

United States History Survey 121 Syllabus

Dr. T. McCord, Fall 2019
TR 12N – 1:15; Nguyen Engineering Building 1103
Mr. Derek Stroop, TA

CLASSROOM TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

TEXTS: Tindall and Shi, *America: A Narrative History*, Vol. 1, 10th brief ed.
Robert Rutland, *George Mason Reluctant Statesman*.
Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, Blight, ed. ed 2

<u>Week of</u>	<u>General Topic</u>	<u>Tindall's Chpts.</u>
Aug. 27	Introduction, Native Americans, European Discovery	1
Sept. 3	Spanish Borderland and French (last add day; 9 th last drop day without penalty.)	1-2
10	English Arrival and Early Virginia. Historical methods.	2
17	17 th Century Virginia; Colonial South (last drop 50% penalty)	2-3
24	Exam #1. New England	3
Oct. 1	Middle Colonies & 18 th Century	3-4
8	18 th Century and American Revolution	4-5
15	NO Class 15 th . Revolution; Rutland Quiz	5
22	Federal Constitution; George Washington Lecture	6
29	Federalist Era and Jeffersonian Era	7-8
Nov. 5	Exam #2; Jeffersonian Era	9
12	Jacksonian Era; Slavery. GW Assignment Due 14th	10-11
19	U.S. Expansion; Douglass Quiz	12-13
26	Civil War. Thanksgiving	14-15
Dec. 3	Reconstruction	16
12	Final Exam 10:30 PM	

NATURE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

John Smith and his fellow adventurers founded the first permanent English colony at Jamestown, Virginia in 1607, but they were only the second Europeans to settle in the future United States. The Spanish had been in St. Augustine, Florida since 1565 and would settle Santa Fe, New Mexico just two years after Jamestown. In 1608 the French established Quebec and in 1624 the Dutch took possession of the Hudson River Valley. Thus, ethnic diversity was an American characteristic from the early days. Also, diverse people were found within the English colonies as Native Americans and Africans added to the mix. By the end of the seventeenth century, these colonies included Swedes, Finns, Germans, Jews, French Huguenots, and Scotch-Irish. Within thirty years after Jamestown, the transition toward a new American culture had begun. Regional economic systems were established early and continued for over 300 years as the South became agricultural and rural, while the North became commercial and eventually industrial and

urban. In 1619 African slavery was introduced—a tragedy that contributed to the great national ordeal of civil war in the 1860s. Virginia was founded for profit, but the Pilgrims and Puritans sought their brands of religious freedom, an idea that by 1786 evolved into Thomas Jefferson's bill in Virginia separating church and state. In 1619 the roots of representative democracy were planted in Virginia and were extended through the New England town meeting. Democratic principles were expressed nationally in the Federal Constitution and were advanced, in theory, during the Jacksonian and Reconstruction Eras.

Because this is a general education course in the Social and Behavioral Sciences, students are expected to have demonstrated the following learning outcomes: “key concepts, terminology, principles or theories within the field,” “methodological approaches to the field” and “how individuals, groups or institutions are influenced by contextual factors appropriate to the field.”

COURSE GOALS

The main goals are to present United States history as an unfolding story of the American people and to introduce students to history as an academic discipline. As a story, one hopes to generate curiosity about the past, which will stimulate students to read historical literature throughout their lifetimes. As a discipline, the course will touch upon the interpretation of history and the array of factors that influence historians and autobiographers. Frederick Douglass's autobiography is a primary source that will be read, discussed and interpreted in class. Another goal is to explore the character of George Washington, a study that began in cooperation with Mount Vernon. Students will write a paper analyzing his last will and testament, which can be found on line in digital form. The paper is to reflect aspects of his character that are found in the document.

Finally, students are reminded that the skills and goals of historians can be applied to other walks of life, such as the law, journalism, business, the park service, the state department, and a host of government-related jobs.

METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

To a great extent this is a lecture course that will be supplemented with films and with discussion of both the films and the assigned readings. The student must develop a style for taking notes and students are encouraged to ask pertinent questions and to make relevant comments on any material then before the class.

EXAMINATIONS

The student will be responsible for all material covered in lectures, texts, and class discussions. There are three examinations and three quizzes listed in this syllabus. There will be no make-up examinations without a medical doctor's written excuse, or, without being cleared with the professor ahead of time.

ATTENDANCE

Full attendance is expected and is necessary because lectures will cover points that are not in the readings, nor do the themes exactly follow the textbook chronology. It will be considered in the final grade. According to the university catalogue, "students are expected to attend the class periods of the course for which they register. In-class participation is important to the individual student and to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of non-participation."

ATTENDANCE AND GRADING

The student is allowed three unexcused absences; after that, there will be a full grade drop in your participation grade for each unexcused absence. Any combination of being tardy or leaving class early four times without an adequate reason will result in a full grade drop. An excused absence must be supported with a written note from a medical doctor, or, through consultation with the professor.

HONOR CODE

This code applies to all examinations and written work. This means that you may neither give nor receive any information during an examination. It also means that you may not use any material, written or oral, during an exam. Guidelines for assigned papers will be discussed as the projects arise, but at all times the student must guard against plagiarism.

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY

In this survey class, computer skills are not required to complete the work; however, it is helpful to use e-mail, and it is virtually essential to know word processing. The university now requires that all e-mail with faculty must be from a **GMU ACCOUNT**.

CELL PHONES, ETC.

Cell phones, earphones, cameras, radios, or any communication devices are not to be used in class at any time! Please turn off your cell phones before the start of class. Lap top computers may be used in the front rows for taking notes, but not for exams or anything else; screens will be inspected at random.

GRADING

The three exams and the George Washington paper/project are worth 20% each of your final grade. The two quizzes and the participation grade are averaged together, and are worth 20%.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

If anyone has a physical condition that requires a special seating location, please see me after class.

OFFICE HOURS, E-MAIL ADDRESSES, AND PHONE NUMBERS

My office is in Robinson B 226C, second floor

Office hours: Tuesday 11:00-11:45 am; Wednesday 6:30-7:00 pm, and by appointment

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