

United States History Survey to 1877

Spring 2009

HIST 113 C

Tuesday-Thursday 8:50-10:00 am

Moravian College

Comenius 305

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Office Hours: by appointment

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Course Introduction:

The task before us is quite large. In a course spanning several centuries, involving three continents and examining an array of people groups, many heralded historical events will inevitably slip through the cracks. Paul Revere's ride might go unheeded, Francis Scott Key's humming might be out of earshot, and Betsy Ross's sewing prowess might have to be acclaimed elsewhere. In their place we will select several new people and events to highlight, thus enlarging and reshaping the historical narrative for the period covered by our course.

Although much of our time will be spent examining sweeping movements and influential ideas, I intend to keep us grounded by devoting at least some time to the individual lives of several early Americans. My decision to integrate daily life with broad political and economic circumstances arises from two considerations. First, I know that many students find early American history frustrating because it seems irrelevant. I trust that uncovering real people doing and saying real things will enable you to better understand their world and its fundamental similarities to and differences from your own. Likewise, I hope that the past will become more than spectacle for you as you begin to see the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries through the eyes of the people living during those years.

My second motivation for focusing on people draws attention to the overarching theme for the course. Colonial America was a face-to-face society, with individuals relying on personal connections to buy land, sell crops, run businesses, educate children, escape punishment, secure favor with the government, and operate churches. By 1877 newly expanded federal and state bureaucracies and institutions like railroad companies and investment banking houses had assumed control of many of these aspects of life that previously had been transacted between individuals. This course attempts to chart the transition from a face-to-face society to one governed increasingly by institutions and to measure this transition's impact on the lives of ordinary people.

Primary Sources:

To help you better understand what made these people tick, we will be examining some primary sources (i.e. memoirs, letters, transcripts of speeches). I will supply most of these documents as handouts, but some will only be available online or as a documentary. Reading primary sources can be a tricky thing. You will have to adjust to unfamiliar language and even more creative spelling, but I have confidence that the more you read, the more comfortable you will become with the writings of your fellow Americans.

It is also my intent that handling primary sources will introduce you to the task of the historian. History is not simply a collection of facts that historians spend their life chasing. Rather historians carefully examine the existing evidence (primary sources) and present an argument about it, much like a lawyer appearing before a jury. The evidence, however, is often tricky, requiring historians to analyze rigorously before reaching any conclusions about the past. For example, what might seem like a straightforward essay or travel narrative has to be inspected: What audience did the author intend to reach? How might the author have misread a situation? By the end of the course, I trust that asking such questions will seem natural to you.

These primary sources will also be at the heart of several of your assignments for this course. Three times throughout the semester, I will ask you to analyze several documents. Your job will be threefold: summarize the documents, identify what you don't understand and how those missing pieces might help to clarify the source, and connect the document to the broader course (ex: does the author seem to agree with the interpretations we talk about in class or you read in your textbook?). You do not need to write formally for these assignments (think of them as a primary source blog), and I will grade on a check plus, check, and check minus system, which correspond roughly to the letter grades A, B, and C. Each of these assignments will not necessarily be weighted equally; rather I will assign a "document analysis" grade at the end of the semester based on all three assignments. I will be looking for improvement over the course of the semester as well as effort.

Writing:

While examining primary sources is an important part of the historian's job, another major segment is converting interpretations of the documents into coherent prose. Having analyzed primary material, this course will also enable you to practice the historian's craft through your written assignments. Again, writing history means making an argument and then supporting your claim using evidence from the past. Both of your papers and the Midterm exam will require you to practice this skill.

Papers and Exams:

1. The first assignment will be on the book *Facing East from Indian Country* and is due in class on **February 10**. In this book Daniel Richter argues that "eastern Native people were anything but passive victims unable to change." For your **3-5 page paper** you will discuss how they rebuilt Indian country,

focusing on the factors that most influenced their reinvention. I will give you a more detailed assignment sheet during the first few days of class.

2. **Midterm Examination.** This exam will be in-class and will occur on **February 26**. The format for this exam will be True/False/Justify. The entire exam will consist of several statements to which you will respond either true or false and then justify your answer. Points will be awarded only upon how completely and persuasively you justify your answer, not upon whether you select true or false.
3. Your final paper will require you to use the **Kingdom of Matthias** monograph. In **3-5 pages** you will make an argument about one of the characters in that book and how that character's life reflected the enormous cultural upheavals of the era. More details will be given later in the semester. The paper is due in class on **April 14**.
4. **Final Examination.** The final exam will be held on Thursday, **May 7** at 1:30 pm. The exam will consist of approximately a dozen short answer questions, covering material since the Midterm. You will be given three hours to take this exam.

Grades:

Documents	10%
First paper	20%
Midterm	20%
Final paper	25%
Final exam	25%

Policies:

1. **Participation:** I have not included participation as a specific percentage of your grade, but it will significantly affect my overall evaluation of your performance in this course. Participation will affect your grade by as much as one third (ex: good participation will move your grade from a B+ to an A-; poor participation will reduce your grade from a B+ to a B). I realize that some of you are more reticent than others, so participation in discussion will not be the only basis for my evaluation, but your insightful comments and questions are the easiest way to indicate to me that you have thought about the material and are prepared for class. Each class will include both lecture and discussion so there will be plenty of opportunities to make your voice heard. For those of you who are naturally shy, I suggest that you come to class having already thought about what you can contribute ahead of time. I prefer to not randomly call on students, but I will resort to that tactic if you are persistently silent.

2. **Attendance:** Attendance will also factor into my evaluation of your class participation. **Missing more than two classes without written permission from the health center or the dean will automatically result in a lowering of your grade.** Should you be absent for health or personal reasons, your written excuse should be delivered to me on your first day back. Any absence (even those without good excuse) should be reported or explained to me.
3. **Late assignments** will be accepted but will be reduced by a third of a grade for every day that the assignment is late (including weekends and breaks). **Papers receiving a grade lower than a C- must be rewritten unless the low grade is a result of being late. The student must also consult with me before rewriting.** For the first paper, students receiving a grade of C+, C, or C- have the option to rewrite (again, unless the grade has been altered by lateness) but only after consulting with me. In both cases, I will average the two grades together. No rewrites will be accepted for the first paper after **March 12.**
4. **Plagiarism** will not be tolerated. Plagiarism occurs whenever you use someone else's words or ideas without putting them in quotation marks and citing their work in a footnote. The most egregious forms of plagiarism occur when students copy entire paragraphs or sentences from another source and try to pass them off as their own, but copying short phrases is just as illegal. Simply changing a few words from another author's paragraph or sentence does not get you off the hook for plagiarism—you have still pilfered words and ideas. Moravian's plagiarism policy is that you will either fail the entire course or fail the assignment. I have found that most students who have resorted to plagiarism in the past did so out of desperation, fearing that their paper would be poor or late. Please remember, however, that both of these conditions would be preferable to academic dishonesty, which affects not only your grade but your overall academic record as well.
5. I reserve the right to alter this syllabus should the need arise during the semester.

Readings:

The schedule of readings accompanies the course outline listed below. Readings are to be completed by class time on their scheduled date. Your papers and some exam material will be based on these readings, and I will expect you to be able to converse in class about them. All of the readings are from the three books listed below except one article, "Rebel against Rebel," by Woody Holton. That article is available on reserve at Reeves Library. I encourage you to make a copy of this article so you can bring it to class and use it for assignments. The following books are available at the bookstore:

Give Me Liberty!, Eric Foner

Facing East from Indian Country, Daniel Richter

Kingdom of Matthias, Paul Johnson and Sean Wilentz

Course Outline

Jan. 20: Course Introduction

Jan. 22: Indians of North America

Reading: **Facing East, pp. 1-68**

Jan. 27: European Overseas Expansion

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, ch. 16-41**
Documents: George Percy and John Smith

Jan. 29: The Chesapeake from 1607-1660

Reading: **Facing East, pp. 69-78**
Give Me Liberty, pp. 43-62
Document Analysis #1 due (George Percy and John Smith)

Feb. 3: Puritan Outsiders in New England

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, pp. 62-77**

Feb. 5: King Phillip's War and Bacon's Rebellion

Reading: **Facing East, pp. 90-109**

Feb. 10: Eighteenth-century slavery and the settlement of the Deep South

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, pp. 125-140**
First Paper Due

Feb. 12: Mid Atlantic Colonies: Urban Centers, Poverty, Religion, and Family Life

Reading: **Facing East, pp. 79-90**
Give Me Liberty, pp. 85-94

Feb. 17: Westward Expansion and the Seven Years War

Reading: **Facing East, pp. 164-188**
Give Me Liberty, pp. 158-166

Feb. 19: The Causes of the American Revolution

Reading: **Facing East, pp. 189-216**

**“Rebel Against Rebel,” by Woody Holton (on reserve)
Give Me Liberty, 167-190**

Feb. 24: A Revolution for Whom?

Reading: **Facing East, pp. 216-223**
Give Me Liberty, 190-200

Feb. 26: **Midterm Exam**

March 3: Spring Break: **No Class**

March 5: Spring Break: **No Class**

March 10: Forming the Constitution

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, pp. 201-212, 235-257**

March 12: A Midwives' Tale (movie)

First Paper Rewrites due

March 17: The Early Republic: Republicanism, Hamilton vs. Jefferson

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, pp. 230-233, 268-281**

March 19: Internal and External Threats to the New Nation

Reading: **Facing East, pp. 223-236**
Give Me Liberty, pp. 281-301
Document Analysis #2 due (Midwives' Tale)

March 24: Industrialization, mill culture, and labor movements

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, ch. 9**

March 26: The Market Revolution: transportation, industrialization, politicization

Reading: **Kingdom of Matthias, prologue, chs. 1-2**

March 31: Andrew Jackson and the Second Party System

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, pp. 349-369**

April 2: Second Great Awakening and Reform Movements

Reading: **Kingdom of Matthias, chs. 3-4, epilogue**
Give Me Liberty, pp. 416-420

April 7: Abolitionism and Women's Rights

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, pp. 420-440**
Documents: Mary Reynolds and Frederick Douglass

April 9: Nineteenth-century slavery and the Plantation South

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, ch. 11**
Document Analysis #3 due (Reynolds and Douglass)

April 14: Westward expansion and Cherokee removal

Kingdom of Matthias paper due

April 16: The Politics of Manifest Destiny

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, pp. 447-456**

April 21: The Union Dissolves

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, pp. 456-479**

April 23: The Civil War

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, ch. 14**

April 28: Whose Reconstruction?

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, ch. 15**

April 30: Conclusion and Review

Thursday, May 7: **Final Exam, 1:30-4:30 pm**