Instructor: Cynthia Wiecko, PhD
Adjunct Faculty

Class Time/Location: Online
Office Location: Ferguson Social Sciences 119
Office Hours: M-F 9:30am to 10:30am; by appointment; email
Instructor Email: Cynthia.wiecko@tamuc.edu

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:


The campus bookstore has these titles packaged together for sale. If students choose to obtain the books from another source be sure of the editions.

A Note about the Course Texts:
Students are expected to acquire the course texts prior to the start of class. Failure to do so will hinder a student’s ability to keep up with the course, and the Instructor is in no way responsible for such an eventuality. Allowances will not be made for students who lack possession of any one or both of the textbooks.

Course Description:

This course introduces the field of history by developing the students’ skills at critical analysis of both reading and writing assignments and class participation. Students will explore the political, economic, social, and cultural history of the United States from the age of European exploration and conquest through Reconstruction. Students will read a textbook, one primary source reader, and additional readings as needed. Through these readings, assignments, and lectures students will examine major themes in American history, such as colonization, the founding of a new nation, the forging of an American culture, the entrenchment of slavery, the coming of the Civil War, and the meaning of Reconstruction.

Student Learning Outcome:

Students will recognize ways in which slavery divided American society, and thus became a leading factor in causing the Civil War.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments**

This is an online course using eCollege. The course space in eCollege will include the syllabus, gradebook, weekly reading assignments, all writing assignments, and all quizzes. Students will be submitting all of their completed assignments into the course space as well. Students must have an email address listed on file with the university for Instructor communication, access to a computer with word processing capability, and internet connectivity.

The reading assignments and class topics are listed for each week. I expect you to complete your readings prior to viewing the PowerPoint presentation for the week. This class requires a substantial amount of time to complete the reading and writing assignments. Note taking and engagement are essential to doing well in this class. Readings give students a broad overview of major issues while the lecture delves more deeply into a few of those topics. Quizzes are an assessment of the student’s ability to synthesize and understand the course material. As such, they include material from the textbook, reader, and lecture. Writing assignments, such as the discussion posts and film analysis, allow students to develop better communication skills and demonstrate an understanding of course material.

Before any assignments are due, students should familiarize themselves with eCollege and the course space. To access this course, go to MyLeo, login, click eCollege on the right side of the screen, then click My Courses on the left side of the next screen and look for this course.

**Assignment Explanations:**

**Weekly Reading Quizzes:**
Each week students will complete a short reading quiz on eCollege over the assigned reading in *The American Promise* (exception: Week 1). Students should expect no more than 10 questions per chapter that may include multiple choice, fill in the blank, or maps. Each quiz will be open all week but students only have a one hour time limit to complete it. The quiz will be due @ 11:59pm the day before the material is covered in lecture. Multiple choice questions will be scored immediately in eCollege. Your quiz score will be finalized in the Gradebook within 7 days. Students are free to use the textbook, notes, and information in eCollege to complete the quiz but no outside sources are allowed. **Quizzes cannot be made up. No late work accepted.**

**Discussion Posts:**

A total of five prompts will be posted in eCollege under Discussion. These prompts are usually based on the primary source readings assigned for the week. Students must answer each prompt in two paragraphs using the primary sources and any relevant information from other class texts. Posts must contain evidence cited from the assigned readings. Students will submit their discussion post to the Discussion Thread by 11:59pm on Friday of the week indicated. While these posts are more informal than the exams or paper, spelling and grammar must be accurate. **Discussion Posts cannot be made up. No late work accepted.** Students can earn from 1 to 5 additional points (up to the maximum 20 points for the assignment) by responding to a fellow classmate’s post. Your response must elaborate on a point or pose a related idea/question. Simply writing something like, “Good work, Joe! I completely agree” is insufficient. **Note: I reserve the right to substitute special assignments of a similar length with notice.**

**Film Analysis Paper:**

Students will choose a film, either from the provided list available in eCollege or obtain instructor approval for an alternate title, and write a critical film review. If choosing an alternative film, it must pertain to American history from ancient indigenous settlement to 1877. All students must notify the instructor of their film choice by the end of Week 3 and receive an ‘Approved’ notice before submitting the paper. Students must also provide the instructor with a tentative list of proposed sources, in addition to the film, by mid-semester and will receive Instructor feedback. See the Schedule for the Film Selection Due Date and Tentative Sources Due Date.

This assignment requires active participation in the viewing experience so note taking is essential. Students will submit their paper into the appropriate eCollege Dropbox by the due date indicated on the Schedule.

This will be a 3 to 4 page paper, double spaced (full pages, 12 point font, Times New Roman, 1 inch margins). A minimum of three sources, in addition to the film, are required. All papers must include a Work Cited page in **MLA** or **Chicago** format (Chicago is the standard for History). Significant latitude is given for writing style but spelling and grammar must be accurate. For any questions on spelling and grammar, contact the instructor or visit the TAMU-Commerce Online Writing Lab. More than three typographical errors results in 1 full letter grade deduction from the final score. **Film Papers cannot be made up. No late work accepted. Failure to submit the film paper will result in an automatic F for the course.**

For this paper, you are a highly regarded film critic known internationally for your reviews of historical films. The editor of the *New York Times* has asked you to write an in-depth review of a film. She wants you to research the historical event or group, (1) write about what actually happened, and (2) then review the film for its historical accuracy. Thus, your paper will have two
parts of similar length. In order to conform to the New York Times style of writing, a good film critic would also view a few reviews already published in the paper, available online at http://www.nytimes.com/pages/movies/index.html.

If you are unfamiliar with film reviews focusing on historical accuracy, visit these sites before constructing your paper. They are regarding James Cameron’s 1997 blockbuster, Titanic.

Wikipedia Page on Titanic – take note of the discussion on historical accuracy in Cast: Historical Characters, Writing and Inspiration, Scale Modeling, and Editing.

Five Titanic Myths Spread by Films – BBC article

This paper should not focus on cinematography, camera angles, acting ability, or the soundtrack. Instead, you are conducting a historical analysis of the film, attempting to ‘read between the lines’ and compare the historical event with the writer/director’s interpretation of the event. To achieve sufficient depth of material, you should also read the part of your textbook and reader that discusses the historical context of the film’s subject matter AND from the time of filming (for example, a film about the 1880s that was made in the 1950s would require reading about both decades). It will also be necessary to do further background reading from appropriate hard copy and online sources and provide citations for those used in the paper.

When you are ready to write your paper, some of the questions below may help guide you in constructing your analysis. Note: Responses to these questions are not required; they are simply food for thought!

How does the film portray the past when compared to descriptions of life in the US from that time?
Does it romanticize or demonize the period?
Does it accurately portray the past?
What historical myths and misconceptions does the film convey?
Do the filmmakers seem to have an agenda?
What does the film say about the time in which it was made?
What forces (contemporary issues, beliefs, fears, mores) were at work during its production that might have affected its final form?
What underlying message(s) does the film contain?
For whom is the message(s) intended?
How differently is this subject viewed now when compared to the time of the film’s release?
What is lost and what is gained in portraying history through film?
How do filmmakers and historians negotiate the tension between accuracy and truth?
Some films can be accurate, even meticulous, about historical detail, events, and personalities, yet totally lack any larger insight about the past. Can creative imagination actually enhance a fundamental understanding of the past?
Does cinema embody the autobiographies of the scriptwriters and filmmakers more than those of the historical characters portrayed?
What do audiences actually experience when watching “history on film?”

Participation:

This course moves at a fast pace and focuses on a variety of complex events and ideas, sometimes spending only a short amount of time on a particularly large topic. For this reason, students must keep up with the readings and writing assignments. As this is a university level
course, discussion (through the discussion post assignment) is also an expected part of the class. You are also encouraged to ask questions and answer those questions asked to the class.

**Grading**

Quizzes (15 @ 20 points each) 300
*Film Analysis* 200
  (Film Selection-25, Tentative Sources-75, Paper-100)
Discussion Posts (5 @ 20 points each) 100

**TOTAL:** 600 points

Semester Grades: A: 100-90%; B: 89-80%; C: 79-70%; D: 69-60%; F: 59% and below.

*NOTE: Failure to complete the film analysis paper will result in an automatic failing (F) grade for the course. You must complete this assignment.*

**TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

The following information has been provided to assist you in preparing to use technology successfully in this course.

- Internet access/connection – high speed required (not dial-up)
- Word Processor (i.e. MS Word)

Additionally, the following hardware and software are necessary to use eCollege:
Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means our courses work best if you are using a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0, or 8.0).
Your courses will also work with Macintosh OS X along with a recent version of Safari 2.0 or better. Along with Internet Explorer and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser (3.0) on both Windows and Mac operating systems.
It is strongly recommended that you perform a “Browser Test” prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login in to eCollege, click on the ‘myCourses’ tab, and then select the “Browser Test” link under Support Services.

**ACCESS AND NAVIGATION**

This course will be facilitated using eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To get started with the course, go to: https://leo.tamuc.edu/login.aspx.

You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

**COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**
Interaction with Instructor Statement:

Students who wish to meet with the Instructor can arrive at Ferguson Social Sciences 119 during the Office Hours posted at the top of this syllabus or schedule an appointment. Email is the best way to contact the Instructor with any questions or concerns. Unless otherwise announced, students will receive a response within 24 hours.

eCollege Student Technical Support:

Texas A&M University-Commerce provides students technical support in the use of eCollege. The student help desk may be reached by the following means 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
Chat Support: Click on 'Live Support' on the tool bar within your course to chat with an eCollege Representative.
Phone: 1-866-656-5511 (Toll Free) to speak with eCollege Technical Support Representative.
Email: helpdesk@online.tamuc.org to initiate a support request with eCollege Technical Support Representative.
Help: Click on the 'Help’ button on the toolbar for information regarding working with eCollege (i.e. How to submit to dropbox, How to post to discussions etc…)

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Additional Resources:

Depending on student familiarity with history courses, university classes, and the quality of work expected in assignments the following links may be helpful:

Doing Research
Evaluating Scholarly Content Online
A Tutorial on Plagiarism
Assessing Online Resources
How To Use the Library Catalog
MLA Tutorial

Late Assignments:

Ample time is given for the completion of all assignments and there are no ‘surprise’ due dates. Late work will not be accepted.

Extra Credit:

There is no extra credit in this course.

Class Conduct:

I will treat you with respect and I expect the same in return. Please exercise common courtesy as if you were physically in a classroom setting.
Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is taking someone else’s work and passing it off as your own words, thoughts, or ideas. This includes, but is not limited to, using direct quotes out of a book or from the internet as your own words, properly using quotation marks but noting the wrong person as the author, purchasing a paper from friends or strangers, using material from the internet verbatim as your own words, and cutting and pasting entire papers or internet pages as your final paper. Cheating on exams and discussion posts or allowing others to copy your answers is another form of academic dishonesty.

It is fine to use other people’s words and ideas as long as they receive credit in citations. If you are unsure about the precise definition of plagiarism and/or think you may have committed this form of academic dishonesty, see me or visit the TAMU-Commerce Online Writing Lab before you turn in the assignment.

I have absolutely no tolerance for plagiarism! If a student commits academic dishonesty on any part of an assignment, the assignment will receive a zero with no possibility for make-up. If academic dishonesty is committed a second time, the student will immediately fail the course and the instructor will pursue the maximum university discipline possible. This is not negotiable.

Writing Lab:

The TAMU-Commerce Online Writing Lab is a valuable service free to any student. They can help you get started on a paper, help with drafts, and answer specific questions about citation style, grammar, and spelling. While they will not write the paper for you, they are there to give feedback and guidance.

University Specific Procedures:

ADA Statement

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 have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu
Student Disability Resources & Services

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook).
I reserve the right to modify the class schedule throughout the semester if necessary but will give all students ample written notice on eCollege.

Week 1 (Aug 27 – Aug 31): Introduction to Course and Ancient America

Readings: TAP, Chapter 1
          RAP, Introduction for Students, Chapter 1

Assignment: None

Week 2 (Sept 3 – 7): European Exploration

Readings: TAP, Chapter 2
          RAP, Chapter 2

Assignment: Weekly Reading Quiz due @ 11:59pm Sunday
            Discussion post #1 due @ 11:59pm Friday

Week 3 (Sept 10 - 14): The Chesapeake Colonies in the Seventeenth Century

Readings: TAP, Chapter 3
          RAP, Chapter 3

Assignment: Weekly Reading Quiz due @ 11:59pm Sunday
            Film selection due @ 11:59pm Friday

Week 4 (Sept 17 - 21): The Northern and Middle Colonies in the Seventeenth Century

Readings: TAP, Chapter 4
          RAP, Chapter 4

Assignment: Weekly Reading Quiz due @ 11:59pm Sunday

Week 5 (Sept 24 - 28): Eighteenth Century America

Readings: TAP, Chapter 5
          RAP, Chapter 5

Assignment: Weekly Reading Quiz due @ 11:59pm Sunday

Week 6 (Oct 1 - 5): The Road to Independence

Readings: TAP, Chapter 6
          RAP, Chapter 6

Assignment: Weekly Reading Quiz due @ 11:59pm Sunday
Week 7 (Oct 8 - 12): Revolution and A New Republic

Readings:
- TAP, Chapter 7 & 8
- RAP, Chapter 7 & 8

Assignment:
- Weekly Reading Quiz due @ 11:59pm Sunday
- Tentative Sources for Film Analysis due @ 11:59pm Friday

Week 8 (Oct 15 - 19): A New Nation

Readings:
- TAP, Chapter 9
- RAP, Chapter 9

Assignment:
- Weekly Reading Quiz due @ 11:59pm Sunday
- Discussion post #3 due @ 11:59pm Friday

Week 9 (Oct 22 - 26): Early National America

Readings:
- TAP, Chapter 10
- RAP, Chapter 10

Assignment:
- Weekly Reading Quiz due @ 11:59pm Sunday

Week 10 (Oct 29 – Nov 2): Jacksonian Democracy

Readings:
- TAP, Chapter 11
- RAP, Chapter 11

Assignment:
- Weekly Reading Quiz due @ 11:59pm Sunday
- Discussion post #4 due @ 11:59pm Friday

Week 11 (Nov 5 - 9): The New West and the Free North

Readings:
- TAP, Chapter 12
- RAP, Chapter 12

Assignment:
- Weekly Reading Quiz due @ 11:59pm Sunday

Week 12 (Nov 12 - 16): The Slave South

Readings:
- TAP, Chapter 13
- RAP, Chapter 13

Assignment:
- Weekly Reading Quiz due @ 11:59pm Sunday

Week 13 (Nov 19 – 23): The House Divided

Have a good Thanksgiving! Eat lots of turkey and pie!
Readings:  TAP, Chapter 14  
            RAP, Chapter 14

Assignment:  Weekly Reading Quiz due @ 11:59pm Sunday

Week 14 (Nov 26 - 30): The Civil War

Readings:  TAP, Chapter 15  
            RAP, Chapter 15

Assignment:  Weekly Reading Quiz due @ 11:59pm Sunday  
             Discussion post #5 due @ 11:59pm Friday

Week 15 (Dec 3 - 7): Reconstruction

Readings:  TAP, Chapter 16  
            RAP, Chapter 16

Assignment:  Weekly Reading Quiz due @ 11:59pm Sunday  
             Film Analysis due @ 11:59pm Friday

Finals Week (Dec 10 - 14)

*Have a wonderful holiday!*