

United States History Survey to 1877

Spring 2015

HIST 113 A

Tuesday-Thursday, 8:55-10:05 am

Moravian College

Comenius 305

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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.

Two themes will occupy much of our attention throughout the semester. Our textbook, *Give Me Liberty* by Eric Foner, wrestles with the meaning of the word "liberty," and we will engage in much of the same examination. With Foner we will look at "the meanings of freedom, the social conditions that make freedom possible, and the boundaries of freedom that determine who is able to enjoy freedom and who is not."

The second theme steers our attention to the people of the past, hopefully making them seem more human and less mere spectacle. 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). 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 lives 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 not always immediately clear, 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 usually include the following: summarize the documents, determine their context and significance, identify what you don't understand and how those missing pieces might help to clarify the source, and connect the documents 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). Each one is worth 5% of your grade.

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. Your first paper and the Midterm exam will specifically focus on practicing the skill of persuasive writing. Your second paper will bring all of your skills together: writing with an argument and analyzing primary sources.

Papers and Exams:

1. The first assignment will require you to grapple with the ideas in the book *Cry Liberty*, which describes the colonial era's largest slave rebellion. It should be **3-5 pages** and is due in class on **February 17**. I will give you a more detailed assignment sheet during the first few weeks of class.
2. **Midterm Examination.** This exam will be in-class and will occur on **March 3**. 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 a Civil War document collection found online at <http://valley.vcdh.virginia.edu>. In **4-5 pages** you will make an argument about everyday life during the Civil War in Franklin Co., PA and Augusta Co., VA. More details will be given later in the semester. The paper is due in class on **April 23**.

4. **Final Examination.** The final exam will be held on Thursday, **May 7** at **8:30 am**. 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.

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 when your final average falls in a borderline zone (ex: a final average of 79.9 will remain a C+ unless you have actively participated in class throughout the semester; a 79.1 will move from a C+ to a B- with great participation; an 80.1 will drop from a B- to a C+ with poor participation). 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 not to call randomly 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. **Your two papers** will be accepted late but will be reduced by a third of a grade for every day that the assignment is late (including weekends and breaks). **First 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 31**. There is no rewrite option for the second paper.
4. No late work will be accepted after the last day of class, **April 30**.
5. **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.

6. You are responsible for keeping **hard copies** of all of your work. Electronic submissions that fail to reach me in a compatible form will still be counted late. In general I discourage electronic submissions, but if for some reason you do send me an assignment via e-mail, I will always acknowledge the message. **If you don't get a response from me, it means I haven't received your work, and I will expect a hard copy of the assignment the next class period.**
7. All electronic devices should be turned off and remain invisible for the duration of the class period unless permission is granted by the professor.
8. I reserve the right to alter this syllabus should the need arise during the semester.
9. If you are struggling in this class or with coursework in general, please don't hesitate to talk to me about it. If you wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability, contact Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Academic Support Services for Academic and Disability Support at the lower level of Monocacy Hall or by calling 610-861-1401. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

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. **Eight times throughout the semester I will also give short quizzes on the reading. If you miss one of these quizzes you can't retake it, but I will drop the lowest three scores before giving you a final quiz grade.** In addition to the textbook (*Give Me Liberty*) and the book, *Cry Liberty*, several articles and some of the documents for your document analysis assignments are available in a course pack from the bookstore.

Give Me Liberty! (4th Seagull Edition), vol. 1, Eric Foner
Cry Liberty: The Great Stono River Slave Rebellion of 1739, Peter Hoffer
Course pack available at the bookstore

Grades:

Quizzes	5%
Documents	18% (6% each)
First paper	17%
Midterm	20%

Final paper 20%
Final exam 20%

Course Outline

Jan. 20: Course Introduction

Jan. 22: Indians of North America

Reading: **Facing East from Indian Country, 41-68 (course pack)**

Jan. 27: European Overseas Expansion

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 15-43**
Documents: Native American speeches

Jan. 29: The Chesapeake from 1607-1660

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, pp. 57-64**
Document Analysis #1 due (Native American speeches)

Feb. 3: Puritan Outsiders in New England

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 64-81**

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

Reading: **Cry Liberty, 1-61**

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

Reading: **Cry Liberty, 62-150**

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

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 91-94, 95-96, 110-121, 157-160**

Feb. 17: Westward Expansion and the Seven Years War

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 164-172**
First Paper Due

Feb. 19: The Causes of the American Revolution

Reading: **"Rebel Against Rebel," by Woody Holton (course pack)**
Give Me Liberty, 174-199

Feb. 24: A Revolution for Whom?

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 210-222, 228-244**

Feb. 26: Forming the Constitution

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 257-270**

March 3: **Midterm Exam**

March 5: The Early Republic: Republicanism, Hamilton vs. Jefferson

Reading: **“Judith Sargent Murray: The American Revolution and the Rights of Women” by Sheila Skemp (course pack)**

March 10, 12: No Class, Spring Break

March 17: A Midwife’s Tale (movie)

March 19: Internal and External Threats to the New Nation

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 295-316**

March 24: Industrialization, mill culture, and labor movements

Reading: **“Building a Community of Labor” by Thomas Dublin (course pack)**
Documents: “Susan...in the Lowell Mills,” “Lowell’s Female Workers”
***Document Analysis #2 due (Midwife’s Tale)**

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

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

March 31: Andrew Jackson and the Second Party System

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 379-393**
First Paper rewrites due

April 2: No Class

April 7: Second Great Awakening and Reform Movements

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 432-443**
Documents: Lyman Beecher, Seneca Falls, Dorothea Dix (course pack)

April 9: Abolitionism and Women's Rights

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 443-464**

***Document Analysis #3 due (Beecher, Seneca Falls, Dix)**

April 14: Nineteenth-century slavery and the Plantation South

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, ch. 11**

April 16: Westward expansion and Manifest Destiny

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 467-479**

April 21: The Union Dissolves

Reading: **Give Me Liberty, 480-507**

April 23: The Civil War

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

Valley of the Shadow paper due

April 28: Whose Reconstruction?

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

April 30: Conclusion and Review

Thursday, May 7: **Final Exam, 8:30-11:30 am**