

History 103
AMERICAN HISTORY TO 1865

Winter 2013

Professor: Rand Jimerson

**Office: Bond Hall 324
Telephone: 650-3139**

**Office hours: Th 10-12 and by appt.
E-mail: Rand.Jimerson@wwu.edu**

COURSE SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES

This course presents the story of the American people -- both individually and collectively, as members of various social, political, economic, and cultural groups -- from the beginning of European exploration and settlement to the end of the Civil War. The focus is on the experiences of ordinary people, as well as political and social leaders. By examining major issues and events in early American life, we will attempt to understand both the roots of contemporary society and the process of historical investigation.

This approach emphasizes the remarkable diversity of the American people and the forces that have led to conflict or consensus on significant political, economic, social, and cultural issues. Many of the concerns shaping the American experience prior to the Civil War have clear echoes in our own day. Understanding their historical background can help us respond to these issues both now and in the future. Other topics that stirred passionate responses many years ago may seem at first glance irrelevant to our own experience. That in itself reminds us that some of our own contemporary concerns may be short-lived, from the perspective of our country's historical development. Both of these realizations make up our historical perspective on the present.

The course objectives are:

- to gain an understanding of major issues and events in American history up to 1865;
- to learn about the diversity and richness of personal experience among Americans;
- to understand how historians select, examine, and interpret documents, photographs, letters, diaries, novels, memoirs, and other primary sources;
- to apply these skills in analyzing and interpreting primary sources; and
- to gain a fuller appreciation for the value of History for contemporary life.

REQUIRED READINGS

- Eric Foner, ***Give Me Liberty!: Volume 1*** (Brief third edition, 2012)
- Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, ***Good Wives***
- Henry Louis Gates, Jr., ***The Classic Slave Narratives***
- Sam Watkins, ***Company Aytch***

ASSIGNMENTS

(1) **Lecture classes**: Lectures will supplement but not duplicate the assigned readings, providing an overview and analytical interpretation of some of the major themes in American history before 1865. All readings should be *completed* by the date assigned.

(2) **Discussion sections**: The smaller discussion sections which meet on Tuesday or Thursday will emphasize active participation by students in discussing the assigned readings. These discussions will emphasize the analytical skills needed in writing essay exams. Attendance at the discussion sections is mandatory. **Note: For all discussion sections, please bring the assigned book with you to class!** We will refer to the books during discussions.

(3) **Exams**: There will be two mid-term exams and a final exam. Exam questions will be based on the assigned readings, lectures, and discussion sessions. You will be asked two types of questions: short answer identifications, in which you will identify the named person, event, or concept and then explain its historical significance; and essays, in which you will answer a broad-based question by stating your conclusion or interpretation (thesis) and then backing it up with factual evidence, examples, and your own ideas. The mid-term exams will be **February 8** and **March 1**. The final exam will be held during finals week, **March 18-22**. Date and time will be announced later.

GRADING

Your grade for the course will be calculated as follows:

- First mid-term exam, 20%
- Second mid-term exam, 20%
- Final exam, 30%
- Discussion attendance, 10%
- Discussion participation, 20%.

NOTE: Active participation in discussions will be an important part of your final grade.

CLASS SCHEDULE

<u>week</u>	<u>date</u>	<u>topic</u>	<u>required readings</u>
1	1/8	Course introduction	
	1/9	North America in 1490	
	1/11	Europeans “discover” the “new world”	Foner, ch. 1
2	Jan 15/17	DISC: Foner, chapters 1-3	
	1/14	Jamestown and the Virginia colony	Foner, ch. 2-3
	1/16	Pilgrims and Puritans	
	1/18	Europeans, natives, and the environment	
3	Jan 22/24	DISC: Ulrich, pp. 5-125	
	1/23	Freedom and slavery	
	1/25	New France and Britain	Foner, ch. 4
4	Jan 29/31	DISC: Ulrich, pp. 126-241	
	1/28	Declaring independence	
	1/30	Confederation and the new nation	Foner, ch. 5-7
	2/1	Federalists and anti-federalists	
5	Feb 5/7	DISC: Mid-term exam review	
	2/4	“What is the American, this new man?”: American identity	
	2/6	The world of Thomas Jefferson	
⇒	2/8	First mid-term exam [bring blue book]	
6	Feb 12/14	DISC: <i>Classic Slave Narratives</i>, pp. 323-436	
	2/11	Manifest destiny	Foner, ch. 8
	2/13	Expansion, transportation, and conflict	Foner, ch. 9
	2/15	Social and economic life in North, South and West	

4

7 **Feb 19/21 DISC: *Classic Slave Narratives*, pp. 437-545**

2/20 Jacksonian democracy Foner, ch. 10

2/22 Old South and slavery Foner, ch. 11

8 **Feb 26/28 DISC: *Classic Slave Narratives*, pp. 546-665**

2/25 Revivals and reform movements Foner, ch. 12

2/27 Abolitionists and anti-slavery agitation

⇒ **3/1 Second mid-term exam [bring blue book]**

9 **Mar 5/7 DISC: *Company Aytch*, ch. I-X**

3/4 Spanish America and war with Mexico

3/6 Compromise and sectional conflict Foner, ch. 13

3/8 Coming of the Civil War

10 **Mar 12/14 DISC: *Company Aytch*, ch. XI-XVII**

3/11 Civil War: battles and leaders Foner, ch. 14

3/13 Emancipation and end of war

3/15 America in 1865

11 ⇒ **March 18-22 Final Exam week – date will be announced [bring blue book]**