

SURVEY OF UNITED STATES HISTORY

HISTORY 2110

Dr. William D. Bryan

This course will provide you with a broad overview of the important themes and events in American history, ranging from pre-Columbian North America to the present. This is a lot of ground to cover! Rather than studying history by reading the words of present-day historians, we will learn about the nation's past through the eyes of people living it. We will read and discuss a variety of documents written by people experiencing formative events in the nation's past first-hand, what historians call "primary sources." This approach will shed light on the many different groups who have shaped the modern United States, and will also teach you the skills historians use to understand and make sense of different historical perspectives and complex events.

Course Goals:

This course will introduce you to the methods that historians use to understand and analyze the messiness of history. To see how historical narratives are shaped by competing perspectives, we will grapple with accounts from people of different backgrounds living in different contexts. We will consider how the way people remember important events has changed, and will explain why these changes occurred using historical evidence. This course will teach you how to distill large volumes of information down to the most important points, sort through conflicting accounts by weighing the value of each source, and express original conclusions in writing that you can defend with evidence. My hope is that this will make you critical reader and a good writer—skills that are valuable outside of the classroom.

Required Materials:

History courses require a lot of reading and this class is no exception. All required reading materials will be provided to you on D2L/BrightSpace. You will typically have two or more assigned readings for each class. We will spend time every class discussing these readings. All readings are listed in the course schedule and posted on D2L/Brightspace. I expect you to complete each reading before the class that is it assigned.

You are not required to purchase a textbook for this course. We are covering a lot of material, however, and you will most likely find a textbook helpful to provide further context on the topics we will be talking about in class. I have included optional readings from a free, online textbook, *The American Yawp* [available at: <http://www.americanyawp.com/>] for each week in the course, but you will not be evaluated on this material.

Grading Policy:

The class grade will be formulated from a midterm exam (20%), a final exam (20%), two short reading responses (10% each), a map quiz (5%), a historical marker project (15%), and class participation (20%):

The **midterm exam (20%)** and **final exam (20%)** will consist of a mix of identification and essay questions. Identification questions will require you to write a paragraph that explains what the term/person/event/image is and why it is significant. Essay questions will require you to synthesize evidence from lectures and class readings to answer broad questions in detail. You will be tested primarily on your ability to analyze historical information, come to your own conclusions about it, and defend these conclusions with evidence.

Midterm: June 29

Final: July 20

If you fail to take an exam during the assigned exam period you will receive a zero for the assignment, unless clearing your absence with me and scheduling a makeup time at least one day prior to the assigned date of the exam.

Reading Responses (10% each): You will complete two short reading response assignments, which will require you to briefly respond to a prompt about a series of class readings. An electronic copy of your response as a Microsoft Word or pdf file will be due to the dropbox on D2L/Brightspace at the beginning of class when each response is due. These responses should not be long—no more than one page, double-spaced, with one inch margins all around and 12-point font. Late papers will be penalized 10 points for every day that they are late.

Reading Response 1: June 20

Reading Response 2: July 11

Map Quiz (5%): This quiz will have you identify important locations from class on a blank map. I will provide you with a list of all potential locations beforehand on D2L/BrightSpace. The map quiz will be held in class on **June 15**.

Historical Marker Project (15%): For this project you will be required to research and analyze the history and details behind an existing historical marker. Your grade will be based on two components: your prepared analysis and a short in-class presentation of your findings. We will talk more about this project in class, but it will be due at the beginning of class on **July 19**.

Class Participation (20%): All classes will be a combination of lecture and discussion. Required readings are indicated in the syllabus, and should be completed for the class that they are assigned in the course schedule. Since these readings will take the place of the textbook, I expect you to have read the material and to come to class prepared to discuss it. You are also required to bring all assigned materials to each class. Participation is an important part of your grade (20%) and will be evaluated mostly on the quality of your observations in class. Participation may also involve writing about a particular topic during an in-class assignment, taking reading quizzes, or participating in small group discussions.

All grades will be calculated using GSU's grading scale:

A+ (97-100), A (93-96), A- (90-92), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D (60-69), F (0-59).

If you ever have questions or concerns about your performance in the course, please don't hesitate to speak with me.

Attendance:

Attendance is critical to success in this course. You are only allowed one unexcused absence for the term. More than one unexcused absence will affect your participation grade. Excused absences—such as illness, family emergencies, religious observances, and university-approved curricular and extra-curricular activities—should be properly documented, and must be cleared by me beforehand. You are responsible for scheduling a time to make up any assignment that you miss as a result of an excused or unexcused absence prior to missing class, and for catching up on all lecture material and readings. Tardiness is grounds for being marked absent from class at my discretion.

Academic Integrity:

Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated, and may result in failure of the course and disciplinary action. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Not knowing the university's academic integrity policy is no excuse for plagiarism. Take time to familiarize yourself with the university's policy on academic dishonesty, available at:

<http://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/files/2013/03/2014-2015-Section-II-Academic-Conduct-Student-Code-of-Conduct.pdf>.

Disability Access:

Students who wish to request accommodation for a disability may do so by registering with the Office of Disability Services. Students may only be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of Disability Services of a signed Accommodation Plan and are responsible for providing a copy of that plan to instructors of all classes in which accommodations are sought. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell me as soon as possible.

Classroom Conduct:

I expect you to conduct yourself in a professional manner at all times. Inappropriate or disruptive behavior is grounds for dismissal from the class. Computers will be allowed in class as long as they don't become a distraction to you or students around you. Cell phone use will not be tolerated during class. Please make sure you have silenced and put away your phone before class begins. No video or audio recording of lectures is allowed without my permission.



COURSE SCHEDULE*

*The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.

Week 1:

Textbook: American Yawp, Chapters 1-4.

June 6: **Introduction to the Course**
Native American Societies in the Americas

June 8: **The Columbian Exchange**
British North America

DISCUSS: Excerpts from Bartolomé de las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies* (1542)
Excerpts from *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682)*

*Assigned readings are available on D2L/BrightSpace.

Week 2:

Textbook: American Yawp, Chapters 5-11.

June 13: **The American Revolution**
Forging a New Nation

DISCUSS: Documents on the Boston Massacre (1770)
Excerpts from Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* (1776)

June 15: **MAP QUIZ**
Revolution and Reform
The Plantation South

DISCUSS: Angelina Grimké, *An Appeal to the Women of the Nominally Free States* (1837)
Selection of WPA Slave Narratives

Week 3:

Textbook: American Yawp, Chapters 12-14.

June 20: **READING RESPONSE #1 DUE**
Manifest Destiny and the Mexican War
Sectional Politics and Secession

DISCUSS: Cherokee Letters from John Ross and Elias Boudinot (1836, 1837)
James K. Polk's War Message to Congress (1846)
Excerpts from Hinton Rowan Helper's *The Impending Crisis of the South* (1857)

June 22: **The Civil War**
Emancipation and Rehearsals for Reconstruction

DISCUSS: Abraham Lincoln's Letter to James Conkling (1863)
Frederick Douglass, Address to the Massachusetts Antislavery Society (1865)

Week 4:

Textbook: American Yawp, Chapter 15.

June 27: **Reconstruction**

The New South and Jim Crow

DISCUSS: Booker T. Washington, Address at the Atlanta Exposition (1895)
W. E. B. du Bois, Excerpts from *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903)

June 29: **MIDTERM EXAM**

The Lost Cause and Memory of the Civil War

DISCUSS: James Loewen, Excerpts from *Lies Across America* (1999)

Week 5:

Textbook: American Yawp, Chapters 16-18, 20.

July 4: **HOLIDAY, NO CLASS**

July 6: **Labor, Immigration and Business in the Gilded Age**
Progressive Reformers

DISCUSS: Selections from Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890)
Andrew Carnegie, "Wealth" (1889)

Week 6:

Textbook: American Yawp, Chapters 19, 21-23.

July 11: **READING RESPONSE #2 DUE**

An American Empire

World War I

DISCUSS: Theodore Roosevelt, "The Strenuous Life" (1899)
Emilio Aguinaldo, "Aguinaldo's Case Against the United States" (1899)
"For Freedom and Democracy," *North American Review* (1917)

July 13: **HISTORICAL MARKER PROJECTS DUE, IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS**

The Great Depression and the New Deal

World War II

DISCUSS: Martha Gelhorn's Letter to Harry Hopkins (1934)
Cranston Clayton, "The TVA and the Race Problem" (1934)

Week 7:

Textbook: American Yawp, Chapters 24-30.

July 18: **The Cold War and the Atomic Age**
The Struggle for Civil Rights

DISCUSS: Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" (1963)
Malcolm X, "What Does Mississippi have to do with Harlem?" (1964)

July 20: **FINAL EXAM**
 Summing up the Class

Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State. Upon completing the course, please take the time to fill out the online course evaluation.