History 1301: US History to 1865

Dr. Beth Robinson
Spring 2016

Section WO2
FC 253A // 361.825.3385 // beth.robinson@tamucc.edu
Fully Online
Office Hours: TBA

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. Students 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. Discussion. 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 Monday, students will turn in a “response paper” that analyzes primary historical documents. For this short assignment (1.5-2 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.

b. Exams
You will take two essay-based exams.

Discussion (30%)
Response Papers (30%)
Midterm (20%)
Final Exam (20%)

Grade Breakdown:
A: 90-100  D: 60-69
B: 80-89  F: 59 or below
C: 70-79

If you have a question about an individual grade on an assignment, please come to my office hours or schedule an appointment. I am more than happy to speak with you, but you need to wait 24 hours after the assignment is returned before approaching me.

Late Work/Make Ups
I will not accept any late Reading Responses or Discussion Posts. Please give yourself plenty of time to familiarize yourself with Blackboard before the first due date. Late exams will not be accepted without documented and legitimate justification, at the discretion of the instructor or as mandated by law or university policy.

Academic Integrity
By enrolling in the university, students are automatically agreeing to abide by its policies, including those on academic misconduct. Academic integrity and scholarship are core values that should guide our conduct and decisions as members of the TAMUCC community. Plagiarism and cheating contradict these values, and so are serious academic offenses. Penalties include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, or suspension or expulsion from the university. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow citation practices. For more information, consult the Student Code of Conduct: http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/handbook.html

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 Appeals 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. 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 17
Introductions
DISCUSS: Message board A

Week 2: January 24
From Europe...
READ: Foner, Ch. 1

Week 3: January 31
…To America
READ: Foner, Ch. 2 & 3

Week 4: February 6
Freedom and Slavery
READ: Foner, Ch. 4

Week 5: February 13
The Revolution, Part 1
READ Foner, Ch. 5

Week 6: February 20
The Revolution, Part 2
READ: Foner, Ch. 6

Week 7: February 27
Early Republic
READ: Foner, Ch. 7 and 8

Week 8: March 6
Midterm Exam

SPRING BREAK

Week 9: March 20
The Market and a New American Culture
READ: Foner, Ch. 9

Week 10: March 27
Limits of Democracy
READ: Foner, Ch. 10

Week 11: April 3
Women and Reform Movements
READ: Foner, Ch. 12

**Week 12: April 10**  
The Coming Storm  
READ: Foner, Ch. 11

**Week 13: April 17**  
Rising Sectional Tensions  
READ: Foner, Ch. 13

**Week 14: April 24**  
The American Civil War  
READ: Foner, Ch. 14

**Week 15: May 1**  
Aftermath and Conclusion  
READ: Foner, Ch. 15  
Final Exam