyond.

There are no prerequisites to this course, though those students unfamiliar with the basic contours of U.S. History are urged to read the materials closely, and to meet with the instructor or TAs to discuss any interpretive or factual questions that may arise.

Required Texts

James Henretta, et. al., *America: A Concise History*, 5th ed. (2012)

Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple* (Oxford University Press, 1987 edition with Cathy N. Davidson introduction)

Michael P. Johnson, *Reading the American Past, Volume I, to 1877: Selected Historical Documents* (2012)

Attendance and Class Decorum

Regular attendance is absolutely crucial to student success, given that exams and assignments will draw equally from lectures and readings. Since lectures are a central part of the course, the instructor expects student help in creating and maintaining a positive learning environment. *Arriving late, leaving early, (non-course related) internet surfing, texting, noisily packing up your materials five minutes before lecture ends, etc.*, are distracting and disrespectful to our classroom community and are strongly frowned upon by the instructor. At the same time, however, the instructor pledges, and expects students to follow suit, to respectfully consider divergent ideas, viewpoints, and commentary arising throughout the semester.

Grading

Exams: There will be two in-class exams and a final exam, to be given during the designated finals period. The in-class exams will require you to answer one essay question and two short identification questions. The final exam will consist of two identifications, an essay question relating to the last third of the course, and a comprehensive essay question.

Make-up Exams: You are expected to take all tests at the scheduled times. *Only students who are UNABLE to take the test on the scheduled day will be allowed to take a make-up exam.* Students who miss an exam because of illness, or other circumstances beyond their control, and who wish to take a make-up exam, must make arrangements with the instructor within one week after the missed exam.

If you have *questions or complaints* about your exam grades, you must speak with the Teaching Assistant who graded your exam. You are welcome to speak with Dr. Miller after you have met with your TA. If you request a re-grade, however, you accept the fact that your new grade can be *lower* as well as higher, based on the judgment of the instructor. Also, you should present any questions or complaints about the first exam before the second exam. You should address any questions about the second exam before the final exam.

Reading/Attendance Quizzes: There will be five pop-quizzes issued at random dates throughout the semester. The quizzes will feature two multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, or true/false questions, which will be extremely straightforward for anyone who has done the reading. Fifty points will be awarded for completing the quiz, and 25 points will be awarded for each correct answer. *No make-ups will be given for these quizzes without a documented excuse (i.e. a doctor's note, proof of participation in a school-sponsored activity, etc.)*

- 1st In-class Exam, 25%
- 2nd In-class Exam, 25%
- Final Exam, 35%

- Reading/Attendance Quizzes (5 x 3% each), 15%

This course will use the +/- grading system, breaking down as follows:

93-100: A	80-82: B-	67-69: D+
90-92: A-	77-79: C+	63-68: D
87-89: B+	73-76: C	60-62: D-
83-86: B	70-72: C-	59 and below: F

Academic Integrity

The instructor takes cheating and plagiarism very seriously and expects all students to be conversant with, and observant of, University policy regarding academic integrity and the student honor code. All potential violations will be dealt with immediately and, if necessary, reported to the Dean's Office. Please visit <http://utsenate.org/integrityut/honorcode/> to learn more about the UT honor code and expectations of academic honesty.

Religious Holidays

The instructor will comply with University policy regarding absences due to religious holidays. Students must inform the instructor at least 14 days prior to any class days or assignments they will miss as a result of a religious holiday. Students will be given a reasonable time to make up any assignments or obligations missed as a result of such holidays. It remains the student's obligation, however, to manage their progress throughout the semester and make sure they have completed all scheduled assignments in a timely fashion.

Cultural Diversity in the United States

This course carries the flag for Cultural Diversity in the United States. Cultural Diversity courses are designed to increase your familiarity with the variety and richness of the American cultural experience. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from questions addressing the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one U.S. cultural group that has experienced persistent marginalization.

Students with Disabilities

The instructor complies fully with University policy regarding students with documented disabilities. It is the *student's responsibility*, however, to make the instructor aware of any special accommodations or needs in a *timely manner*. If you have, or feel you may have, a disability that might affect your performance in this class, please ensure that you have filed the correct paperwork with the Services for Students with Disabilities office (<http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>).

Classroom and Campus Safety

The instructor supports and observes the policies of the Office of Campus Safety & Security (<http://www.utexas.edu/safety/>), including the following:

- Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.
- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building. Links to information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at www.utexas.edu/emergency.
- Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors.
- Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.
- *Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)*: UT students, staff, and faculty, worried about the behavior of their roommates, classmates, coworkers, etc., are encouraged to contact the Campus Safety & Security Behavior Concerns Advice Line (512-232-5050, <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal/>)

Schedule

Part I: From “God, Glory, and Gold,” to “Land, Labor, and Capital”

WEEK 1:

Thursday, August 29: Distribution of Syllabi and Initial Remarks

WEEK 2:

Tuesday, September 3: 15th Century Europe and Initial Atlantic Exploration

Readings: Henretta, pp. 2-21; Johnson, pp. 1-4, 7-14, 20-22 (“A Taino Origin Story,” “Genesis: The Christian Origin Narrative,” “Aristotle on Masters and Slaves,” “Columbus Describes His First Encounter with ‘Indians’”)

Thursday, September 5: The Fall of the Aztec Empire and the Rise of New Spain

Readings: Henretta, pp. 22-35; Johnson, pp. 23-31 (“A Conquistador Arrives in Mexico, 1519-1520,” “A Mexican Description of the Conquest of Mexico”)

WEEK 3:

Tuesday, September 10: Catch-up Imperialists—The French, Dutch, and British in North America and the Caribbean

Readings: Henretta, pp. 36-65; Johnson, pp. 37-40, 45-47, 56-60 (“Richard Frethorne Describes Indentured Servitude in Virginia,” “Sex and Race Relations,” “The *Arbella* Sermon”)

Thursday, September 12: The Solidification of the British North American Colonies

Readings: Henretta, pp. 66-95; Johnson, pp. 48-50, 66-68 (“Bacon’s Rebellion,” “Wampanoag Greivances at the Outset of King Philip’s War”)

WEEK 4:

Tuesday, September 17: An Unstable Society—Class Conflict, Slavery, & Authority

Readings: Henretta, pp. 96-115; Johnson, pp. 73-75 (“Words of the Bewitched”)

Thursday, September 19: The Seven Years’ War

Readings: Henretta, pp. 116-127; Johnson, pp. 99-102 (“Mary Jemison Is Captured by Seneca Indians during the Seven Years’ War”)

WEEK 5:

Tuesday, September 24: The Collapse of British-Colonial Relations

Readings: Henretta, pp. 128-147; Johnson, pp. 103-118 (“An Oration on the Second Anniversary of the Boston Massacre,” “A Boston Shoemaker Recalls British Arrogance and the Boston Tea Party,” “Daniel Leonard Argues for Loyalty to the British Empire,” “Edmund Burke Urges Reconciliation with the Colonies”)

Thursday, September 26: The American Revolution

Readings: Henretta, pp. 148-174; Johnson, pp. 119-131, 134-137 (“Thomas Paine Makes the Case for Independence,” “Letters of John and Abigail Adams,” “Boston King Seeks Freedom by Running Away to the British Army”)

WEEK 6:

Tuesday, October 1: **Exam #1**

Part II: Home Rule and Who Rules at Home?

Thursday, October 3: Forging a New Republic

Readings: Henretta, pp. 175-203; Johnson, pp. 143-150, 155-160 (“Richard Allen Finds the First African Methodist Church,” “Thomas Jefferson on Slavery and Race,” “Making the Case for the Constitution”); Rowson, introduction, preface, & pp. 8-64

WEEK 7:

Tuesday, October 8: Atlantic World Crises and the War of 1812

Readings: Henretta, pp. 204-226; Johnson, pp. 178-187 (“A French Sugar Planter Describes the French and Saint Domingue Revolutions,” “President George Washington’s Parting Advice to the Nation,”); Rowson, pp. 65-120

Thursday, October 10: Early American Culture and the Second Great Awakening

Readings: Henretta, pp. 227-257

WEEK 8:

Tuesday, October 15: The Market Revolution

Readings: Henretta, pp. 258-291

Thursday, October 17: Andrew Jackson and Jacksonian America

Readings: Henretta, pp. 292-320; Johnson, pp. 207-210, 216-223 (“President Andrew Jackson’s Parting Words to the Nation,” “Alexis de Toqueville Describes the Three Races in the United States,” “David Walker Demands Emancipation”)

WEEK 9:

Tuesday, October 22: Westward Expansion and Its Problems—Slavery, Cotton, Indians, and Texas

Readings: Henretta, pp. 321-350

Thursday, October 24: “King Cotton:” The Socioeconomics of the Antebellum South

Readings: Henretta, pp. 351-379; Johnson, pp. 250-252, 257-265 (“Plantation Rules,” “Nat Turner Explains Why He Became an Insurrectionist,” “The Proslavery Argument”)

WEEK 10:

Tuesday, October 29: The Sectional and Foreign Policy Questions of Texas Annexation

Readings: Henretta, pp. 380-391

Thursday, October 31: **Exam #2**

Part III: From “Union” to “Nation:” Sectional Crisis and Civil War, 1846-1865

WEEK 11:

Tuesday, November 5: The Mexican-American War

Readings: Henretta, pp. 392-403

Thursday, November 7: The Compromise that Wasn’t

Readings: Johnson, pp. 227-241 (“Abraham Lincoln Explains the Free-Labor System,” “The Anxiety of Gain: Henry W. Bellows on Commerce and Morality,” “Gold Fever,” “That Woman is Man’s Equal: The Seneca Falls Declaration”)

WEEK 12:

Tuesday, November 12: Bleeding Kansas

Readings: Henretta, pp. 404-409

Thursday, November 14: Dred Scott, Filibustering, and the Climax of the Sectional Crisis

Readings: Johnson, pp. 266-273 (“The Kansas-Nebraska Act,” “The Antislavery Constitution,” “The Proslavery Constitution”)

WEEK 13:

Tuesday, November 19: The Election of 1860

Readings: Henretta, pp. 410-419

Thursday, November 21: The Confederate High Tide, 1861-1862

Readings: Henretta, pp. 420-425

WEEK 14:

Tuesday, November 26: Total War, 1863-1864

Readings: Johnson, pp. 283-285 (“President Lincoln’s War Aims”)

Thursday, November 28: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

WEEK 15:

Tuesday, December 3: Life on the Home Front—Questions of Class, Gender, and Race

Readings: Johnson, pp. 289-293, 298-305 (“The New York Draft Riots,” “General William T. Sherman Explains the Hard Hand of War”)

Thursday, December 5: The End of the Civil War

Readings: Henretta, pp. 426-445

FINAL EXAM, Saturday, December 14, 7:00-10:00 p.m. (room TBA)