

1815 to 1877

HIS 243

The United States from



Instructor: James Paxton

Fall 2006

Class: Monday and Wednesday 10:10am to 11:20am

Office: Comenius 306

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00–3:00

Wednesday 1:30-2:30

Or by appointment

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Course Description: The period between the end of the War of 1812 and the outbreak of the Civil War in the United States was marked by territorial expansion, economic growth, and democratic reform. Some historians have characterized the period as “The Era of the Common Man,” but it was also a time of sectional tension, alienation, inequality, and hardening race relations. Neither comprehensive nor chronological, this course will explore these themes by focusing on how Americans promoted, accommodated, directed, and resisted four major and interrelated “revolutions” that shaped mid-nineteenth-century American society: the market revolution, westward expansion and the rise of Jacksonian democracy, religious revivals and reform movements, and sectional politics. Americans responded to these developments in a variety of ways that contributed to intellectual radicalism, westward movement, the spread of slavery, and the rise of reform and abolitionism that exacerbated sectional tensions. By examining these developments, students will be able to decide for themselves why Americans went to war with each other in 1861.

Course Objectives

Students will

- become familiar with the main events and themes in American history from the end of the War of 1812 until 1877.
- become familiar with some of the major schools of thought and historiographical debates that have shaped historians' understanding of the United States in the Antebellum period.
- understand the ways in which historians have "constructed" the past.
- learn to critically evaluate secondary sources.
- further develop clear and effective oral and written communications skills.

Class Organization

Classes will be a combination of lecture and discussion. We will usually begin with a 20-30 minute introduction to the week's topic followed by a student-led discussion of the assigned readings.

Required Texts

Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *The Kingdom of Matthias: A Story of Sex and Salvation in 19th-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

John Mack Faragher, *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986).

Charles Joyner, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

Required texts are available in the Moravian College bookstore. Additional readings are available on JSTOR or will be placed on reserve in Reeves Library.

Attendance

While there is no formal penalty for missing classes, students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes. Success in the course depends upon comprehension of the lecture material and participation in class discussions. Lateness will not be tolerated.

Please turn off or mute all electronic devices in the classroom.

Grade Distribution

Essay 1	10%
Essay 2	12%
Essay 3	15%
Journals	18%
Participation	25%
Final Exam	20%

The participation grade reflects the quality and quantity of your participation. It is not an attendance grade. However, if you do not attend class, then you cannot participate.

Journals

Throughout the semester you will write a total of six journal responses to the readings. Which classes you hand in a journal is up to you, but do not leave them to the end of the course. The journals should succinctly state the author(s) main arguments. When you are writing your journals, consider how the readings relate to one another and to the work we have done in the course. Journal entries should be 1-2 pages, typed, double-spaced, with a one-inch margin. In terms of style, journal entries may be less formal, but they will still be marked for spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Journals **must** be handed in at the beginning of the class in which they are due.

Assignments

During the course you will become an expert in one area of nineteenth-century American history. By the third week you will choose a topic, which you will explore in-depth through three essays. The essays will be historiographical in nature. Papers are due at the beginning of the class. The first essay will be a 2-3 page book review. The second essay will compare the book you reviewed in essay one with another book on the same subject. It should be 3-4 pages in length. The final essay will be a 6-7 page historiographical essay assessing five books. You may substitute three articles for a book. A historiographical essay provides comment and analysis on a number of works pertaining to one subject. Do not summarize the contents of the books. Instead, analyze the book's evidence and conclusions and then compare the author's evidence and conclusions with what you have found in other works.

Late Policy

Papers turned in after the beginning of the class on which they are due will be assessed a penalty of 10% for the first day they are late and 5% for each day thereafter. Computer and printing problems are not acceptable reasons for lateness.

Schedule

Week 1 – Introduction

Aug. 28 – Antebellum America

Aug. 30 – Historiography of the United States

Reading and Writing Essays

I. Expansion

Week 2

Sept. 4 – No Class – Labor Day

Sept. 6 – The Western Frontier

Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History,"
Frontier and Section: Selected Essays of Frederick Jackson Turner, ed. Ray Allen
Billington, 37-62. Reserve.

Is the "frontier" a useful concept in American history?

Week 3

Sept. 11 – Pioneer Settlements

Daniel H. Usner, Jr. "American Indians on the Cotton Frontier: Changing Economic
Relations with Citizens and Slaves in the Mississippi Territory," *Journal of
American History* 72 (1985): 297-317. Reserve/JSTOR

Does Usner support Turner's frontier thesis?

Sept. 13 – Indian Removal

F.P. Prucha, "Andrew Jackson's Indian Policy: A Reassessment," *Journal of American
History* 566 (December 1969): 527-39. Reserve/JSTOR

R. Satz, "Rhetoric Versus Reality: The Indian Policy of Andrew Jackson," *Cherokee
Removal Before and After* (1991), 29-54. Reserve

Faragher, *Sugar Creek*, xiii-xvii, 3-36.

Why did the United States remove Native Americans? Was removal genocide?

Essay Topics and Bibliography Due

Week 4

Sept. 18

Faragher, *Sugar Creek*, 39-75, 121-42.

What did settlers value? What did they hope to achieve in the west?

Sept. 20 – The Age of Jackson

Faragher, *Sugar Creek*, 143-155.

Edward Pessen, "The Egalitarian Myth and the American Social Reality: Wealth,
Mobility, and Equality in the "Era of the Common Man," *The Many-faceted
Jacksonian Era: New interpretations*, ed. Edward Pessen (1977), 7-46. Reserve

J. Ashworth, "The Jacksonian as Leveller," *Journal of American Studies* 14 (1980): 407-
22. Reserve/JSTOR

How would you characterize the Age of Jackson?

II. Market Revolution

Week 5

Sept. 25 – Overview

Sean Wilentz, Society, Politics, and the Market Revolution, 1815-1848," in Eric Foner,
ed. *The New American History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997),
61-83. Reserve

What is the Market Revolution?

Sept. 27 – The West

Faragher, *Sugar Creek*, 173-237.

Week 6

Oct. 2 – The Rural North

Christopher Clark, “Household Economy, Market Exchange, and the Rise of Capitalism in Connecticut River Valley, 1800-1860,” *Journal of Social History* 13 (1979): 169-90. Reserve

Martin Bruegel, “‘Time that Can Be Relied Upon.’ The Evolution of Time Consciousness on the Mid-Hudson Valley, 1780-1860,” *Journal of Social History* (Spring 1995): 547-564. Reserve/Ebsco

How did Americans respond to the Market Revolution?

Oct. 4 – The Urban North

Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press), 23-60. Reserve

David R. Roediger, “‘Neither a Servant Nor a Master Am I’: Keywords on the Languages of White Labor Republicanism,” in *Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 43-64. Reserve

How did the Market Revolution affect the lives of urban workers?

Essay 1 Due

III. Religion and Reform

Week 7

Oct. 9 – **No Class – Fall Recess**

Oct. 11 – Second Great Awakening

Faragher, *Sugar Creek*, 156-170.

Donald Mathews, “The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process, 1780-1830,” *American Quarterly* 21 (1969): 23-43. Reserve/JSTOR

William McLoughlin, “The Second Great Awakening,” *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform*, 98-140. Reserve

What was the Great Awakening? What role did play in Americans’ lives?

Week 8

Oct. 16 – Nineteenth-Century Women

Faragher, *Sugar Creek*, 96-118.

Nancy Hewitt, “Yankee Evangelicals and Agrarian Quakers: Gender, Religion, and Class in the Formation of Feminist Consciousness in 19th Century Rochester, N.Y.,” *Radical History Review* (1984): 327-42. Reserve

Catherine Clinton, “Women in the Land of Cotton” and “Slaves of Slaves” *The Plantation Mistress* (1982), 3-15, 16-35. Reserve

Deborah Gray White, “The Life Cycle of the Female Slave,” *Ar’n’t I a Woman: Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (1985), 91-118. Reserve

Read Faragher and two of the other articles. Consider how gender, race, and class shaped definitions of “woman” in nineteenth-century America? Of race, class, and gender, which was most important to women’s identity?

Oct. 18 – Unorthodox Sects, Part 1
Johnson and Wilentz, *Kingdom of Matthias*, 3-90.

Week 9 – Unorthodox Sects, Part 2
Oct. 23
Johnson and Wilentz, *Kingdom of Matthias*, 91-179.
What need did the Kingdom of Matthias fill for its adherents?

IV. The South and Slavery

Oct. 25 – Introduction to the Old South
Essay 2 Due

Week 10
Oct. 30 – Native Peoples of the South
James Taylor Carson, *Searching for the Bright Path: The Mississippi Choctaw from Prehistory to Removal* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 70-111.
Reserve
How did Native Americans adapt to the changes in American society?

Nov. 1 – The Institution of Slavery
Stanley Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Intellectual Life* (1959), 81-115, 133-39.
Do you agree with Elkins’ characterization of plantations as concentration camps?

Week 11
Nov. 6 – The Plantation Community
Joyner, *Down By the Riverside*, xv-xxii, 1-40.

Nov. 8
Joyner, *Down By the Riverside*, 41-89.

Week 12
Nov. 13
Joyner, *Down By the Riverside*, 90-171.

Nov. 15
Bertram Wyatt-Brown, “The Mask of Obedience: Male Slave Psychology in the Old South,” *American Historical Review* (1988): 1228-1252. Reserve/JSTOR
Does Wyatt-Brown’s interpretation challenge Joyner’s? How?

Week 13
Nov. 20

Joyner, *Down By the Riverside*, 172-224.

Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*, (1956) 361-77. Reserve

Compare and contrast Stampp and Joyner's interpretations of slavery.

V. Sectionalism, Civil War, and Reconstruction

Nov. 22 – The Irrepressible Conflict?

Eugene Genovese, "The Origins of Slavery and Expansion," *The Causes of the American Civil War*, ed. Edwin C. Rozwenc, 242-67. Reserve

Avery Craven, "The Civil War: A Breakdown of the Democratic Process," *Lincoln and the Coming of the Civil War*, ed. Norton Garfinkle, 91-101. Reserve

Eric Foner, "Slavery and Republican Ideology," *Free Soil, Free Labour, and Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (1970), 301-317.

Reserve

Was the Civil War inevitable?

Week 14

Nov. 27 – Reading Day

Essay 3 Due

Nov. 29 – Secession

Joel Silbey, "The Surge of Republican Power," *The Partisan Imperative: The Dynamics of American Party Politics before the Civil War* (1985), 166-89. Reserve

James Oakes, "The Slaveholders' Revolution," *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (1982), 225-242. Reserve

Peter Wallenstein, "Incendiaries All: Southern Politics and the Harpers Ferry Raid," *His Soul Goes Marching On: Responses to John Brown and the Harpers Ferry Raid* (1997), 149-70. Reserve

Read two articles and consider how Americans responded to the crises of the 1850s?

What factors were most important in bringing about the Civil War?

Week 15

Dec. 4 – Why They Fought?

James M. McPherson, "On the Altar of My Country," and "The Cause of Liberty," in *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 90-116. Reserve

Reid Mitchell, "The Northern Soldier and His Community," in *The Vacant Chair: The Northern Soldier Leaves Home* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 19-37. Reserve

Randall C. Jimerson, "All that We Hold Dear," in *The Private Civil War: Popular Thought During the Sectional Conflict* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press), 8-26. Reserve

Read McPherson and **either** Mitchell **or** Jimerson. Why did Americans fight in the Civil War?

Dec. 6 – Who Freed the Slaves?

Joyner, *Down By the Riverside*, 225-242. Reserve

Barbara J. Fields, “Who Freed the Slaves?” in *The Civil War: An Illustrated History*, ed.

Geoffrey Ward (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 178-81. Reserve

James M. McPherson, “Who Freed the Slaves?” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association* 139 (1995): 1-10. Reserve

Week 16

Dec. 11 - Conclusion