

HIST 2111: United States History I: to 1865
Spring 2010
University of West Georgia
MW 2:00-3:15
Newnan 2101

Instructor: Richard Primuth
Office: TLC 3103
Office Hours: MW 11-1pm; by Appt.
Email: rprimuth@westga.edu
Office phone: 678-839-5348

What is it about history that makes some people dislike history classes so much? The answer probably has a lot to do with misconceptions people have about what “history” is. The British historian Arthur Toynbee said, history is “just one damn thing after another.” The famous Supreme Court justice Oliver Wendell Holmes apparently agreed, saying “the literature of the past is a bore.” But any professional historian will tell you that history is about far more than “the facts.” Names and dates are only the beginning. Any fool can tell you *what* happened in the past; the trick is to understand *why*. Look around you. Why is the United States of 2009 the way it is? Why does it have the social, cultural and political structures it does? How did it get that way? Why do you and I and our fellow citizens speak, act and believe as we do? The goal of HIST 2111 is to think about some possible answers. (Dr. Brian A. Doyle, UGA)

Course Description: This course is a broad survey of the growth and change within the United States from its earliest settlements through the Civil War. Through lectures, readings, discussions and other activities we will examine political, cultural, and social themes in this nation’s early history. We begin with America’s pre-Columbian civilizations, conflict and colonization, Colonial America, move into the founding of a nation, the growth of democracy and end with the American Civil War. We will delve into such issues as race and slavery, women’s rights, and popular culture. The course is fairly light in reading, but emphasizes development of writing skills. Critical thinking and good analytical skills are essential in today’s workplace, and sharpening those skills will be a centerpiece of this course.

Course Objectives: In addition to gaining a basic understanding of themes, issues and events in American history to 1865, students will develop critical reading, writing, and thinking skills. Students will come out of the course with a broader understanding of the United States’ place within a global context, the nations’ diversity and the significance to their own lives.

Required Texts:

America: A Concise History, Vol. 1: To 1877 (4th edition), by James A. Henretta and David Brody

Black Americans in the Revolutionary Era: A Brief History with Documents, by Woody Holton

Course Requirements:

Movie Review: You will need to write a 2-3 page review of a movie dealing with any topic in American history before 1865. After a short introduction and summary of the movie, the paper should concentrate on the film's strengths and weaknesses. Was it accurate? Did it have a slanted viewpoint? Was it good history? Why or why not? The paper needs an introduction, argument with supporting evidence and a conclusion. Movie suggestions include (but are certainly not limited to): *Amistad*, *Glory*, *The Crucible*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *1492: Conquest of Paradise*, *The Patriot*, *Black Robe*, *1776*, *A Woman Called Moses*, *Drums Along the Mohawk*, *Geronimo*, *The New World*. (Due January 27)

Book essay: Read and be ready to discuss *Black Americans in the Revolutionary Era: A Brief History with Documents* on March 19. On that day there will also be a short essay (2-3 pages) due. Discuss the roles of African Americans in the Revolution. Focus in one of three areas: religion, the ideals of freedom versus the reality, or the differing viewpoints of black and white Americans. You will need to develop an argument and use examples from the documents to bolster that argument. (Due March 17)

Research Paper: For this paper you may choose any topic in U.S. history before 1865. In this 6-8 page work you will need to introduce your subject, form a historical argument, use evidence to support that argument, and write a convincing conclusion. A minimum of three sources, of which at least half must be books, are required (the course text cannot be used as a source). This paper will need footnotes and is expected to follow the *Chicago* documentation style. We will discuss this in more detail during class. (Due April 14)

Exams: There will be three non-cumulative exams given in the course. These exams will be a mix of short identifications and essay questions. You will need to bring your own blue books which can be purchased throughout campus. (February 10, March 8, TBA)

Class Participation: This will determine a substantial portion of your grade and includes attendance and participation in class discussions.

Extra Credit: You may write a short (2-3 pages) review of a visit during the semester to a history museum, exhibit or site for extra credit. This needs to be a critical essay. Did the site or exhibit seem to have an overall theme or message? Were there historical inaccuracies? What was done well and what was done poorly? Please include a copy of your ticket or pass with a date attached to this paper. Suggested sites include the Atlanta History Center, Etowah Indian Mounds State Historic Site, Andersonville, West Georgia Museum of Tallapoosa, Allatoona Pass Battlefield, Pickett's Mill Battlefield, New Echota State Historic Site, Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History, Kennesaw National Battlefield, and the Tubman African American Museum in Macon. (Due anytime through April 28)

Grading:

Movie Review: 10%
Book Essay: 10%
Research Paper: 20%
Exam 1: 15%
Exam 2: 15%
Exam 3: 20%
Class Participation: 10%
Extra Credit: up to 5%

Grading Scale:

90% + A
80% + B
70% + C
60% + D
59% - F

Writing Assistance: This course has several writing assignments constituting 40% of your possible grade. If you are struggling (writing does not come easily to most people) seek help sooner rather than later. Suggestions include:

- The UWG Library website (includes citation and style guides, as well as important history databases such as America: History & Life)
- The Writing Center (TLC 1201)
- College writing skills books (many of these are quite good and can be found online for less than \$1.00)
- www.chicagomanualofstyle.org
- <http://www.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/>
- Peers (having another pair of eyes proof your work is always a good idea)
- Class Instructor (I am happy to give any help that I can)

Class Rules:

- Turn cell phones off during class; this is common courtesy
- No food in class, beverages are fine
- Attendance is expected, and please be on time
- This is an academic environment, show respect for others
- Academic honesty is expected. Do not submit the work of others as your own. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and is not tolerated at this university. For details see the Student Handbook, appendix A and the history department statement on plagiarism: <http://www.westga.edu/~history/statementonplagiarism.pdf>
- See also: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>.

Tentative Course Outline:

Week 1 (January 6-8): Course Introduction/Early Civilizations

Week 2 (January 11-15): Early North America (to 1500)

Read: Henretta & Brody, chapter 1

Week 3 (January 20-22; no class Jan. 18): Worlds Collide

Read: Henretta & Brody, chapter 2; Native Viewpoints (on CourseDen)

Week 4 (January 25-29): Establishing Colonies

Read: Henretta & Brody, chapter 3; Women in Huron Society (on CourseDen)

Due: Movie Review (January 27)

Week 5 (February 1-5): Colonial America

Read: Henretta & Brody, chapter 4

Week 6 (February 8-12): The Approaching War for Independence

Read: Henretta & Brody, chapter 5

Exam 1: February 10

Week 7 (February 15-19): American Revolution

Read: Henretta & Brody, chapter 6; Declaration of Independence (in text)

Week 8 (February 22-26): The Early Republic

Read: Henretta & Brody, chapter 7; Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union, Constitution of the United States (in text)

Week 9 (March 1-5): Jacksonian America/Growth of Democracy

Read: Henretta & Brody, chapters 8 and 10; Black Hawk Surrender Speech (on CourseDen)

Week 10 (March 8-12): Economic Transformation/Market Revolution

Read: Henretta & Brody, chapter 9

Exam 2: March 8

Week 11 (March 15-19): Slavery & the South; Class discussion

Read: Henretta & Brody, chapter 12

Due: Book Essay (March 17)

Week 12 (March 22-27): No class, Spring Break!

Week 13 (March 29-April 2): The Industrial North/Reform Movements

Read: Henretta & Brody, chapter 11; Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions (on CourseDen)

Week 14 (April 5-9): American Expansion

Read: Across the Plains in 1844 (on CourseDen)

Week 15 (April 12-16): The Coming Crisis

Read: Henretta & Brody, chapter 13

Due: Research papers (April 14)

Week 16 (April 19-23): The Civil War

Read: Henretta & Brody, chapter 14

Week 17 (April 26-28): The Civil War

Read: Civil War letter (on CourseDen); to be assigned

Final Exam: TBA