



NOTE: This is a DRAFT (July 10th) of the syllabus that will be used in the fall 2009 semester. The final copy will be distributed on the first day of class and posted afterwards. Please feel free to contact me by email if you have questions.

HISTORY 241: HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES to 1865

Fall 2009, Monday, 8:30-11:20, CRN: 90463
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CONTENT: This course presents a survey of the major developments in American history from the pre-Columbian era to the Civil War. Our examination will include early contacts between Native Americans and European settlers, colonial settlement and development, the Revolution and expansion of the new nation, and the debates over slavery that led to the Civil War. Presentations (in a lecture format, assisted with Powerpoint) and class discussions of assigned readings will be used to introduce students to the basic chronology, events, and interpretative issues relevant to the American past

In addition, this course seeks to develop, or enhance, students' familiarity with the basic skills employed in historical thinking and writing, specifically through analysis of primary documents and critical reading of secondary sources. A writing-intensive approach and in-class workshops will be used for this purpose.

STUDENT COMMITMENT: You are expected to come to class prepared to make informed contributions to our class discussions. You will find below (under "Weekly Schedule") the topics that will be covered in class, along with study questions and relevant readings that will guide our work each week. Before each class, please read the assigned material and prepare some notes in answer to the questions listed in the syllabus and/or the texts. These questions will guide our class discussions. Also, a strict schedule of assignments has been designed to accomplish the learning goals and should be respected. Therefore no short essay will be accepted late unless a special permission is granted by the instructor ahead of time. Regular attendance is essential for success in this class.

TEXTS: The following texts are available at the UFV Bookstore:

- Eric Foner. *Give Me Liberty!* (Volume II). Second Seagull Edition.
- John Hollitz, ed. *Thinking Through the Past: A Critical Thinking Approach to U.S. History* (Volume I: To 1877). Fourth Edition [2010]
- Mary Lynn Rampolla. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Short Essays (15%; 20%; 20%)	55%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Attendance and class participation	5%

CLASS CONDUCT: Two cardinal rules should govern our conduct during our weekly meetings: focus on learning and respect of others. During class time I expect students to focus their attention on class-related activities. Cell phones and other electronic devices, other than laptops that are used for course-related purposes, should therefore be turned off while class is in session. I also expect all class members to respect others' opinions and avoid behaviours that are disruptive of others' learning (including tardiness). The use of laptops should be as undistruptive as possible.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1. September 14 — INTRODUCTION

- “Mapping America”: a visual introduction to America (to the 18th century), with special attention to the Spanish New Mexico colony in the Franciscan Century (1606-1680)

Read: Foner, chap. 1, “A New World”

Week 2. September 21 — EARLY ENCOUNTERS IN THE BRITISH COLONIES

I. Meaning of freedom in the early colonies:

1. How did Native and European ideas of freedom differ on the eve of contact? How did the encounter between the two groups affect each group's definition of freedom? (see Foner, 13-16).
2. Examine the documents presented in “Voices of Freedom” (Foner, 32-33) in light of the questions provided at the end of p. 33.

II. Discovery vs. Encounter:

1. How have textbook accounts of the founding of Virginia changed over time? How does Foner's narrative compare to those reviewed in Hollitz? See Foner, chap. 2 (up to p. 77) and Hollitz, chap. 1.
2. Ethno-cultural approach (brief lecture and introduction to *After the Mayflower*)
3. In-class screening, as time allows, of *After the Mayflower* (Episode one, *We Shall Remain*, PBS, American Experience, 2009), 72 min. The documentary is available on DVD at the UFV library; the episodes can be watched online on the PBS website (www.pbs.org); episode transcripts can also be downloaded from the website.

Week 3. September 28— MATURING COLONIES

I. Changing definitions of freedom:

- How did the meaning of freedom change in the colonies in the second half of the 17th century (after 1640)? What developments explain this transformation? See Foner, 77-84.

II. Growth and social tensions in New England and the Middle Colonies:

- Lecture. For background information, read Foner, 85-94, 102-124.

III. Working with Primary Sources:

- Read Hollitz, chap. 2 & 3 and be prepared to work with the documents. The questions listed in the “Investigation” section of the chapters can be used to guide your study.

Week 4. October 5 — THE SOUTHERN COLONIES AND THE INTRODUCTION OF SLAVERY

I. Antebellum Slavery

- Lecture. For background information, read Foner, 94-102, 125-140.
- Excerpts from *Africans in America* (PBS, 1998). Available at UFV library and online at www.pbs.org.

Essay #1 due in class: on Hollitz, chapter 2 OR 3

October 12 – Thanksgiving (UFV closed)

Week 5. October 19 — THE STRUGGLE FOR EMPIRE AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

I. Meanings of freedom on the eve of the American Revolution:

- What did “republicanism” and “liberalism” mean in 18th century America? How did colonial politics (voting requirements and practices, colonial governments, public sphere, freedom of the press and of speech) reflect these ideals? What influence did religious developments have on political culture? See Foner, 140-154.

II. The road to revolution

- Lecture. For background information, read Foner, 154-200.

III. Evaluating one historian’s argument:

- Hollitz, chap. 4. The questions in the “Investigation” section will provide a framework for our class discussion.

Week 6. October 26 — Mid-term exam (in class)

Week 7. November 2 — From “All Men are Created Equal” (1776) to “We the People” (1787)

- How were the ideals of the Revolutionary era expressed and institutionalized in the new nation? Lecture and discussion. For background information, read Foner, 201-288. The “focus questions” at the beginning of Foner’s chapters 6 and 7 will be used to guide class discussion.

Week 8. November 9 — Race and Religion in the Early Republic

- Class time will be divided in half; each half will be devoted to a class discussion of the material presented in Hollitz. For background information, read Foner, 289-301, 328-330; study Hollitz, chap. 6 & 7, using the questions listed in the “Investigation” section of each chapter as guides.

Week 9. November 16 — Rise of a Market Economy and Political Democracy in the Age of Jackson

I. How did the emerging market economy shape debates about the meaning of American democracy?

- Lecture. For background information, read Foner, 304-328, 330-374.

II. How did Andrew Jackson reflect and shape his era?

- Hollitz, chap. 9. The questions in the “Investigation” section will provide a framework for our class discussion.

Week 10. November 23 —From Assimilation to Removal, and the state/federal conflict in the 19th century

- Brief lecture and introduction to *The Trail of Tears* (Episode three, *We Shall Remain*, PBS, American Experience, 2009), 72 min. The in-class screening will be followed by class discussion of the key historical and political issues covered in the documentary (assimilation/removal policies, impact of these policies on the Cherokee people, constitutional/political debates raised by conflict over Native land and sovereignty). No assigned reading for this week.

Essay #2 (on Hollitz, chapter 6, 7 or 9) due in class

Week 11. November 30— The Cotton Economy, Debates about Slavery, and Life under Slavery

- I. How did the cotton economy shape Southern society? Who opposed slavery and why?
- Lecture. For background information, read Foner, 375-441.
- II. Slavery “From the Bottom Up”
- Hollitz, chap. 10. The questions in the “Investigation” section will provide a framework for our class discussion.

Week 12. December 7 — The Sectional Crisis and the Civil War

- I. How did territorial expansion (in the West) fuel the South/North divide? Why were political compromises no longer possible by 1858?
- Lecture. For background information, read Foner, 442-520.
- II. Why did the North win the Civil War?
- Hollitz, chap. 12. The questions in the “Investigation” section will provide a framework for our class discussion.

Essay #3 (on Hollitz, chap. 10 or 12) due on December 9th. Please submit your essay as an email attachment (in Word) to sylvie.murray@ufv.ca by 9 a.m. on December 9th. I will acknowledge reception, by email, by 10 a.m. If you do not receive my email confirmation that your essay has been successfully transmitted electronically, please drop off a printed copy at faculty reception on the Abbotsford campus by noon on December 9th.

Final Exam will be scheduled during the examination period (December 9-22).