

HIST 113 – The United States to 1877



Dr. James Paxton

Comenius 306

Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00–12:00; Thursday 1:00–2:00; or by appointment

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Course Description

Welcome to History 113: The United States to 1877. This course provides an introduction to the political, economic, ideological, and social developments in the United States from contact to 1877. The first part of the course traces the developments that allowed colonists from thirteen disparate colonies to see themselves as one people who should constitute one nation. The second half explores how Americans struggled with the meaning and consequences of their Revolution. They debated the contradiction between the ideals of liberty and equality and the existence of slavery and other forms of dependence; they argued how best to protect state interests in a federal system of government; they negotiated the competing political ideologies of republicanism and liberalism and economic ideologies of agrarianism and capitalism that shaped American

society. Within a hundred years of the Revolution, these issues had so polarized the North and South that the election of a Republican president, Abraham Lincoln, in 1860 prompted the secession of eleven slaveholding states. Only four years of bloody civil war restored the Union and destroyed slavery. This course will provide students with an opportunity to examine and discuss the significance of the American Revolution, Market Revolution, Jacksonian Democracy, and other important issues in American history as they explore the roots of sectionalism and Civil War. We will pay close attention to the interactions between Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans.

Course Objectives

Students will

- Become familiar with the main themes in American history from contact to 1877.
- Consider human agency, causality, and contingency in historical change.
- Identify the roles and contributions of Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans to the development of the United States.
- Learn to critically evaluate and interpret a variety of primary sources, including documents, archeological data, pictures, folk stories/music, and oral tradition.
- Use writing conventions appropriate to the discipline of history.
- Hone oral and written communications skills.

Class Organization

The class will meet twice a week. Most classes will consist of a combination of lecture and discussion. Lectures provide the background and context for the discussions. In order to keep up with the course material, it is important that you complete the assigned reading before class. In addition to attending lectures, you will be required to write two essays, five journal entries responding to assigned readings, two tests, and participate in class discussions. Detailed assignment instructions will be handed out in class.

Required Texts

Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty, Vol. I.* (W.W. Norton, 2006)

Frederick Douglass, ed. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, eds. William L. Andrews and William S. McFeely (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996).

Michael D. Green and Theda Perdue, eds., *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents* (1995).

Additional readings will be emailed to you or placed on reserve in Reeves Library.

Attendance

While there is no formal penalty for missing classes, you 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

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|-------------------------------|-----|
| Essay One | 10% |
| Essay Two | 20% |
| Journal Entries (5 @ 3% each) | 15% |
| Term Test | 20% |
| Final Exam | 23% |
| Participation | 12% |

The participation grade reflects the quality of your participation. It is not an attendance grade.

Assignments

Journals

At various times throughout the semester, you will write journal responses to reflect on the assigned readings. Journal entries should be two pages long, double-spaced. Journals serve as a place for you to think about not just the immediate readings but also the larger themes of the course. I will read every journal entry to ensure that you are keeping up your journal entries and taking them seriously. In terms of format and style, journal entries may be less formal than the essays. They will be graded for content, regularity, and willingness to engage with ideas, rather than for stylistic concerns such as spelling and grammar. Nonetheless, I do expect you to proofread your journals before handing them in.

Essays

You will also write two essays this semester. The essays will give you practice at reading and interpreting primary sources (documents written at the time). The first essay will have you write a fictional biography/autobiography of a seventeenth-century slave who has run away from his or her master. In the second essay, you will look at newspapers in order to determine why Virginia seceded from the Union in the spring of 1861. I will provide more information about the essays in class.

Important Dates

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Essay One | Sept. 20. |
| Essay Two | Nov. 27. |
| Journal Entries are due on the following dates: | Sept. 6 |
| | Sept. 18 |
| | Oct 11. |
| | Oct. 25 |
| | Nov. 20 |
| Term Test | Sept. 27 |

Late Policy

- All assignments are to be handed in at the **beginning** of the class in which they are due unless you have a doctor's note.
- Essays handed in after class will be considered late.
- Late journals will not be accepted.
- Computer and printing problems are not acceptable reasons for lateness.
- Late papers will immediately be assessed a 5% late penalty and 2% will be deducted each day thereafter.
- Emailed essays will not be accepted without prior permission of the instructor.

Academic Dishonesty

According to the Moravian College Student Handbook, the following constitutes plagiarism: "as the use, deliberate or not, of any outside source without proper acknowledgment." Plagiarism shall result in the offender receiving zero in the course. Please consult the Student Handbook for fuller details.

Students with Disabilities

Students with physical, learning, or medical disabilities should speak to me and contact Laurie Roth, Director of the Learning Center, to arrange the appropriate accommodations. Please make these arrangements in the first weeks of the semester.

NOTE: Readings may be changed or added throughout the semester.

Class Schedule

I. Exploration and Contact

Week 1

Aug. 28 – Introduction

Aug. 30

Video: Excerpts from *Black Robe*

Reading: Sky Woman and Genesis

Week 2

Sept. 4 – Invasions of America

Reading: Foner, ch.1.

II. Colonial America

Sept. 6 – Virginia

Reading: a. Foner, ch. 2.

b. Census of the Jamestown Settlement (email)

Journal Entry 1 Due

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the census as a source? What sort of information can the census tell us about the composition and attitudes of the first Virginia settlers? What can't the census tell us?

Week 3

Sept. 11 – New England

Reading: a. Foner, ch. 3.

b. John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity" (email)

Sept. 13 – Colonial Society in the Eighteenth Century

Reading: Foner, ch. 4.

III. The Revolutionary Era

Week 4

Sept. 18 – The Boston Massacre

Reading: a. Foner, pp. 149-170.

b. Three Accounts of the Boston Massacre (email)

Journal Entry 2 Due

What difficulties and challenges do the sources pose in trying to figure out what 'really' happened during the Boston Massacre? Why are the accounts so different? Does reading these documents change the way you think about the Boston Massacre?

Sept. 20 – Imperial Crisis

Essay One Due

Week 5

Sept. 25 – Revolution

Reading: Foner, 170-178, ch. 6.

Sept. 27 – **Term Test**

Week 6

Oct. 2 – Confederation and Constitution

Reading: Foner, ch. 7.

Oct. 4 – Constitutional Convention

Reading: The Constitution, textbook A39-A47

IV. The Early Republic

Week 7

Oct. 9 – **No Class – Fall Recess**

Oct. 11 – Women in the New Nation

Reading: Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood,” *The Many-Faceted Jacksonian Era: New Interpretations*, ed. Edward Pessen (1977), 47-69.
Available at <http://www.pinzler.com/ushistory/cultwo.html>

Video: *A Midwife’s Tale*

Journal Entry 3 Due

Read Welter’s article before coming to class. We will excerpts from *A Midwife’s Tale* in class. In the time remaining, compare and contrast the virtues of nineteenth-century womanhood as described by Welter with the real life experiences of Martha Ballard. Why do you think Ballard’s life might have differed from the ideal?

Week 8

Oct. 16 – Federalists and Republicans

Reading: a. Foner, ch. 8.
b. Jefferson, “Manufacturers”; Hamilton “Report on Manufactures.” (email)

Oct. 18 – The Era of Good Feelings and Bad, 1815-1828

Reading: a. Foner, ch. 9.
b. Washington Irving, “The Devil and Tom Walker,” 437-48. Available at <http://classiclit.about.com/library/bl-etexts/wirving/bl-wirving-devil.htm>

Week 9

Oct. 23 – The Age of Jackson

Reading: Foner, ch. 10.

Oct. 25 – Removal

Reading: Theda Perdue and Michael Green, eds., *Cherokee Removal*.

Journal Entry 4 Due

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, Cherokee culture came under immense pressure to change. To what extent did the Cherokee live a “traditional” lifestyle in the years prior to removal? Why did change occur?

Week 10

Oct. 30 – The Second Great Awakening and Reform

Reading: a. Foner, ch. 12.
b. Declaration of Sentiments (email)

Nov. 1 – The South and Slavery

Reading: Foner, ch. 11.

V. Antebellum America

Week 11

Nov. 6 – Mexican War and Compromise of 1850

Reading: Foner, ch. 13.

Nov. 8 – **No Class – The Instructor Is Away**

Week 12

Nov. 13 – The Collapse of the Second Party System and the Rise of the Republicans

Nov. 15 – The Coming of the Civil War

Video: Excerpts from Ken Burns's *The Civil War*

Week 13

Nov. 20 – Slavery and Freedom

Reading: Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*.

Journal Entry 5 Due

Narrative was a highly successful anti-slavery publication written by an articulate former slave. Douglass' life story provided a devastating and impassioned critique of slavery making him a leading figure in the abolitionist movement. Why do you think Douglass' *Narrative* was so popular? Who was Douglass' audience and how did he appeal to them?

Nov. 22 – **No Class – Thanksgiving Recess**

VI. Civil War and Reconstruction

Week 14

Nov. 27 – The Civil War – **Essay 2 Due**

Reading: Foner, ch. 14.

Video: Excerpts from Ken Burns's *The Civil War*

Nov. 29– Three Experiences of War

Reading: The diary of Nancy Emerson

The letters of Mary Jane Demus and David Demus

The letters of Cynthia and Clyde Potter

The letters and diaries are available on the "Valley of the Shadow" website.

<http://valley.vcdh.virginia.edu>

Week 15

Dec. 4 – Reconstruction

Reading: Foner, ch. 15.

Video: Excerpts from Ken Burns's *The Civil War*

Dec. 6 – Conclusion and Review

The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus with appropriate notification.