

# United States History, 1492-1865

Spring 2004 \* MWF 11:00-11:50 am

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Office Hours: 2:00-4:00 pm M & W; and by appointment gladly given.

**Course Theme:** *Novus Ordo Seclorum -- A New Order for the Ages.* Taking a cue from the Great Seal of the republic, the course examines how the citizens of the United States have thought about and changed their government and society.

## Course Goals:

**I.** To assess the origins and development of the American republic from pre-Columbian time to its fragmented condition at the close of the Civil War.

We will:

- ↯ Identify the issues that defined political and social debates.
- ↯ Appraise the changes and continuities in key economic, demographic, and cultural aspects of American society.
- ↯ Relate political tension to social tension.

**II.** To acquire the basic skills used by historians. Together we will learn history not just by reading what historians say, but by doing what historians do. By the end of the semester you will be able to:

- ↯ Critically analyze primary documents within their historical context.
- ↯ Identify a writer's thesis and evaluate how well he or she supports it.
- ↯ Write a logical and coherent argument of historical interpretation in essay form.

## Course Mechanics:

**I. Readings.** The heart of this course lies in the readings. Lectures, in-class discussion, and all exercises build upon material and themes found in *Created Equal (Text)*, *After the Fact (AfterFact)*, Breslaw, *Tituba: Reluctant Witch of Salem*, (*Tituba*), and Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, (*Jacobs*). All books are in stock at the campus book store. Every student should buy these readings as soon as possible. Because this survey covers a vast historical terrain at a brisk pace, it is **IMPERATIVE** that all members of the class keep on top of the reading.

As a guide, the instructor will provide a set of study questions for each class meeting. On any of the given dates, one of these questions may be selected for a short essay quiz.

**II. Evaluation.** Student performance will be judged by written work and classroom participation.

1) We will have two exams and at least four quizzes. The first midterm falls on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, and the second exam is May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

2) Classroom participation will be determined by demonstrated engagement. What you say, or more significantly, what you ask in class is valued over how often you speak.

**III. Grading.** Quizzes and tests will be assigned a score on the scale 0-100: 0-60=F, 60-70=D, 70-80=C, 80-90=B, 90-100=A. The lowest quiz score will be dropped. All quizzes when averaged equal one-fifth of the course grade, classroom participation equals one fifth, the first exam is one-fifth, and the second exam is two-fifths of the whole.

**IV. Optional Assignments. Probes:** You may write up to two brief essays (2-3 pp.) on topics that interest you for additional credit. Each of these independent probes can add from one to three points to your final grade. Please consult with the instructor if you wish to write a probe, or have questions about suitable topics. Sample probes can be found outside McIver 241.

## THE COURSE

JAN 12 – INTRODUCTION. Survey Time Line.

JAN 14 – THE ART OF HISTORICAL DETECTION

Reading: *Afterfact*, pp. x-xxvii.

1. Who was Silas Deane?
2. What are the relevant facts of his death?
3. Select one point of his case where historical interpretations differ.
4. In the final analysis, if you were a member of a coroner's inquest panel, how would you decide his death? Why?

JAN 16 – THE PRE-COLUMBIAN AMERICAS

Reading: None. In-class film: "Burden of Time"

JAN 19 – NO CLASS : MLK BIRTHDAY

JAN 21 – SPANISH AMERICA

Reading: *Text*, pp. 25-41 & 45-54.

- 1) What was the greatest impact of Spanish rule on the indigenous people?
- 2) Who, in addition to Spain, sought colonies in the New World?
- 3) Who was Bartolomeo de Las Casas?

#### JAN 23 – NORTH AMERICAN COLONIES

Reading: *Text*, pp. 54-76.

1. How did Samuel de Champlain establish New France? Why?
2. Describe the Dutch settlements of the Hudson River Valley.
3. How did the English government promote exploration and settlement of the Americas?
4. Why did the Puritans establish Plymouth?

#### JAN 26 – THE VIRGINIA COMPANY

Reading: *Afterfact*, pp. 1-21.

1. Is Captain John Smith a reliable historical source?
2. What was the role of land in the settlement of the Chesapeake region?
3. What was the difference between slavery and indentured servitude?

#### JAN 28 – MASSACHUSETTS BAY

Reading: *Tituba*, pp. 3-38.

1. Describe the activities of Captain Wroth on the coast of South America.
2. Create a brief social portrait of Barbados in the 1670s. What kinds of people were there? What were they doing?
3. Why were 'Indians' deemed good slaves?
4. What evidence is there that Tituba was on the Thompson plantation?

#### JAN 30 – WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE

Reading: *Tituba*, pp. 39-62.

1. What elements of African culture would have shaped Tituba's world on Barbados?
2. What factors led colonial authorities to tighten restrictions on slaves in the late seventeenth century?
3. How did elites tend to view the beliefs and behaviors of subordinated people in the New World?

#### FEB 2 – COLONIAL LABOR SYSTEMS

Reading: *Tituba*, pp. 65-88.

#### FEB 4 – DEMONIC FORCES, 1692

Reading: *Afterfact*, pp. 23-47 & *Tituba*, 89-106.

#### FEB 6 – BRESLAW'S RELUCTANT WITCH

Reading: *Tituba*, pp. 107-132.

#### FEB 9 – SPECTRAL EVIDENCE

Reading: *Tituba*, pp. 133-170.

#### FEB 11 – EVENTS AND DOCUMENTS: OUR SEARCH FOR MEANING

Reading: *Tituba*, pp. 171-197.

#### *Part Two*

#### THE MAKING AND BREAKING OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA, 1660-1781

#### FEB 13 – AFRICAN LABOR POWER

Reading: *Text*, pp. 112-133.

#### FEB 16 – SUBJUGATION AND RESISTANCE

Reading: *Text*, pp. 133-146; Handouts on slave trade.

#### FEB 18 – VARIED LANDSCAPES AND ENTERPRISES

Reading: *Text*, pp. 148-169.

#### FEB 20 – ENGLISH IMPERIAL CONSOLIDATION

Reading: *Text*, pp. 169-181 & 184-192.

#### FEB 23 – EMPIRE AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Reading: *Text*, pp. 192-214.

#### FEB 25 – WAR AND REVOLUTION

Reading: *Text*, pp. 216-229; *Afterfact*, pp. 48-69.

#### FEB 27 – BRITISH DEFEAT OR AMERICAN VICTORY?

Reading: *Text*, pp. 229-252.

#### *Part Three*

#### TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION, 1781-1818

#### MAR 1 – THE WEAK CONFEDERATION

Reading: *Text*, pp. 254-276.

#### MAR 3 – FIRST EXAM

#### MAR 15 – THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

Reading: *Text*, pp. 276-282, A-8 to A-12 & 282-285.

#### MAR 17 – REVOLUTIONARY LEGACIES

Reading: *Text*, pp. 288-318.

MAR 19 – TUMULTUOUS FOREIGN RELATIONS

Reading: *Text*, pp. 318-323 & 326-341.

MAR 22 – THE WOLF BY THE EARS

Reading: *Text*, pp. 341-355 & 358-367.

MAR 24 – RESTRICTING FEDERAL POWERS

Reading: *Text*, pp. 368-376.

*Part Four*

AN EXPANDING REPUBLIC, 1828-1850

MAR 26 – ANDREW JACKSON: SYMBOL FOR AN AGE

Reading: *Text*, pp. 377-388; *Afterfact*, pp. 71-93.

MAR 29 – WHOSE COUNTRY IS THIS ANYWAY?

Reading: *Text*, pp. 391-418.

MAR 31 – TEXAS AND NORTHERN MEXICO

Reading: *Text*, pp. 418-425 & 433-436; *Afterfact*, pp. 96-119

APR 2 – SETTLING THE FAR WEST

Reading: Handouts on Oregon Trail and California Gold Rush

*Part Five*

THE CRISIS OF THE UNION, 1850-1861

APR 5 – THE SOUTHERN ECONOMY

Reading: *Text*, pp. 428-444; *Jacobs*, pp. xvii-14.

APR 7 – RISE OF ANTI-SLAVERY SENTIMENT

Reading: *Jacobs*, pp. 15-45.

APR 9 – UNC-G CLASSES DISMISSED

APR 12 – THE FAILURE OF COMPROMISE

Reading: *Text*, pp. 444-460; *Jacobs*, pp. 45-63.

APR 14 – DRED SCOTT AND THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW

Reading: *Jacobs*, pp. 63-95.

APR 16 – HARRIET JACOB'S WORLD

Reading: *Jacobs*, pp. 95-128.

APR 19 – THE RISE OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

Reading: *Jacobs*, pp. 128-160.

APR 21 – JOHN BROWN AND VIOLENCE

Reading: *Jacobs*, pp. 161-192.

APR 23 – HARRIET JACOB'S WORLD II

Reading: *Jacobs*, pp. 193-231.

*Part Six*

...AND THE WAR CAME, 1861-1865

APR 26 – THE SECESSION IMPULSE & SOUTHERN VICTORIES

Reading: *Text*, pp. 462-484

APR 28 – A TRIAL BY FIRE

Reading: *Text*, pp. 484-497.

APR 30 – THE ROAD TO APPOMATTOX

Reading: Handouts on 1865

MAY 3 – SECOND EXAM