

**HIS 141 – North America to 1877**  
**Department of History, Davidson College**

HIS 141  
Fall, 2013  
Chambers 1006  
3:05 pm – 4:20 pm

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Office hours: W 12:30-5:30 or by  
appointment

This class explores North American history from contact between Native Americans, Africans and Europeans to the aftermath of the Civil War. We will examine American and United States history from the perspective of great men, and “grand narratives,” as well as from the perspective of disenfranchised people, and silenced voices. Over the course of the semester, students will engage with primary sources, historical monographs, and popular cultural representations of American history.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

*Command of information*

- Competency in major political, social and economic events, movements and turning points in American history to 1877.
- Competency in interactions between the United States and the wider world.
- Competency in different explanations and interpretations of American history.

*Historical skills*

- Ability to link events and themes from the past with current events.
- Ability to clearly express ideas and arguments through writing and speech.
- Ability to read, digest and analyze scholarly work on early American history.
- Ability to use and critique others’ use of primary sources in making historical arguments.

**ORGANIZING QUESTIONS:**

- What are the major turning points in antebellum American history, and why?
- How have the opportunities afforded by “new,” open spaces shaped Americans’ ideas about their history and themselves?
- What are themes in North Americans’ interaction with the wider world? How does knowing more about those themes alter the landscape of U.S. history?
- Whose stories are most frequently told in American history? Whose stories are told less frequently? Why would you like to see better represented in American history?

**EXPECTATIONS AND RULES:**

*Computers:* Computers in class are discouraged. They provide many opportunities for distraction, and click-click of typing is a distraction for other students, so students using computers should sit together, at the front of the classroom. Anyone who engages in electronic

communications or entertainment of any kind during class (texting, phone calls, emailing, Facebook web browsing, games, etc.) will be regarded as absent.

*Accessibility:* Davidson College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this class, complete course requirements, or benefit from the College's programs or services, contact the Academic Access and Disability Resources office (<http://sites.davidson.edu/ctl/learning-service/disabilityresources/>) as soon as possible. To receive any academic accommodation, you must be appropriately registered with AADR, whose staff works with students confidentially and does not disclose any disability-related information without their permission. The AADR serves as a clearinghouse on disability issues and works in partnership with faculty and all other student service offices.

Many of us learn in different ways, and this course is designed accommodate each student differently. For example, you may prefer to process information by speaking and listening, so while lectures are quite helpful for you, some of the written material may be difficult to absorb. Please talk to me as soon as you can about your individual learning needs and how this course can best accommodate them. If you do not have a documented disability, remember that other support services, including the Writing Center and the Center for Teaching and Learning and the Speaking Center, are available to all students (<http://sites.davidson.edu/ctl/students/>).

*Contact and office hours:* I encourage you to come by office hours to check in during the term – feel free to discuss concerns or drafts, or to ask questions about things we have covered in class. Please plan to come see me sometime during the first two weeks of class to touch base, say hello and talk over any expectations or anxieties you have about the class.

I can be reached by e-mail during normal business hours (9-5, m-f), and will generally respond to e-mails received during those hours within 24 hours of receipt. I will strive for, but cannot guarantee speedy responses outside of those times.

*Academic honesty:* Integrity and honor, as exemplified by the honor code (<http://www3.davidson.edu/cms/x8918.xml>) is the college's most fundamental commitment. Plagiarism of any kind will be penalized to the fullest possible extent. There is no mitigating circumstance, ever, for plagiarism.

Whenever you draw upon somebody else's words *or ideas* to make a point, give them credit in a footnote. The most common causes of plagiarism are not deliberate dishonesty. Often it is careless note-taking. Make sure that in your notes you distinguish clearly your thoughts on the reading and the words you have copied from a secondary source. Waiting too long to do the research and the stress and confusion that may result from that rush to finish may produce mistakes that in public represent the most serious violation of academic values. You are, therefore, strongly encouraged to start assignments well in advance of the deadline. If you are uncertain about how to deal with a question of fair credit, ask me. You are also encouraged to consult writing center tutors if you have writing questions.

## ASSESSMENTS:

<b>Blog posts (8 x 2.5%)</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Participation/attendance</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Primary source analyses (2 x 10%)</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Midterm</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Final</b>	<b>20%</b>

**\*You MUST pass each of these categories to pass the class\***

*Attendance and Participation.* An essential component of the craft of history is expressing yourself clearly in a variety of ways, including orally. In this course, your learning depends upon your regular, informed and thoughtful participation in discussion, writing and blog posts. In order to participate fully you *must* have completed all of each week's reading.

Attendance therefore is essential to participation, and it is expected that you attend all class meetings. You are permitted up to two absences each semester – for every student, their two lowest participation grades will be dropped. More than two absences will likely impact your final grade. No student with more than seven absences will pass the course. Regardless of your reason for missing a class, you will be responsible for the material covered that day. Please let me know in advance if you will be missing class.

I understand that speaking in class can be a stressful or daunting experience for some students, so I expect that everyone contribute to making the classroom a comfortable and respectful intellectual environment in which everyone can participate. If you have anxiety about public speaking, please arrange a meeting with me ASAP.

These policies take effect from the first day of class, regardless of when you begin attending the course. For example, if the first time you attend class is during the second week of the semester, you will have already been marked absent from two class meetings.

*Blog responses:*

In **EIGHT** weeks of your choosing, **FOUR** before the midterm and **FOUR** after the midterm, you will write a 250~500 word response to the week's readings. These responses should be posted to the course blog **twenty-four hours before the class meeting**, in order to give me and your fellow students time to read them.

Through these response papers, you will develop the skills necessary to critically read primary and secondary historical sources. Every response should:

- Identify the central questions that inform the readings
- Identify the argument of the reading
- Identify the evidentiary base for the readings (these can be either primary or secondary sources)
- Convey your impressions, likes, dislikes about the readings
- Provide 1-3 keywords as tags for your post (these can be new, or can draw on tags that other students have already used)

- (After the first week) *substantively* reference one of your peers' responses in their own work each week.

This blog is meant to be a conversation amongst scholars (you and your peers). In order to further that conversation, each post after the first week must comment on how your thoughts on the subject of American history relate to those of your peers. This does *not* mean simply saying "two weeks ago, [person] talked about [x]." You must find a way to incorporate your colleague's commentary on previous readings into your analysis. Feel free to include images, music, video, or references to current events in these responses.

While you are required to post eight times during the semester, you are both permitted and encouraged to post other items of interest. These will be counted as extra credit.

*Midterm Review and Final Exam:*

Both the midterm review and the final exam will be take home, open book and open note. The midterm will be available at 12:01 am and will be due by 11:59 on **OCTOBER 10<sup>th</sup>**, and should take you no more than 75 minutes.

The final exam will be available from 8:40 am on **DECEMBER 13<sup>th</sup>** to 5:15 pm on **DECEMBER 19<sup>th</sup>**, and should take no more than three hours.

*Primary Source Analysis (2):*

Once during **each half** of the course (before and after the midterm) you will select a primary source from the supplementary readings and contextualize it in terms of the time and place of its production, and in terms of its historical import in 3-4 pages.

Primary source analyses due on before the start of class on Thursdays, **ONE WEEEEK** after the weeks to which they correspond.

See course website for detailed primary source assignment.

**RULES FOR WRITING:**

*Writing guidelines:* You are expected to master the citation style that is common among historians. This style is known as Chicago Style. The Chicago Manual of Style is available online, and in the Davidson College Library.

Please follow the history department's style guidelines, found at:

<http://www.davidson.edu/Documents/Academic%20Department/History/writing-style-guide.pdf>

Good writing is central to the practice history. That includes the questions of form, and it certainly concerns good grammar. But most historical writing differs from other academic disciplines by its concern for style. Generally history is written in a plain style, not flowery writing with an excess of verbage. Good writing is clear and succinct with the argument clear. A very little book by William Strunk and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style* is generally accepted as the best available guide to such writing. Purchase this book and read it carefully, especially the second chapter, on "Elementary Principles of Composition."

For help with writing, please review the writing and style guide posted on the course moodle, and visit the Writing Center at Chambers Building, North Basement, Room B039. Website: <http://sites.davidson.edu/ctl/students/tutoring/writing/>. Hours: Sunday through Thursday, 2-4pm and 8-11pm

*Late Assignments:* Late papers lose 1/3 of a grade per day. E.g., a B paper submitted the morning after it was due, will receive a B-. Papers more than 72 hours late will receive an F.

*Drafts:* I am happy to look at one draft per primary source assignment, but in order to get my comments you must come to meet with me in person. These drafts need not exhibit correct citation form, but must be completely cited. I will look at drafts sent to me by the **MONDAY** before the assignment is due, and meet with you during my normal office hours on Wednesdays.

#### **READINGS:**

- David Brion Davis. *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (2006)
- Elizabeth Cobbs-Hoffman et al (eds). *Major Problems in American History, Vol. I* (2012)
- Alan Taylor. *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (2001)
- Sean Wilentz. *The Rise of American Democracy* – abridged college edition (2008)

#### **SCHEDULE:**

##### **WEEK 1 - INTRODUCTION**

Tuesday, August 27<sup>th</sup> – Introduction to the course

Thursday, August 29<sup>th</sup> –When does American history begin?

- *American Colonies*. Introduction-Chapter 1

##### **WEEK 2 –EUROPEAN EMPIRES AND THE “NEW” WORLD**

Tuesday, September 3<sup>rd</sup> – The race for colonies

- *American Colonies*. Chapters 3 and 5

Thursday, September 5<sup>th</sup> – Britain: late to the imperial party

- *American Colonies*. Chapters 6 and 8

##### Primary source analysis options:

- “Reverend John Heckewelder Records a Native Oral Tradition of the First Arrival of Europeans on Manhattan Island (1610)” in *MPiAH*
- “English Artists John White Depicts Indian Land Use” (1619) in *MPiAH*
- “Edward Waterhouse, a British Official, Recounts an Indian Attack on Early Virginia Settlement” (1622) in *MPiAH*

##### **WEEK 3: NEGOTIATING NEW SPACE**

Tuesday, September 10<sup>th</sup> – The origins of Atlantic slavery

- *Inhuman Bondage*. Chapters 4-5

Thursday, September 12<sup>th</sup> – A not-so empty land

- *American Colonies*. Chapters 9 and 12

Primary source analysis options:

- “George Alsop, a Resident of Maryland, Argues that Servants in Maryland Profit from Life in the Colonies” (1666) in *MPiAH*
- *The Selling of Joseph: A Memorial* (moodle)
- “Illustration of Slaves Cultivating Tobacco, 1738.” in *MPiAH*

#### **WEEK 4: LAND AND LABOR IN COLONIAL AMERICA**

Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup> – Plantations

- *American Colonies*. Chapters 7 and 11

Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup> – Labor

- *Inhuman Bondage*. Chapter 6

Primary source analysis options:

- “Puritan Leader John Winthrop Provides a Model of Christian Charity” (1630) in *MPiAH*
- “Mary Rowlandson, A New England Woman, Recounts Her Experience of Captivity and Escape from the Wampanoag During King Philip's War, 1675” in *MPiAH*

#### **WEEK 5: CHALLENGES OF COLONIAL SOCIETY**

Tuesday, September 24<sup>th</sup> – Religion

- Collection of essays on American witch trials (moodle)
- *American Colonies*. Chapter 15

Thursday, September 26<sup>th</sup> - Imperial competition redux

- *American Colonies*. Chapter 18

Primary source analysis options:

- “Proprietor William Penn Promotes His Colony” (1681) in *MPiAH*
- “Examination and Testimony of Tituba, a Servant-Slave in Salem, Massachusetts” (1692) in *MPiAH*
- “Gottlieb Mittelberger, a German Immigrant, Portrays the Difficulties of Immigration, 1750” in *MPiAH*

#### **WEEK 6: PRELUDE TO REVOLUTION**

Tuesday, October 1<sup>st</sup> – Meanwhile, in the West...

- *American Colonies*. Chapter 19

Thursday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> – A Revolutionary Age

- David Armitage. “The Declaration of Independence: Its Many Histories” in *William and Mary Quarterly*. Vol. 65, No. 2, April 2008

Primary source analysis options:

- “The Stamp Act Congress Condemns the Stamp Act, 1765” in *MPiAH*
- “Virginian Patrick Henry Warns the British to Maintain American Liberties, 1775” in *MPiAH*
- “Mohawk Leader Joseph Brant Commits the Loyalty of His People to Britain” (1776) in *MPiAH*

**WEEK 7: MIDTERM**

Tuesday, October 8<sup>th</sup> – MIDTERM REVISION

Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup> – MIDTERM EXAM

**WEEK 8: REVOLUTION!**

Tuesday, October 15<sup>th</sup> – FALL BREAK – NO CLASS

NOTE: I will not be holding office hours on Wednesday, October 16<sup>th</sup>. If you’d like to meet with me this week, get in touch and we’ll arrange a time.

Thursday, October 17<sup>th</sup> – Breaking with Britain

- *The Rise of American Democracy*. Chapter 1
- *Inhuman Bondage*. Chapter 7

Primary source analysis options:

- “A Song to Inspire Revolution, 1776” in *MPiAH*
- The Declaration of Independence  
([http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration\\_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/declaration_transcript.html))
- “General Washington Argues for Greater Military Funding by Portraying the Plight of Soldiers at Valley Forge” (1778) in *MPiAH*

**WEEK 9: MAKING A NEW (KIND OF) NATION**

Tuesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> – Jeffersonian democracy

- *The Rise of American Democracy*. Chapters 2-4
- Paul Semonin. “Peale’s Mastodon: The Skeleton in our Closet.” in *Common-Place.Org*, Vol. 4, No. 2.

Thursday, October 24<sup>th</sup> – War and expansion

- *The Rise of American Democracy*. Chapter 5
- Frederick Jackson Turner “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” (moodle) (<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/TURNER/>)

Primary source analysis options:

- “The Articles of Confederation Stress the Rights of States, 1781” in *MPiAH*
- “Cato, an African American, Pleats for the Abolition of Slavery” (1781) in *MPiAH*
- “Republican Thomas Jefferson Celebrates the Virtue of the Yeoman Farmer, 1785” in

### **WEEK 10: LOOKING WEST**

Tuesday, October 29<sup>th</sup> – American slave economies

- *The Rise of American Democracy*. Chapter 7
- *Inhuman Bondage*. Chapters 9-10

Thursday, October 31<sup>st</sup> – Populism

- *The Rise of American Democracy*. Chapters 8-11

#### Primary source analysis options:

- “President George Washington Warns Against "Entangling Alliances," 1796” in *MPiAH*
- “President James Monroe Declares That European Powers May Not Interfere in the Americas, 1823” in *MPiAH*

### **WEEK 11: POPULIST FALLOUT**

Tuesday, November 5<sup>th</sup> – Vanishing Indians

- Patrick Wolfe. “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native.” in *Journal of Genocide Research*. Vol. 8, No. 4, December 2006

Thursday, November 7<sup>th</sup> – American Abolition

- *The Rise of American Democracy*. Chapter 13
- *Inhuman Bondage*. Chapter 13

#### Primary source analysis options:

- “Iroquois Chief Red Jacket Decries the Day When Whites Arrived, 1805” in *MPiAH*
- “President Andrew Jackson Defends Indian Removal, 1833.” In *MPiAH*

### **WEEK 12: ANTEBELLUM POLITICS**

Tuesday, November 12<sup>th</sup> – Uncivil Democracy

- *The Rise of American Democracy*. Chapters 14-16

Thursday, November 14<sup>th</sup> – Gold and Mexico

- *The Rise of American Democracy*. Chapters 17-20

#### Primary source analysis options:

- “President Andrew Jackson Condemns the Rights of "Nullification" and Secession, 1832” in *MPiAH*
- “African American Abolitionist David Walker Castigates the United States for Its Slave System, 1829” in *MPiAH*

### **WEEK 13: A SEPERATING SOCIETY?**

Tuesday, November 19<sup>th</sup> – Immigrant politics

- David R. Roediger, “White Slaves, Wage Slaves, and Free White Labor in the North. John Ashworth” in *MPiAH*



- Dee Dee Joyce, “Charleston’s Irish labourers and their move into the Confederacy” in *Irish Studies Review*. Vol. 18, No. 2, May 2010

Thursday, November 21<sup>st</sup> – Growing disunion

- *Inhuman Bondage*. Chapter 14
- *The Rise of American Democracy*. Chapters 21-22

Primary source analysis options:

- “Harriet Hanson Robinson, a "Lowell Girl," Describes Her Labor in a Textile Mill, 1831” in *MPiAH*
- “Reformer Dorothea Dix Depicts the Horrible Conditions Endured by the Mentally Ill, 1843” in *MPiAH*

## **WEEK 14 – THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS**

## **WEEK 15 – WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION**

Tuesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> – The Civil War

- *The Rise of American Democracy*. Chapters 23-25

Thursday, December 5<sup>th</sup> – Reconstruction/memory

- *Inhuman Bondage*. Chapter 15
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Primary source analysis options:

- “Tally Simpson, a Confederate Soldier, Recounts the Battle of Gettysburg, 1863” in *MPiAH*
- “Senate Candidates Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas Debate Their Positions on Slavery, 1858” in *MPiAH*

## **WEEK 16: REVISION**

Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup> - Final Revision

December 13<sup>th</sup>-December 19<sup>th</sup> – Finals week