History 1301: US History to 1865

Dr. Beth Robinson
Spring 2015, Term 1

Section WO1
Fully Online

Course Description
This course is designed to introduce students to the history of the United States from colonial settlement to the end of the Civil War. This course is not concerned with the memorization of dates, the names of (in)famous Presidents or even what to think about America’s past, but rather one that seeks to help you learn how to think about the past. We will try to understand what history means to citizens of the 21st century: how do we understand it, why does it matter, and can our understanding of our own past change the present and possibly our future?

The course will explore several themes within the history of the United States, but will center on the overarching idea of freedom. What is this idea of freedom and what is the story of its evolution? People have not always viewed freedom as a principal value for a society or a government to possess, but now we think of it as essential. What is the story of freedom? How have various peoples been involved in the struggle for freedom? How have they altered its meanings over time? In following the course of these struggles, we will examine how Americans chose to define this idea as well as how they left a difficult and mixed legacy that we must understand if we are to make sense of freedom in our own lives.

Several alternate themes will also emerge concerning America’s promise of freedom: the connection between national politics and everyday life; the intriguing and often perplexing relationship between slavery and freedom; freedom’s role in U.S. foreign relations as well as the conquest and settlement of “frontier” regions on the North American continent.

It is important for you to know that the story of U.S. history is not always an attractive one; additionally, it is rarely, if ever, a simple narrative. And yet, we live in the world that this story created. We should know how this story began.

NOTE: In a face-to-face course, much of the learning, motivation, and reminders result from regular attendance to lectures. Since this is an online course, students are expected to take on even more responsibility for their own success. You should plan to spend the hours that they would be in class engaging with the readings, assignments, and online discussions.

Student Learning Outcomes
Students who successfully complete this course will:

- demonstrate critical thinking by combining, changing, or reapplying existing information, gathering and assessing information relevant to a question, and analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing information;
- develop communication skills by interpreting and expressing ideas through writing, oral, or visual communication;
demonstrate personal responsibility by evaluating historical choices and actions, and relating consequences to decision making;

- develop social responsibility by identifying intercultural competence and civic responsibility in past regional, national, and global communities.

**Required Texts**


**If you choose to order it through online outlets, you may use any edition, but make sure you get Volume 1 (the first half of US history).**

2) Additional required texts—namely, primary documents—will be posted on the course Blackboard page.

**Course Requirements**

1. Participation. The format of this class is designed to generate thoughtful debate and discussion. Students are expected to have read material closely and to contribute thoughtfully to discussions via the Blackboard message board.

2. Reading. The goal is to read material closely and carefully. I have deliberately kept the amount of assigned reading reasonable with the expectation that the reading is done thoroughly and thoughtfully.

3. Writing.
   a. Response Papers
      Beginning in Week 2, each Sunday, students will turn in a “response paper” that analyzes primary historical documents. For this short assignment (1-2 pages), you will evaluate what the document is, who wrote it and why, and what it tells us about ideas, limits, and definitions of freedom during the period we are studying. These will be submitted to Blackboard as .doc/x or .pdf files.
      A longer response to *Women Strikers Occupy Chain Store* will be assigned.
   b. Exams
      You will take two exams. All of the assigned readings, films, and lectures will be covered in the exams. Exams will typically involve a mix of short answer and essay questions. These will be submitted to Blackboard as .doc/x or .pdf files.

**Participation (25%)**

**Response Papers (35%)**

**Midterm (20%)**

**Final Exam (20%)**

**Late Work/Make Ups**

I will not accept any late work. Please give yourself plenty of time to familiarize yourself with Blackboard before the first due date.

**Academic Advising**
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

Disability Services
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Grade Appeal Process
Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.
Schedule of Topics and Readings
The schedule is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Week 1: January 18
Introductions, From Europe…
READ: Foner, Ch. 1
WRITE: Response Paper #1
DISCUSS: Message board A

Week 2: January 25
…To America
READ: Foner, Ch. 2 & 3
WRITE: Response Paper #2
DISCUSS: Message board B

Week 3: February 1
Freedom and Slavery
READ: Foner, Ch. 4
WRITE: Response Paper #3
DISCUSS: Message board C

Week 4: February 8
The Revolution
READ: Foner, Ch. 5 & 6
WRITE: Response Paper #4
DISCUSS: Message board D

Midterm Exam – Due Friday, February 13

Week 5: February 15
The Early Republic and Conflicts in Early US History
READ: Foner, Ch. 7 & 8
WRITE: Response Paper #5
DISCUSS: Message board E

Week 6: February 22
Democracy, Culture, Politics, and Social Movements
READ: Foner, Ch. 10 & 12
WRITE: Response Paper #6
DISCUSS: Message board F

Week 7: March 1
The Coming Storm and American Civil War, Part 1
READ: Foner, Ch. 11 & 13
WRITE: Response Paper #7
DISCUSS: Message board G
Week 8: March 8
American Civil War, Part 2 and Conclusion
READ: Foner, Ch. 14 & 15
WRITE: Response Paper #8
DISCUSS: Message board H

Final Exam – Due Friday, March 13