

UNITED STATES HISTORY TO 1865 (HIS 211-01)

University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Fall 2013

Tuesday and Thursday 3:30-4:45pm ~ MHRA 1215

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Course Description: This course highlights some of the events, themes, and issues across more than 250 years of United States history from the first encounters between Europeans and Native Americans through the American Civil War.

History is more than a set of facts brought out of the archives and presented as “the way things were;” it is a careful construction held together with the help of hypotheses and assumptions.¹ Therefore, this course will also examine the “construction” of history as students analyze primary sources, discuss debates in secondary works written by historians, and use both primary and secondary sources to create their own interpretation of history.

**This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Changes in the syllabus or course schedule will prioritize effectiveness for student learning. Any changes will be announced in-class and on Blackboard.*

Required Textbooks: (available at the UNCG bookstore or online)

Hollitz, John. *Thinking Through the Past: A Critical Thinking Approach to U.S. History, Volume I: to 1877*, 4th edition. Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2010.

Additional readings are posted on Blackboard under “Course Readings.”

GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

This course satisfies General Education (GEC) requirements established by the UNCG faculty for historical perspectives (GHP/GMO):

Historical Perspectives (GHP)

Students use an historical approach to a specific region and period to explore the context of events (social structure, economics, political systems, culture, or beliefs), evaluate evidence and divergent interpretations, and communicate historical ideas in writing.

At the completion of a GHP course, the student will be able to:

¹ James West Davidson and Mark Hamilton Lytle, *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection*, Volume I, 6th edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), xiii.

- Demonstrate a general knowledge and appreciation of historical events, social structures, economics, political ideologies and systems, belief systems, or cultural expressions
- Demonstrate an understanding of some of the diverse historical events, forces and/or contexts in the ancient (GPM) and modern (GMO) world
- Analytically and critically evaluate historical evidence and divergent interpretations
- Communicate historical ideas clearly

These general education objectives are applicable to all courses with GHP credit regardless of subject matter. The specific HIS 211 course objectives described below are designed to address these General Education Program Goals.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Through class discussion and written assignments, students will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of major events and themes in American history from the initial encounters between Native Americans and Europeans through the American Civil War.
- Analyze continuity and change across historical eras in terms of individual human choices and the larger societal structures. [Historical Comprehension]
 - Draw comparisons across time periods and regions in order to define enduring issues as well as large-scale or long-term developments that go beyond regional and temporal boundaries.
- Use historical thinking to contextualize and analyze primary and secondary sources representing different points of view. [Historical Thinking/Analysis]
 - Differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations, acknowledging that the two are related, but that historians select facts based on their ideas about what is most significant about the past.
 - Analyze historical sources by evaluating their authenticity and credibility, and their social, political, and economic context.
 - *Goals for Primary Sources:*
 - Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage by identifying who was involved, what happened, where it happened, what events led to these developments, and what consequences or outcomes followed.
 - Read historical narratives imaginatively, taking into account what the narrative reveals of the humanity of the individuals and groups involved--their probable values, outlook, motives, hopes, fears, strengths, and weaknesses.
 - Appreciate historical perspectives by: (a) describing the past on its own terms through the eyes and experiences of those who were there, as revealed through their literature, diaries, letters, debates, arts, artifacts, and the like; (b) considering the historical context in which the event unfolded—the values, outlook, options, and contingencies of that time and place; and (c) avoiding “present-mindedness”—judging the past in terms of present-day norms and values.
 - *Goals for Secondary Sources:*
 - Identify the central question(s) the historical narrative addresses and the purpose, perspective, or point of view from which it has been constructed.
 - Distinguish between unsupported expressions of opinion and informed hypotheses grounded in historical evidence.

- Challenge arguments of historical inevitability by formulating examples of how different choices could have led to different consequences.
- Hold interpretations of history as tentative, subject to changes as new information is uncovered, new voices heard, and new interpretations broached.
- Evaluate major debates among historians concerning various interpretations of the past.
- Begin the process of conducting original research by investigating and interpreting primary and secondary sources. [Historical Research]
- Use evidence-based reasoning to interpret the past coherently while developing and presenting an original argument orally and in writing. [Historical Interpretation]
 - Support interpretations with historical evidence in order to construct closely reasoned arguments rather than opinions.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance Policy: Class attendance is mandatory, and you are expected to arrive on time. You are allowed 3 unexcused absences during the semester. Having more than 3 unexcused absences will negatively impact your grade in addition to receiving a 0 for participation on the days you miss.

- If you know you are going to be absent from a class, please notify me *prior* to that class and include the reason for your absence. Notify me of an absence as far in advance as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made to compensate for the missed class and assignments, if necessary. If you are on an athletic team or will miss class because you are representing UNCG elsewhere, I may request a letter from your coach or supervisor detailing the days you will be absent. If you are missing class for a religious observance, you must notify me in writing *prior* to the absence. *Be aware that telling me you will miss class does not constitute an excused absence.*

Electronic Devices: Laptops and other electronic note-taking devices are permitted; however, I reserve the right to ban them individually or as a group should they be used for purposes unrelated to class, or if they distract other students. Use of electronic devices for anything other than note-taking in class (e.g. Facebook, Youtube, gaming, texting, chatting, etc.) is prohibited and will result in deductions in your Participation Grade.

Assignment Policy: All assignments must be submitted in hard copy. Assignments submitted late will receive a *fifteen point* deduction. Late assignments will not be accepted more than one week after the original due date. With appropriate documentation, I may accept late assignments without penalty at my discretion. If you leave an assignment in my mailbox, you should email me to let me know it is there.

* Should you be unable to print a hard copy to submit on the due date, I will accept an electronic copy of the assignment as a placeholder until the next class period *if it is emailed prior to class time*. I *must* receive the hard copy in the following class or the late policy will apply.

Blackboard: Be sure to check Blackboard for course announcements, readings, assignments, and links to important websites.

Electronic Communication: The easiest way to contact me is by email. I will reply to all emails, and I try to respond promptly, so if you do not hear from me within 24 hours (48 hours on weekends), try again. Any emails sent after 6pm can expect a response the following morning. I

will send out any class emails through Blackboard to your UNCG email address, so be sure to check it regularly.

- All emails should include “HIS 211” in the subject line.
- Emails should be professional and courteous. You should begin with a salutation and conclude with your name.
- *Emails sent from class during class time will not receive a reply.*

Academic Integrity: You are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity. It is your responsibility to avoid even the appearance of dishonesty regarding your work. UNCG defines plagiarism as “intentionally or knowingly representing the words of another, as one’s own in any academic exercise” and the university’s Academic Integrity policy is available online: <http://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integrity-policy/>. All sources used in any paper or assignment must be properly cited or they will be considered plagiarism. Any instance of plagiarism will receive a 0 for the assignment and may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for appropriate action.

EVALUATION

Grading:

Participation and Syllabus Quiz	20%
Homework (Discussion Preparation)	10%
Writing Assignments	20%
Unit I Exam	15%
Unit II Exam	15%
Final Exam	20%

Participation: Simply attending class will not give you an “A” for participation. You are expected to come to class prepared to ask questions and make comments. You should contribute to each class period through discussion and active engagement with in-class activities. Using electronic devices for purposes unrelated to class will result in deductions in your participation grade.

Syllabus Quiz: On August 27th there will be a quiz on the content of the syllabus. The quiz will be “open syllabus” and will ask basic questions about information from the syllabus to ensure that students have read and understand the course requirements. The Syllabus Quiz grade will be part of the participation grade.

Homework: There will be several homework assignments throughout the semester. These assignments will serve as preparation for class discussion.

Timeline: Studying history is not simply about memorizing a series of dates; however, understanding chronology is vital to an understanding of history. As part of your homework grade, you will keep a timeline throughout the semester. I may ask to review student timelines periodically, so they should be kept up-to-date with the course material. The timeline will also be used in preparation for course assignments and as a study guide for exams. You will receive instructions for creating a timeline in class.

Assignments: There are 4 writing assignments throughout the semester. Due dates are listed in the Course Schedule. Specific information on each assignment will be discussed during class as the due date approaches.

Grading Rubric for Daily Portion of Participation Grade

Grade	Criteria
A	Student is always well prepared for class; Student participates frequently in class sessions and makes relevant contributions to discussions; Student actively listens when others talk and “builds off” the ideas of others; Student always shows respect for classmates and instructors
B	Student is prepared for class; Student regularly participates in most class sessions and makes relevant contributions to discussions; Student actively listens when others talk; Student shows respect for classmates and instructors;
C	Student is usually prepared for class; Student occasionally participates in class sessions and makes some relevant contributions to the discussion; Student listens when others talk; Student shows respect for classmates and instructors;
D	Student is seldom prepared for class; Student seldom participates in class sessions and rarely makes relevant contributions to the discussion; Student rarely listens when others talk;
F	Student is rarely prepared for class; Student almost never participates in class sessions and rarely makes relevant contributions; Student almost never listens when others talk;

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 – Introduction

Tuesday, August 20 – What is History?

Thursday, August 22 – Reading History

Readings:

Hollitz: Chapter 1 – “The Truth about Textbooks”

UNIT I: THE CREATION OF AMERICAN SOCIETY

Week 2 – Early Encounters

Tuesday, August 27 – Encounters

Readings:

Bboard: *American Colonies*, Ch. 1 – “Natives”

Thursday, August 29 – Colonizing the New World

Readings:

Bboard: *American Colonies*, Ch. 2 – “Colonizers”
“Colonizers” – Primary Sources

Week 3 – Colonial Settlements

Tuesday, September 3 – Early Settlements

Readings:

- Bboard: *Colonial America*, Ch. 2 – “New Spain”
Colonial America, Ch. 3 – “New France”
The World Turned Upside Down – “Introduction”
Envisioning America – “Introduction”

Thursday, September 5 – Jamestown (Re)Discovered

Readings:

- Bboard: *American Colonies*, Ch. 6 – “Virginia”
 Jamestown Rediscovery Project – “Jamestown”

Week 4 – Colonial Societies: New England and the World

Tuesday, September 10 – New England

Readings:

- Hollitz: Chapter 2 – “The Primary Materials of History”
 Bboard: *Colonial America*, Ch. 5 – “New England”

Thursday, September 12 – The Atlantic World

Readings:

- Bboard: *American Colonies*, Ch. 14 – “The Atlantic”
 “The Atlantic” – Primary Sources

Week 5 – Colonial Societies: The Middle Colonies and Religion

Tuesday, September 17 – The Best Poor Man’s Country?

Readings:

- Hollitz: Chapter 3 – “Evaluating Primary Sources”
 Bboard: *Colonial America*, Ch. 7 – “British America”

Thursday, September 19 – Religion and Revival

Readings:

- Bboard: *American Colonies*, Ch.15 – “Awakenings”
 “Awakenings” – Primary Sources

Writing Assignment #1 due

Week 6 – Becoming America

Tuesday, September 24 – Rebellion, War, and Society

Readings:

- Hollitz: Chapter 4 – “Evaluating One Historian’s Argument”

Thursday, September 26 – ***UNIT I EXAM***

UNIT II: THE EARLY REPUBLIC AND ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

Week 7 – Creating a “Republican” Society

Tuesday, October 1 – A New Form of Government

Readings:

Hollitz: Chapter 5 – “Motivation in History”

Thursday, October 3 – “Republicanism”

Readings:

Bboard: *After the Fact*, Ch. 5 – “Material Witness”

Social Fabric, Ch. 13 – “The Affectionate Family”

America: A Concise History, excerpt from Chapter 8

Week 8 – Race and Religion

Tuesday, October 8 – Race and the Republic

Readings:

Hollitz: Chapter 6 – “Ideas in History”

Thursday, October 10 – Religion and Reform

Readings:

Hollitz: Chapter 7 – “The Problem of Historical Causation”

Week 9 – American Expansion

Tuesday, October 15 – *NO CLASS (Fall Break)*

Thursday, October 17 – Western Expansion and Economic Developments

Readings:

Hollitz: Chapter 8 – “Grand Theory and History”

Writing Assignment #2 due

Week 10 – Jacksonian America

Tuesday, October 22 – A Democratic Revolution

Readings:

Hollitz: Chapter 9 – “History as Biography”

Thursday, October 24 – The Long, Bitter Trail

Readings:

Bboard: *The Long, Bitter Trail*, Ch. 3 – “The Removal Act”

Social Fabric, Ch. 12 – “Trail of Tears”

Week 11 – Slavery

Tuesday, October 29 – Slavery and Society

Readings:

Hollitz: Chapter 10 – “History ‘From the Bottom Up’”

Bboard: *Social Fabric*, Ch. 16 – “The African-American Family”

Thursday, October 31 – *NO CLASS*

UNIT II TAKE-HOME EXAM

UNIT III: A NATION DIVIDED

Week 12 – Ideology and Society: Women in Antebellum America

Tuesday, November 5 – “Woman’s Sphere”

Readings:

Bboard: *Taking Sides* – “Issue 10: Did the Industrial Revolution Provide More Economic Opportunities for Women in the 1830s?”

UNIT II TAKE-HOME EXAM due

Writing Assignment #3 due

Thursday, November 7 – Regional Perspectives on Womanhood

Readings:

Hollitz: Chapter 11 – “Ideology and Society”

Week 13 – The Road to Disunion

Tuesday, November 12 – Expansion, War, and Sectional Crisis

Readings:

Bboard: *A People at War*, Ch. 1 – “The Road to Bleeding Kansas”

Thursday, November 14 – Two Societies at War

Readings:

Bboard: *A People at War*, Ch. 3 – “Friends and Foes”
Social Fabric, Ch. 21 – “Why Soldiers Went to War”

Week 14 – The Civil War

Tuesday, November 19 – Why Did Secession Fail?

Readings:

Hollitz: Chapter 12 – “Grand Theory, Great Battles, and Historical Causes”

Thursday, November 21 – The Illustrated Civil War

Readings:

Bboard: *Going to the Source*, Ch. 12 – “Photography on the Battlefield”

Writing Assignment #4 due

Week 15 – The Civil War: A Retrospective

Tuesday, November 26 – Revisiting “The Truth about Textbooks”

Readings:

Bboard: Sheriff, “Virginia’s Embattled Textbooks”

Thursday, November 28 – *NO CLASS (Thanksgiving Break)*

FINAL EXAM: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5 – 3:30-6:30PM