

AMERICAN CIVILIZATION TO 1877

Dr. William D. Bryan

This course is a broad overview of American history until 1877. Although we will explore many of the important themes and formative events of this era, we will focus on what the development of the United States looks like when placed in a global context. American society, politics, institutions, and culture were shaped in large part through connections with the rest of the world. Understanding these broader connections is critical to understanding American history. We will consider several key questions: What factors had the most significant influence on American society from outside the nation's borders? How did the United States shape events occurring throughout the rest of the world? How and why has America's relationship with the world changed over time? We will also look at American history through the eyes of outsiders, and will consider how people of different geographic and cultural backgrounds interpreted events in the United States. This course will therefore provide you with a foundational knowledge of American history, but will also push you to make broader connections by looking beyond the nation's borders.

This course will provide you with skills that will be highly useful outside the classroom. You will be expected to sort through large volumes of information and distill it down to the most important points. History is full of conflicting accounts, and you will also analyze information by weighing the value of each source, coming to original conclusions about the material, and defending your arguments with evidence. This class will improve your skills of analysis, and will help make you a more critical reader and functional writer—skills that are valuable to everyone.

Required Materials:

There are two required texts for this class, listed below. Required reading materials for Friday discussions and documents to be used in writing the paper will be posted on ANGEL.

--Eric Foner. *Give Me Liberty!: An American History*, Volume I, Second Seagull Edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008. (ISBN: 978-0393932553)

--Stephanie E. Smallwood. *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007. (ISBN: 978-0674030688)

Grading Policy:

The class grade will be formulated from one short paper, a mid-term exam, a final exam, class participation, and leading discussion on one assigned Friday. The grade breakdown and due dates are listed below:

Map Quiz (5%): September 24

Paper (25%): November 19

Mid-term Exam (25%): October 11

Final Exam (25%): TBA

Class Participation (15%)

Lead Discussion (5%): TBA

Grades will be calculated using PSU's grading scale: A (100-95), A- (94.9-90), B+ (89.9-87.9), B (87.8-83.3), B- (83.32-80), C+ (79.9-75), C (74.9-70), D (69.9-60), F (59.9 and below).

In each instance, 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. For this reason, tests will be essay-focused, with several identification questions. The majority of the final exam will not be cumulative. However, the essay question will address a major theme from the class, and ask you to consider it over the whole semester. Students who fail to take exams during the assigned exam period will receive a zero for the assignment, unless clearing their absence with me at least one day prior to the assigned test.

You will have one paper assignment, which will ask you to consider a packet of primary source documents provided to you. The paper should be around 4 pages double-spaced, and will examine the justifications for ending the international slave trade. The primary source document packet you will need will be provided to you well in advance of the due date, as will more information and an overview of paper expectations. Fifteen points will be deducted each day a paper is late, and papers more than four days late will not be accepted.

Friday classes will be a discussion-type format. You should read and think critically about the material beforehand, and be prepared to discuss it in class with your peers. Participation is an important part of your class grade (15%), and I want you to openly share your comments and questions about the readings. Participation is graded mostly by the quality of your observations—don't focus on quantity, but work to contribute to the ongoing conversation about the material. Groups will be assigned to lead discussion each week (except the first), and this will also count towards your total grade.

Course Schedule and Assignments: (*schedule is subject to change)

Week 1: Early Human Habitation of North America

Reading: Foner, Chapter 1 (p. 1-16)

August 23: Introduction to the Class

August 25: The Formation and Peopling of North America

August 27: Discussion, Native American Societies, How to Read Primary Sources

Assignment: Selections from the Diary of Christopher Columbus; Selections from Bartolomé de Las Casas, *The Devastation of the Indies*; Excerpt from Juan de Oñate's "Letter from New Mexico"; Excerpt from Paul Le Juene and Jerome Lalemant, *The Jesuit Relations*; William Bartram describes Southeastern Indians (available on ANGEL)

Week 2: Exploration and Contact

Reading: Foner, Chapter 1 (p. 16-42)

August 30: European Exploration and Contact with North America

September 1: September 3: Discussion, Europeans in the New World

September 3: Spanish, Portuguese, and French America

Assignment: Letter from Christopher Columbus to the King and Queen of Spain; Selections from Richard Hakluyt's writings about the reasons for settling in the New World; William Penn's Letter to the Free Society of Traders; Selections from Thomas More's *Utopia*

Week 3: The Development of Colonial North America

Reading: Foner, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 (p. 43-106)

September 6: Labor Day Holiday, NO CLASS

September 8: British North America: New England, Middle Colonies, British Caribbean

September 10: Discussion, The Nature of American Slavery

Assignment: Excerpts from Carl Degler, "Slavery and the Genesis of American Race Prejudice" and Edmund S. Morgan, "Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox"

Week 4: European Exchanges

Reading: Foner, Chapter 4 (p. 125-140)

September 13: The Columbian Exchange

September 15: Gullah Culture and Language in the Lowcountry

September 17: Discussion, The Middle Passage and its Influence on American Slavery

Assignment: Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, Chapters 3-7

Week 5: From Colonies to Nation

Reading: Foner, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 (p.106-124, 140-166)

September 20: The Anglicization of North America, Imperial Administration of the Colonies

September 22: The Enlightenment and Seeds of Colonial Discontent

September 24: Discussion, Thomas Paine and the World (**MAP QUIZ**)

Assignment: Selections from Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*; Selections from James Chalmers, *Plain Truth*; Edmund Burke "Speech to Parliament, March 22, 1775"

Week 6: Revolution!

Reading: Foner, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 (p. 167-200, 201-234)

September 27: The American Revolution

September 29: Worldwide Ripples of the American Revolution

October 1: Discussion, Revolutionary Legacies

Assignment: Thomas Jefferson, Letters about the Haitian Revolution; Toussaint L'Overture, "A Refutation of Some Assertions in a Speech Pronounced in the Corps

Législatif...”; Léger Félicité Sonthonax, Decree of General Liberty; The Free Citizens of Color, Address to the National Assembly; The Declaration of Independence (U.S.)

Week 7: Growing Pains of a New Nation

Reading: Foner, Chapter 7 (p. 235-267)

October 4: Constructing a New Nation

October 6: Affairs of Honor: Political Culture in the Early Republic

October 8: Discussion, What is Democracy?: Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists

Assignment: Excerpts from Patrick Henry’s speeches before the VA Ratifying Committee (5 June 1788 and 9 June 1788); Selections from the Federalist Papers: #'s 4-5, 10, 11, 14; Brief review for Mid-term Exam

Week 8: A Young Nation

Reading: Foner, Chapter 8 (p. 268-301)

October 11: **MID-TERM EXAM**

October 13: Growing Pains, The War of 1812

October 15: Discussion, American Democracy from the Outside

Assignment: Selections from Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* and Francis Lieber, “Letters to a Gentleman in Germany”

Week 9: The Changing Face of America

Reading: Foner, Chapter 9 and Chapter 12 (p. 302-337, 409-440)

October 18: The Revolutions Within

October 20: Reforming and Awakening Americans

October 22: Discussion, The Transnational Roots of Antebellum Reform

Assignment: Selections from the Diary of Charles Woodmason; Selections from the Autobiography of Mary Doolittle about the Shakers; Selections from Angelina Grimke’s *Appeal to the Christian Women of the South*; Excerpt from “Letter XXII: Condition of Women” by Fanny Wright; Excerpt from the American Temperance Society’s *Temperance Manual*

Week 10: Jacksonian America

Reading: Foner, Chapter 10 (p. 338-374)

October 25: Jacksonian America

October 27: Guest Lecture: Jacksonian Vice

October 29: Discussion, Andrew Jackson and Indian Removal

Assignment: Annual Message of Cherokee Chief John Ross; Selections from Jeremiah Everts’ “William Penn Essays”; Andrew Jackson’s Message to Congress “On Indian Removal”

Week 11: Manifest Destiny and American Empire

Reading: Foner, Chapter 13 (p. 441-453)

November 1: Manifest Destiny in the Western Hemisphere

November 3: The Mexican-American War and the Revolutions of 1848

November 5: Discussion, Debates over the Mexican-American War

Assignment: Selections from Congressional debates over the Mexican War

Week 12: The Old South

Reading: Chapter 11 (p. 375-408)

November 8: Slavery and Plantation Life in the Old South

November 10: Slave Resistance in World Perspective; Yeomen Families and Slavery

November 12: Discussion, The Ideology of Slaveholders and their Critic

Assignment: James Henry Hammond's "Cotton is King" Speech and "Letters to an English Abolitionist"; Selections from George Fitzhugh's "Southern Thought"; Richard Furman's Exposition on Slavery; Selections from Hinton Rowan Helper's *Impending Crisis*

Week 13: Sectionalism Rising

Reading: Foner, Chapter 13 (p. 453-479)

November 15: Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men

November 17: Sectionalism and the Coming of Civil War

November 19: Discussion, A Divided Nation? (**PAPER DUE**)

Assignment: Selections from the Lincoln-Douglas Debates; Republican and Democratic Party Platforms of 1860; Political cartoons dealing with the election of 1860

November 22-26: Holiday, NO CLASS

Week 14: A Divided Nation

Reading: Foner, Chapter 14 (p. 480-519)

November 29: The Civil War on Land and at Sea; The War in a World Context

December 1: The Civil War Homefront(s)

December 3: Discussion, Rehearsal for Reconstruction

Assignment: Excerpt from Charlotte Forten's "Life on the Sea Islands"; Excerpt from Elizabeth Hyde Botume's *First Days Among the Contrabands*; Excerpt from W.C. Gannett's "The Freedmen at Port Royal"; Text of William T. Sherman's General Order No. 9; Excerpt from Charles Nordhoof, "The Freedmen of South Carolina"; Excerpt from Don Carlos Rutter and Laura Towne letter to Abraham Lincoln; Petition of South Carolina Freedmen to President Lincoln; Letter of Northern Minister to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue

15: Reconstructing America

Reading: Foner, Chapter 15 (p. 520-555)

December 6: Reconstructing the Nation: An Unfinished Revolution?

December 8: What Does Freedom Mean?: A Comparative look at Emancipation

December 10: Review for Final Exam

Assignment: Review the material from the lectures, reading, and discussions. Come to class prepared to ask questions about what you don't understand.