

HIST 113 – The United States to 1877



Dr. James Paxton

Comenius 306

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00am–noon; 2:00-3:00pm; 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.

Required Texts

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

Eric Foner, *Voices of Freedom, Vol. 1* (W.W. Norton, 2008)

Additional readings will be emailed to you.

Assignments

During the course, you will write one 10-page essay using the primary source reader *Voices of Freedom* as your main source. Lectures and the textbook, *Give Me Liberty*, will provide background and context. The essay will cover the entire timeframe of the course, that is from first contact to Reconstruction, and focus on a single theme. What theme you explore is up to you, but you must receive my approval first. Possible themes include but are not limited to liberty, religion, women, African Americans, Native Americans, economy. You will write the paper in stages throughout the semester. First, you will analyze and discuss the documents during eight in-class ‘workshops’ and then you will have an opportunity to write rough drafts of each section and receive peer comments. In order to facilitate the peer review process, you will be assigned to a writing group of your colleagues with whom you will exchange work, ideas, and constructive criticism.

Workshops

Periodically, throughout the semester (7-8 times) you will meet with your writing groups in what I call workshops. In some but not all of these workshops, you will collectively

answer questions based on readings from *Voices of Freedom* primary source reader and turn in your answers at the end of the class.

Grade Distribution

Essay Part One	15%
Essay Part Two	20%
Writing through the semester	15%
Term Test 1	15%
Final Exam	25%
Participation	10%

Attendance: If you have more than three unexcused absences during the semester, you will receive zero on your participation mark.

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

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.
- Computer and printing problems are not acceptable reasons for handing in work late.
- Work outside of school and having a number of assignments due in the same week are not acceptable reasons for handing in work late.
- 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: "the use, deliberate or not, of any outside source without proper acknowledgment. While the work of others often constitutes a necessary resource for academic research, such work must be properly used and credited to the original author. This principle applies to professional scholars as well as to students....All work that students submit or present as part of course assignments or requirements must be their own original work....When students use the specific thoughts, ideas, writings, or expressions of others, they must accompany each instance of use with some form of attribution to the source. Direct quotes from any source (including the Internet) must be placed in quotation marks...and be accompanied by an appropriate citation." Plagiarism will 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. Early America

Week 1

Jan. 15 – Introduction

Jan. 17 – Invasions of America

Reading: *Voices of Freedom (VF)*, Ch. 1.

Reading: *Give Me Liberty (GML)*, ch.1.

Week 2

Jan. 22 – Virginia and the Origins of Slavery

Reading: *GML*, ch. 2.

Jan. 24 – Puritan New England

Reading: *GML*, ch. 3.

Week 3

Jan. 29 – Workshop 1

Reading: a. *VF*, Ch. 2.

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

Jan. 31 – Becoming American?

Reading: *GML*, ch. 4.

Reading: *VF*, Ch. 3.

II. Revolutionary Era

Week 4

Feb. 5 – Workshop 2

Reading: *VF*, Ch. 4.

Feb. 7 – Empire and Colonies

Reading: *VF*, Ch. 5.

Week 5

Feb. 12 – Revolution

Rough Draft of Section One Due

Reading: *GML*, 170-178, ch. 6.

Feb. 14 – **Term Test**

Week 6

Feb. 19 – Workshop 3

Return Comments on Papers.

Reading: *VF*, Ch. 6.

Feb. 21 – Confederation and Constitution

Reading: *GML*, ch. 7.

Week 7

Feb. 26 – **TBA**

Feb. 28 – Workshop 4

Essay Part One Due

Reading: *VF*, Ch. 7.

Week 8

Mar. 4 – **Spring Recess – No Class**

Mar. 6 – **Spring Recess – No Class**

III. The Early Republic

Week 9

Mar. 11 – Federalists and Republicans

Reading: *GML*, ch. 8.

Mar. 13 – Workshop 5

Reading: a. *VF*, Ch. 8.

b. Jefferson, “Manufacturers”; Hamilton “Report on Manufactures.” (email)

Week 10

Mar. 18 – Market Revolution

Reading: *GML*, ch. 9.

Mar. 20 – Workshop 6

Reading: a. *VF*, 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>

IV. Antebellum America

Week 11

Mar. 25 – Age of Jackson

Reading: *GML*, ch. 10.

Reading: *VF*, Ch. 10.

Mar. 27 – South and Slavery

Reading: *GML*, ch. 11.

Rough Draft of Essay Due

Week 12

Apr. 1 – Workshop 7

Return Comments on Essay.

Reading: *VF*, Ch. 11.

Apr. 3 – Second Great Awakening and Reform

Reading: *GML*, ch. 12

Week 13

Apr. 8 – Workshop 8

Reading: *VF*, Ch. 12.

Apr. 10 – Mexican, Britain, and the United States

Essay Two Due

Reading: *GML*, ch. 13.

Reading: *VF*, Ch. 13.

V. Civil War and Reconstruction

Week 14

Apr. 15 – The Collapse of the Second Party System and the Rise of the Republicans

Apr. 17 – The Civil War

Reading: *GML*, ch. 14.

Reading: *VF*, Ch. 14.

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

Week 15

Apr. 22 – Reconstruction

Reading: *GML*, ch. 15.

Reading: *VF*, Ch. 15.

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

Apr. 24 **TBA**

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