

**H211-05 U.S. History to 1877**  
**Spring, 2005**

*I hold it that a little rebellion now and then is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical.*

Thomas Jefferson, 1787

*History is an argument without end.*

Peter Geyl, 1950s

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Off. hrs.: M,W, 12:00-2:00, Th, 2:00-4:00

**Description:**

This class is about little rebellions by ordinary Americans over the last three centuries. It offers an alternative social history of politics rather than the traditional U.S. history survey of political parties, great personalities, and national progress. The course aims include: provoking intellectual curiosity about the past; learning how to read primary documents and evaluate secondary sources; and to encourage critical thinking skills.

**Requirements:**

All students are required to attend lectures. More than two unexcused absences will result in grade deduction. Each student is required to write FIVE papers. These must include at least TWO document tests and TWO essay tests. They may be chosen from any of the weekly questions listed below. Limit each paper to 3 typewritten double-spaced pages. Each counts for 20 percentage points. They are due on the dates specified. Late papers will not be accepted.

**Readings**

There are four books which are required reading for this course.

Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States, 1492-Present* (1980; Perennial, 2003)

Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Harvard, 1998)

Paul A. Gilje, *Rioting in America* (Indiana, 1996)

William E. Gienapp, ed., *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (Norton, 2001)

The reading should be done weekly before lecture. Bring the text and documents to class. The documents are on Jackson Library e-reserve.

**Lectures**

**Week 1:**

READ:

Jan. 10:

Jan. 12:

Tests

**Introduction**

Zinn, 1-22, 683-688; Gilje, 1-11; DOCS: Columbus,1494; Las Casas, 1542

**History as Perspective**

**Columbus' "Truth"**

1/ Explain the traditional viewpoint and its critique?

2/ Examine ONE document and answer the questions below it.

<b>Week 2:</b> READ: Jan. 19 Tests	<b>Slavery's Beginnings in North America</b> Zinn, 23-38; Berlin, 15-46, 109-176; DOC: Virginia laws; Stono, 1739 <b>Societies with slaves to slave societies</b> 1/ Explain the shift? 2/ What do the Virginia laws tell us about race and slavery in the C17th?
<b>Week 3:</b> READ: Jan. 24 Jan. 26 Test	<b>Class in the Colonies</b> Zinn, 39-58; Gilje, 12-34; DOCS: Mittelberger, 1750; Sprigs, 1756 <b>Poor Laborers</b> <b>The Propertied Rich</b> 1/ Why did people riot in colonial America? 2/ What do the two documents reveal about indentured servitude?
Jan. 26	FIRST PAPER DUE
<b>Week 4:</b> READ: Jan. 31 Feb. 2 Test	<b>Making Americans</b> Zinn, 59-75; Berlin, 177-194; DOCS: Slave petition, 1774; Paine, Adams, 1776 <b>Class War &amp; the Mob</b> <b>Against the British</b> 1/ Describe the myth of the American Revolution and its critique? 2/ Explain the rudiments of republican ideology?
<b>Week 5:</b> READ: Feb. 7 Feb. 9 Test	<b>Wars of Independence</b> Zinn, 77-89; Berlin, index, "Am. Rev.," 490 <b>Politics of War</b> <b>Age of Revolutions</b> 1/The Year is 1778. The place is the southern colonies. You are either a/ a patriot or b/ a loyalist or c/ a slave. Why are you on the side you are on? Describe wartime life? What do you hope to achieve?
<b>Week 6:</b> READ: Feb. 14 Feb. 16 Tests	<b>The Genius of the U.S. Constitution</b> Zinn, 90-102; Gilje, 51-59; DOCS: US Constitution, 1787; Shay, 1786 <b>Little Rebellions</b> <b>Government of Property?</b> 1/ The U.S. Constitution: work of genius or protection of property? 2/ In what ways did post-revolutionary rebellions exemplify the American mob tradition?
Feb. 16	SECOND PAPER DUE
<b>Week 7:</b> READ: Feb. 21	<b>Invisible Women</b> Zinn, 103-124; DOCS: Lowell mill worker, 1836; <i>New York Herald</i> , 1845; Women's Rights, 1848*; Sojourner Truth, 1851 <b>Women workers</b>

Feb. 23  
Tests

### **The politics of women**

1/ Examine ONE document and answer the questions below it.  
2/ In what ways did American women act politically during the 1830s-1840s?

**Week 8:**  
READ:  
Feb. 28  
Mar. 2  
Tests

### **The other Civil War**

Zinn, 211-251; Gilje, 60-84; DOCS: Lakier, 1857; Lowell, 1847 in Gienapp

### **Capital**

### **Labor**

1/ What were the new political riots?  
2/ How have historians traditionally treated the Jacksonian era?  
What's the critique?

## **SPRING BREAK!!!**

**Week 9:**  
READ:  
Mar. 14  
Mar. 16  
Tests

### **American Slavery**

Zinn, 172-210; Berlin, 217-357; DOCS: Garrison, 1831; Anti-Slavery Convention, 1833; De Bow, 1861; Harper, 1838, in Gienapp

### **Political Economy**

### **The Great Debate**

1/ Outline the key features of the political economy of American slavery?  
2/ Summarize the main points of the abolitionist and proslavery arguments. Which do you find most persuasive and why?

MAR. 16

THIRD PAPER DUE

**Week 10:**  
READ:  
Mar. 21  
Mar. 23  
Tests

### **American Empire**

Zinn, 125-170; DOCS: Cherokee Treaty, 1817; Monroe, 1823; Black Hawk, 1833; O'Sullivan, 1845

### **Manifest Destiny**

### **Mr. Polk's War**

1/ Explain the case for Indian removal? What was its critique?  
2/ What were the arguments against war with Mexico?

**Week 11:**  
READ:  
Mar. 28  
Mar. 30  
Tests

### **Civil War Origins**

Gienapp, 27-68

### **Free or Slave Territories?**

### **House Divided**

1/ What role did territorial disputes play in the coming of the Civil War?  
2/ How and why did North Carolina secede from the Union?

**Week 12:**  
READ:  
Apr. 4  
Apr. 6

### **War Front**

Gienapp, 235-248, 219-234

### **The experience of war**

### **Who freed the slaves?**

Test 1/ The year is 1863. You are either: a/ a confederate soldier or b/ a Union soldier or c/ a slave or d/ a woman. Why are you fighting? What are military conditions like? What do you hope to accomplish from this war?

APR. 6 FOURTH PAPER DUE

**Week 13:**  
READ: **Home Front**  
Apr. 11 Gilje, 84-94; Gienapp, 179-218  
Apr. 13 **Document discussion**  
**The Civil War in Global Context**

**Week 14:**  
READ: **Reconstruction I**  
Apr. 18 Gienapp, 317-376  
Apr. 20 **Overview**  
Tests **Political**  
1/ What was radical about republican reconstruction?  
2/ Examine 2 documents and discuss their historical significance?

**Week 15:**  
READ: **Reconstruction II**  
Apr. 25 Gienapp, 377-392; Gilje, 87-100  
Apr. 27 **Economic**  
Tests **Social**  
1/ Discuss shifting property rights in man to property rights in labor?  
2/ Examine 2 documents and discuss their historical significance?

May 2 **Rethinking U.S. history**

MAY 2 FIFTH PAPER DUE