

KINGSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
of The City University of New York  
Department of History, Philosophy and Political Science

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Title: American Civilization I  
Number: HIS 11  
Credits/Hours: 3 credits/3 hours

INTRODUCTION

History 11 begins with the discovery and early settlement of North America and ends with the Civil War. The course attempts to cover aspects of the development of the United States from many different points of view. It tries to go beyond dates and facts and to consider why the United States developed as it did.

To what extent did America develop in a unique fashion, different from the individual countries which furnished its settlers and to what extent is America the conglomerate of what those settlers brought with them into new physical surroundings? How has America been defined by the evolution of its government, its land, and its people? What factors led to the divergence in ideology and experience that fractured the American Union and resulted in a lengthy and bloody Civil War? To address these and other historical questions, the class integrates elements of history, political science, economics, art and literature to present a multifaceted vision of America and its history.

OBJECTIVES

A primary objective of the course is for the student to achieve a deeper insight into the American experience, past, present and future. Through intensive study of the events and individuals that comprise the history of the United States of America, undergraduates will develop a sense of perspective and a broader frame of reference for their own individual and collective histories. The knowledge students acquire in our learning environment will provide them with the necessary intellectual and cultural background to define for themselves what it means to be American.

Additionally, as a central offering in the liberal arts, the course acquaints students with many of the core concepts, theories, and facts essential to academic and cultural literacy. Through emphasis on reading and interpreting texts, comparative conceptual analysis, the explication of graphic charts and illustrations, and communicating clearly and effectively through writing, the course develops and enhances student skills in the areas of critical thinking, reading comprehension, and both oral and written communication.

## ASSESSMENT

History 11 employs a wide variety of pedagogical techniques including lecture, discussion, and computer-based (online and web-enhanced) instructional technologies. Oral presentations, low-stakes writing assignments, and small discussion groups are also encouraged.

Assessment of student learning will be based on class assignments, which include readings from primary and secondary texts, group discussions in class and/or online, class presentations, and written work, which may take the form of essays, journals, reports, research papers, or other assigned writing. The specific combination of assignments is left to the discretion of the individual instructor.

In addition to informal or low-stakes assignments, student achievement of basic skills and knowledge will also be measured through examinations and term papers. Examinations require essay writing and will test reading comprehension and fluency as well as mastery of critical thinking skills. Specific weighting of various assignments and requirements is determined by the individual instructor. However, students in all sections are expected to master a common body of information as measured by their responses to selected questions. Final examinations will therefore incorporate a common element constituting fifty percent of the exam, and will be in essay form.

## COURSE OUTLINE

The following topics will be covered by the course. Instructors may vary the content and organization of their sections.

### I. European Settlement and Colonial America

Introduction to the motivation and particulars of the settlement process; encounters with indigenous peoples; regional differentiation; religious, economic, cultural, and social aspects of colonial life.

### II. The Revolutionary Era

The background and history of the War of American Independence; French and Indian War; pre-revolutionary tensions; the events and individuals that shaped the revolutionary ideology and the growth of republicanism; fighting and winning the American Revolution.

### III. The New Republic

The American political system; the Articles of Confederation, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights; the rise of political parties; the role of the judiciary.

#### IV. The Era of Good Feelings

The growth and development of the United States during the early nineteenth century; the origins of physical, cultural, and social growth in America; the emergence of industrialization and a national market economy; the democratization of American politics; reform movements.

#### V. Slavery and Sectionalism

The history and development of slavery in the antebellum South; westward expansion and rising sectional tensions; attempted political compromise between the free labor and slavery ideologies.

#### VI. The Civil War and Reconstruction

The sectional crises after 1850 that culminated in secession and Civil War; the ideological, military, technological, and economic aspects of the Civil War; the end of the war and Presidential and Congressional Reconstruction.

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