

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Title: U.S. History in a Global Context: From the Colonial Period through the Civil War

Number: HIS 17

Credits/Hours: 3 credits/3 hours

INTRODUCTION

This course will examine U.S. history from the colonial period through the Civil War. Unlike the traditional survey course of this period, this course will take a transnational approach and explore how U.S. history fits into the global context. Historians and other scholars have become increasingly aware U.S. history can be better understood by examining how it is enmeshed in events and developments outside the nation's borders. As the historian Thomas Bender has written, "National histories are part of global histories." This course will fulfill one of the required courses for students who have chosen to pursue the college's Global and Environmental Studies Option.

How was the development of the American colonies connected to the creation of the Atlantic World? In what ways were the ideas of liberty and equality of the American Revolution part of transnational intellectual and political movements? Can our understanding of the American slavery be enriched by putting it in the context of Caribbean slave societies and the international abolitionist movement? To address these and other historical questions, the class integrates elements of history, political science, economics, art and literature to present a multifaceted history 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 and to understand that U.S. history is intrinsically connected to events and processes that occur outside the nation's boundaries. 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 and has meant to be American.

Additionally, as a central offering in the Liberal Arts, the course acquaints students with many of the core concepts, theories, and methodologies 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 17 employs a variety of pedagogical techniques including lectures, 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 forms and combinations of assignments are left to the discretion of individual instructors.

In addition to informal or low-stakes assignments, student achievement of basic skills and knowledge will 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 individual instructors. However, students in all sections are expected to master a common body of information as measured by their responses to selected questions.

COURSE OUTLINE

The following topics will be covered by the course. Given the breadth and fluidity of this subject, it is expected that instructors may vary the content, organization, and overall approach of their sections.

I. North American Colonization and the Atlantic World

The collision of Africa, the Americas, and Europe and the creation of the Atlantic World; slavery; and European competition in the New World

II. Colonial North America

Confrontation with Native American societies; urban political culture; and the relationship between American religious and political developments and their European counterparts

III. The International Context of the American Revolution and the Early Republic

The historical connections between the American Revolution and global developments; European foundations of the American constitution; the impact of the Haitian Revolution on debates over slavery in the U.S.

IV. Transnational Perspective on Jacksonian America

The impact of foreign affairs on domestic policy; nationalism as a growing international political project; and immigration

V. Expansion, Slavery, and Economic Development

The nation's growing imperial interests from the Louisiana Purchase to the Mexican War; the impact of the international abolitionist movement; and the growing importance of cotton on the international market

VI. The Civil War

The war as an example of 19th century nation building; the impact of the war on the international cotton trade and empire building

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Beckert, Sven. "Emancipation and Empire: Reconstructing the Worldwide Web of Cotton Production in the Age of the American Civil War," *American Historical Review*, Dec. 2004.

Davies, Edward J. *The United States in World History*. London: Routledge, 2006.

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Guarneri, Carl J. *America in the World: United States History in Global Context*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007.

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McFadden, Margaret H. *Golden Cables of Sympathy: The Transatlantic Sources of Nineteenth-Century Feminism*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1999.

McNeill J.R., and William McNeill. *The Human Web: A Bird's-Eye View of World*

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Manning, Patrick. *Migration in World History*. New York: Norton, 2000.

Mintz, Steven. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Russo, David J. *American History from a Global Perspective: An Interpretation*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2000.

White, Richard. *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes, 1650-1815*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning Goals:

The purpose of this course is:

1. To help students explore how events and developments that occur in the U.S. are connected to events outside the nation's boundaries.
2. To trace specific historical developments in American domestic and foreign affairs during this period including the creation of the Atlantic world, the relationship between the American colonies and imperial rivalries, slavery in the new world, and nation building in the early 19th century;
3. To foster skills needed to read, interpret, and analyze primary sources such as documents and other texts;
4. To foster skills needed in historical methodology;
5. To foster skills needed to write a historical essay;
6. To enable students to apply their learned knowledge to their understanding of ongoing current events in American society and culture.

Learning Outcomes:

As a result of taking this course, students will learn or be able to:

1. Read and comprehend primary source texts;
2. Identify and understand key vocabulary terms used within the discipline;
3. Identify and analyze historical problems from a variety of viewpoints;
4. Explain and defend historical arguments;
5. Write clearly, critically, and effectively;
6. Develop and use research skills;

7. Use a variety of learning strategies including traditional lectures, oral presentation, collaborative learning, and/or computer-assisted learning (in certain hybrid-online sections).

Measurement:

Strategies to be used in demonstrating that students' learning has been achieved will include:

1. Quizzes
2. Classroom discussion
3. In-class ("low-stakes") writing assignments
4. Group discussions and/or presentations
5. Take-home writing assignments
6. Examinations (essay and objective/factual)
7. Essay papers (short and/or term papers)
8. On-line and web-enhanced exercises and assignments

Evaluation:

Based on the above measurements, the following quantitative and qualitative evidence will provide evidence that students have achieved their learning outcomes:

1. 75% passing grades on quizzes
2. Discussions and writing assignments reflect students' understanding of texts and class material, as well as their facility in explaining and defending their position
3. Writing assignments reflect students' ability to think and write clearly, effectively, and critically
4. Examination results demonstrate knowledge of basic concepts and ability to analyze historical problems.