UNITED STATES HISTORY TO 1877

Instructor: Dr. Graham Nessler
Class Meets: TR 8:00a-9:15a, SS 150
Office Location: Ferguson Social Sciences 146
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2:00-4:00 PM, and Thursdays, 1:45-4:45 PM
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Please see the note on communication below.

This syllabus is subject to change (any updated versions will be posted to eCollege)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course offers an introduction to the history of the United States and North America from initial European colonization to the end of Reconstruction. Though references to and invocations of the early history of this country—particularly the nation’s founding and the Civil War—are common in many aspects of US life ranging from political discourse to popular culture, these invocations too often suffer from a lack of rigorous historical scrutiny. In this course, we will delve into the colonial and early republican periods of US history, paying particular attention to the problem of slavery and the contingencies of the republic’s expansion. We will also situate the history of the US within broader North American and Atlantic contexts. We will closely study how men, women, and children from around the globe have shaped the land that is now called the United States, and how the past and present of this country have always been profoundly intertwined.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will recognize ways in which slavery divided American society, and thus became a leading factor in causing the Civil War.
2. Students will acquire a firm understanding of the circumstances of North American expansion from the colonial era to Reconstruction.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course Format:

Though this is principally a lecture course, part or all of some class sessions will be devoted to discussions of the material, and lectures will be punctuated by interactive question-and-answer
sessions. There will also be two sit-down examinations. I firmly believe that learning is a shared enterprise in which both instructor and students play a vital role. To this end, it is imperative that each student come to class prepared to actively engage with the material.

**Required Texts:**


Other required readings are available on the course’s eCollege page.

**Grading:**

The components of this course will be weighted into the final grade as follows:

- Quizzes: 15% of your final grade
- Midterm Exam: 25% of your final grade
- Book Review: 25% of your final grade
- Final Exam: 35% of your final grade

**Grading Scale:**

A=90-100%
B=80-89%
C=70-79%
D=60-69%
F=59% and below

**Quizzes:**

I will periodically give in-class quizzes over the material covered in the week’s readings and the Tuesday lecture. These will be unannounced (“pop”) quizzes that will be given at the beginning of class on some Thursday sessions. These quizzes will typically be in multiple-choice or fill-in-the-blank format, though some quizzes may also require short essays (1-2 paragraphs). **No make-up quizzes** will be given under any circumstances. The combined average score for all your quizzes will determine your quiz grade, which counts for 15% of your overall course grade. I will drop your lowest quiz score from this calculation.

**Midterm Exam (October 11):**

The midterm exam will cover all material through Week VII. You will need a blue book and a pen or pencil. I will give more details in class.
Book Review (due November 29 at 5:00 pm):

You will write a book review of Afua Cooper, *The Hanging of Angélique: The Untold Story of Canadian Slavery and the Burning of Old Montréal*. I will provide more details in class.

Final Exam (December 11):

The final exam will be cumulative, covering all material from lectures and readings for the entirety of the course. This exam will also be in blue-book format. More details will be forthcoming.

Paper Format:

Your book review must be in Times New Roman, 12-point font with one-inch margins and in Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx). *Please do not submit any documents in .pdf format.* Please double-space all body text and single-space your endnotes (which should be in Times New Roman, 10-point font). Please use endnotes and not footnotes. We will follow the Chicago Manual of Style for this paper. A copy of *The Chicago Manual of Style* is available for consultation at the Reference Desk at TAMUC Library. I recommend investing in a copy of this book (preferably the 15th or 16th edition) as this is the standard format for scholarship in history and other fields in the United States.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND ACCESS

In this course, we will make extensive use of the eCollege online course system ([https://leo.tamuc.edu/login.aspx](https://leo.tamuc.edu/login.aspx)). eCollege is a Learning Management System (LMS) that facilitates instruction through a variety of online tools. For more information and technical support in using eCollege, please send a message to helpdesk@online.tamuc.org or call 1-866-656-5511.

Please find the page for our course within eCollege and navigate to it. You will submit your book review through eCollege and receive instructor feedback through this system. You will also find on eCollege all of the course readings which do not come from the books that you will purchase. We will discuss eCollege and our use of it in more detail in class. **Please submit all written work to the appropriate listing in the Dropbox on the course’s eCollege page. (No hard copy submissions, please.)**

For this course, you will need an up-to-date web browser, Microsoft Word (or Open Office), and the free Adobe Acrobat reader ([http://get.adobe.com/reader/](http://get.adobe.com/reader/)).

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Outside of class sessions and office hours, email is the best way to communicate with me. Please use your TAMU Commerce email address in all email communication with me, and put the course name (History 1301) in the subject line. Please also keep the following in mind: like all of you, I am a busy member of this University community who must juggle multiple commitments. Please expect a response to your message within 24 hours on a weekday and 48 hours on the
weekends. I will not respond to questions whose answer is contained in this syllabus or in another handout that I have distributed.

**Writing Center:**

Students are encouraged to make use of the University’s Writing Center for assistance in composing and revising their papers. If you take advantage of this service, please plan ahead by giving yourself enough time to make an appointment and incorporate their suggestions into your revisions. For more information and to make an appointment, see: [http://web.tamu-commerce.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiesSocialSciencesArts/departments/literatureLanguages/writingCenter/default.aspx](http://web.tamu-commerce.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiesSocialSciencesArts/departments/literatureLanguages/writingCenter/default.aspx).

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**COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

**Course Specific Procedures:**

*Late Work Policy:* The book review is due on November 29 at 5:00 pm to eCollege; you will incur a penalty of one letter grade per day late. This starts from the minute after the deadline (i.e. a paper turned in at 5:10 that was due at 5:00 the same day is counted as being one day late). No extensions will be granted under any circumstances.

*Special Needs:* All students with any special needs must see the instructor as soon as possible in the semester to discuss this. Failure to address the matter promptly may result in the inability to accommodate a specific circumstance. See below for more details on disability accommodations.

*Laptop Use:* Use of laptops in class is a privilege. I reserve the right to revoke this privilege if a student is caught using a laptop for any purpose other than to access the course readings, access eCollege for this class, or take notes related to our course. Cell phones must be turned off and not used at all in class sessions; iPads and other tablets can be used only for the purposes for which laptop use is permissible. I reserve the right to ask a student to leave if his or her cell phone or other electronic device disrupts our learning environment.

*Grade Appeals:* The instructor’s judgment of all student grades on exams, essays, and all other graded assignments is final and will not be subject to revision, except when a mathematical error has been committed.

*Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:* Plagiarism is any act which involves the theft of someone else’s ideas. This includes but is not limited to: lifting text out of anyone else’s work without proper attribution; using an author’s exact words with a citation but without quotation marks to indicate these words; and simply reiterating another’s ideas (author, professor, peer, etc) without giving credit to this person. Plagiarism also includes buying or otherwise acquiring material from the Internet and passing it off as your own as well as having a friend (or anyone else) write all or part of your paper. You are also committing plagiarism if you submit part or all of something that you have written for another assignment—for this or another class—without proper attribution. Other forms of academic dishonesty include (among other offenses): possessing, using, or distributing illicit examination materials; and forgery.
I have a zero tolerance policy towards all forms of academic dishonesty. Anyone caught plagiarizing or committing any other academic offense will receive a zero on the assignment in question and will be referred to the Dean of Students. The offender may also fail the course. Ignorance is not an excuse; it is the responsibility of all students to be fully informed about plagiarism and to absolutely avoid it. If you have any doubts as to what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me. All written assignments will be automatically uploaded to turnitin.com for plagiarism checking.

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- Room 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu

If you require such an accommodation, please contact the above office as soon as possible in the term.

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). Among other things, this includes exhibiting respectful behavior in class at all times. While I welcome and expect disagreements in viewpoints, all students must refrain at all times from making inappropriate or offensive remarks and treat all classmates and the instructor with respect, courtesy, and dignity. Please see the above guidelines if you are unclear about any aspect of acceptable conduct.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Week I: Introductions

August 28: Introductions
  Go over syllabus, course policies, and general expectations.

August 30: The “Columbian Exchange” and the Early Spanish Conquests

Readings:
• ANH, first part of chapter 1 (5-40) [36 pp]
• Total reading: 65 pp

**Week II: The British Empire in America, I**

September 4: European Challengers to Spanish Hegemony

September 6: The Establishment of the Thirteen Colonies

Readings:
• ANH, rest of chapter 1 and chapter 2 (40-105) [66 pp]
• Total reading: 80 pp

**Week III: The British Empire in America, II**

September 11: Life in British North America

September 13: Economics, Politics, and Colonial Wars

Readings:
• ANH, chapters 3 and 4 (108-187) [80 pp]
• Total reading: 88 pp

**Week IV: The American Revolution**

September 18: The Crisis of Empire in North America

September 20: The Defeat of British Rule in the Thirteen Colonies

Readings:
• ANH, chapters 5 and 6 (190-267) [78 pp]
• Total reading: 87 pp

**Week V: Building a New Nation**

September 25: The Articles of Confederation and the Constitution
September 27: Early Expansion, Settlements, and Crises

Readings:
- ANH, chapters 7 and 8 (270-341) [72 pp]
- **Total reading: 89 pp**

**Week VI: The Early Republic**

October 2: The Jeffersonian Era and the Haitian Revolution

October 4: The War of 1812

Readings:
- ANH, chapter 9 (344-375) [32 pp]
- FTR: “Marbury v. Madison” and Lewis and Clark’s “Journals” (203-217) [15 pp]
- **Total reading: 69 pp**

**Week VII: Diplomacy and Regional Crises**

October 9: The “Era of Good Feelings” and its Aftermath

**October 11: Midterm Exam in Class (covers material through Week VII)**

Readings:
- ANH, chapter 10 (383-411) [29 pp]
- FTR: James Monroe, “Monroe Doctrine” (244-250) [7 pp]
- **Total reading: 36 pp**

**Week VIII: The Jacksonian Era**

October 16: Politics and Economics in the Jacksonian Age

October 18: Denmark Vesey and Slave Resistance in the Antebellum South

Readings:
- ANH, chapter 11 (414-447) [34 pp]
- FTR: Daniel Webster, “South Carolina’s Ordinance of Nullification;” Andrew Jackson, “The President’s Nullification Proclamation;” and Hezekiah Niles, “Indians within the United States” (256-266) [11 pp]
- **Total reading: 70 pp**

**Week IX: Industrialization and Immigration**
October 23: Economic Expansion

October 25: Popular Culture and Immigration

Readings:
- ANH, chapter 12 (450-489) [40 pp]
- Total reading: 54 pp

Week X: Religious Movements and Social Change

October 30: Religion and Society

November 1: The Antebellum Women’s Rights Movement

Readings:
- ANH, chapter 13 (492-523) [32 pp]
- Total reading: 37 pp
- **There is less reading than usual this week; you would be wise to use this time to finish Cooper, *The Hanging of Angélique.*

Week XI: Manifest Destiny

November 6: Westward Expansion and the Mexican War

November 8: Texas Independence and the Question of Slavery

Readings:
- ANH, chapter 14 (526-561) [36 pp]
- FTR: James K. Polk, “The President’s War Message to Congress;” Henry Clay, “Speech about the Mexican War” (341-352) [12 pp]
- Sean Kelley, “‘Mexico in his Head:’ Slavery and the Texas-Mexico Border, 1810-1860,” *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 3 (2004): 709-723 [15 pp]
- Total reading: 63 pp

Week XII: The Twilight of the Antebellum Era

November 13: Plantation Society in the Old South

November 15: The Sectional Crisis

Readings:
- ANH, chapters 15-16 (569-645) [77 pp]
- **Total reading: 91 pp**

**Week XIII: No class; happy Thanksgiving!**

**Week XIV: The Civil War**

November 27: The Civil War: Outbreak and Course

November 29: In-Class Discussion of Cooper, *The Hanging of Angélique*

*Book Review of Cooper due (at 5:00 pm)*

Readings:
- ANH, chapter 17 (648-699) [52 pp]
- FTR: Frederick Douglass, “The Reasons for our Troubles;” Frank Moore, “Women of the War” (419-424, 441-446) [12 pp]
- **Total reading: 64 pp**

**Week XV: Reconstruction**

December 4: Reconstruction: Conflicts and Legacies

December 6: In-Class Review for Final Exam, and Final Evaluations

Reading:
- ANH, chapter 18 (702-739) [38 pp]
- FTR: “The Late Convention of Colored Men;” “Black Codes of Mississippi;” “Klan Terrorism in South Carolina” (459-463, 468-472) [10 pp]
- **Total reading: 48 pp**

**Final exam: December 11, 8:00a-10:00a.**