

Issues in American History

Short-form syllabus and course schedule

Instructor: Professor Dave Gartner

Course: HIS 1000-02 | Room: Lentz 337 | Meeting Time: TR 9:50-11:30

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What to Buy

There are only two books. Both are short. Both are cheap:

Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Destiny and American Territorial Expansion*

Brett Flehinger, *The 1912 Election and the Power of Progressivism*

What We Do In This Course

This survey course offers students a (very) broad overview of American history, from pre-Columbian contact up to the post-WWII era. It is, honestly, a frighteningly enormous amount of material to cover in a very short amount of time. So we're going to focus primarily on the physical and economic transformation of the country. Put another way: we will provide some answers to the question *Why does America look and work the way it does today?*

What's Important

The most important aspects of the study of history are (in no particular order) critical thinking, reading primary documents, and writing. Content mastery - having some understanding of the events of American history - is important in that it is necessary for thinking, writing and reading. While students are expected to know some factual information about American history, it is largely in service of these greater goals. Rote memorization of names and dates is not expected, nor is it particularly useful in adult life, unless you're playing trivia.

Yeah, Yeah. What About Grades?

Students are evaluated in their progress on critical thinking, writing argumentative papers, reading primary sources, and content understanding. Grades are broken down thus:

Discussion Participation	200 pts.	20%
Argumentative Papers (2)	300 pts.	30%
Reading Questions (4)	100 pts.	10%
Midterm Exam	200 pts.	20%
Final Exam	200 pts.	20%

Be Cool - Don't Do These Things

Use a cell phone and/or send text messages in class. Focus on the class. (And, no, you aren't nearly as good at multitasking as you think you are.)

Guess what? The glow of your smartphone lights you up in a darkened lecture room. Don't do it.

Pack up all your stuff early, then sit and wait for class to end. This causes all other students to pack up early as well and thus causes chaos.

Use a personal computer during class. If you want to use the internet instead of paying attention, don't come to class.

Lie to me. I respect honesty. Also, I cannot help you in any facet of your education if we're not talking about reality.

Turn in assignments late. There is a 50% penalty for late work. There is also a course schedule telling you when assignments are due.

Class Participation

Are you thinking about history while in history class? Are you paying attention? Are you experiencing any neural activity whatsoever? Your professor cannot guess: speaking in class discussion is essential.

Following daily lectures there will be a short period for discussion of the assigned reading. On days without assigned reading, this period will be given over to open discussion and/or exam preparation. Twenty percent of your course grade is dependent on your contribution to class understanding and discussion. Much class discussion will be centered around open-ended questions designed to prompt original critical thinking (and not memorized responses or factual information). Those performing at the highest levels will routinely engage in such reasoning. Want to get a lot out of this class? Or at least a high grade in the class? Say something intelligent at least once in every class period.

Participation Evaluation

A: Student actively and eagerly participates multiple times throughout class, serving as a course leader and raising the level of discussion and participation for all other members.

A-/B+: Student frequently participates in class, if not as insightfully or skillfully as those in the A range.

B: Student speaks on average at least once each class, but not as often or (more importantly) as insightfully.

C: Student rarely or never speaks in class, except when directly called upon, but does pay attention and does not cause any disturbances.

D: Student seldom or never participates in a meaningful fashion; student also frequently does not pay attention, sleeps, or creates disturbances, such as using cell phones or other electronic devices.

F: Student must be frequently reprimanded and/or removed from class due to extreme maladaptive behaviors.

Reading Questions

Ever find yourself reading an assigned text and wondering how on earth you're supposed to know what's important? Wouldn't it be great if you had a guide - something to tell you where to look and point out all the good stuff? And maybe help you prepare for the paper by showing you all the best material to think about? This is what the Reading Questions are for.

To complete the reading questions, download them from the class site on eRacer. Type in the answers on that document (preferably in a different color font, to make it easy to tell what writing is yours). When you are finished, upload them to the course site again.

By typing up your answers in this way, you will be typing important quotes and your own ideas, and thus be able to quickly use them for your argumentative paper.

Finally, note that any students who turn in identical (or very nearly so) sets of answers, particularly on the questions calling for individual reasoning, will receive grades of zero.

Issues in American History - Course Schedule

Any changes will be notified at least 24 hours in advance

Date	T/R	Text	Pages	Assignment Due
Feb. 2	R			
Feb. 7	T	.....Greenberg, Manifest Destiny	.....Part 1, pages 1-37	
Feb. 9	R	.....Greenberg, Manifest Destiny	.....Part 2, Chapter 1, pages 39-43	
Feb. 14	T	.....Greenberg, Manifest Destiny	.....Part 2, Chapter 2, pages 44-57	
Feb. 16	R	.....Greenberg, Manifest Destiny	.....Part 2, Chapter 3, pages 60-83	.....Reading Questions 1
Feb. 21	T	.....Greenberg, Manifest Destiny	.....Part 2, Chapter 4, pages 84-102	
Feb. 23	R	.....Greenberg, Manifest Destiny	.....Part 2, Chapter 5, pages 103-119	
Feb. 28	T	.....Greenberg, Manifest Destiny	.....Part 2, Chapter 6, pages 120-142	
Mar. 2	R	.....Greenberg, Manifest Destiny	.....Part 2, Chapter 7, pages 143-148	
Mar. 7	T	.....Greenberg, Manifest Destiny	.....Part 2, Chapter 8, pages 149-158	.....Reading Questions 2
Mar. 9	R			Paper #1
Mar. 14	T			
Mar. 16	R		Midterm Exam	
Mar. 21-23			Spring Break	
Mar. 28	T	.....Flehinger, The 1912 Election	.....Part 1, Chapter 1, pages 3-20	
Mar. 30	R	.....Flehinger, The 1912 Election	.....Part 1, Chapter 2, pages 21-33	
Apr. 4	T	.....Flehinger, The 1912 Election	.....Part 1, Chapter 3, pages 34-46	
Apr. 6	R	.....Flehinger, The 1912 Election	.....Part 1, Chapter 3, pages 47-62	.....Reading Questions 3
Apr. 11	T	.....Flehinger, The 1912 Election	.....Part 2, Chapter 4, pages 63-85	
Apr. 13	R	.....Flehinger, The 1912 Election	.....Part 2, Chapter 4, pages 86-105	
Apr. 18	T	.....Flehinger, The 1912 Election	.....Part 2, Chapter 5, pages 106-123	
Apr. 20	R	.....Flehinger, The 1912 Election	.....Part 2, Chapter 5, pages 124-140	
Apr. 25	T	.....Flehinger, The 1912 Election	.....Part 2, Chapter 6, pages 141-157	
Apr. 27	R	.....Flehinger, The 1912 Election	.....Part 2, Chapter 7, pages 158-179	.....Reading Questions 4
May 2	T			Paper #2
May 4	R			
May 9	T			
May 11	R			
Dec. 15	R		Final Exam: 10:30 am	

What To Do During Lectures

You'll find it is imperative to take thorough notes during lectures: most of the information necessary for doing well on the exams is only given orally (and not typed into lecture slideshows). For that matter, the course is much more interesting if you pay attention, and it is easiest to pay attention if you are actively thinking about things. Writing notes forces you to do such thinking.

You are encouraged to take notes specifically in preparation for the midterm and final exams. Both have the same format, consisting of four sections: chronology, matching, identification and essay. (There is no multiple choice or true/false.) These four sections are as follows:

Chronology involves placing major events or important people (e.g., presidents) in their proper historical order. The categories available always are very prominent events, and the choices available are almost always widely spaced apart.

Matching always involves connecting a noteworthy historical figure to something that person is known for.

Identification always involves elaborating on the historical importance of major events, innovations, or developments. You need to provide as many distinct points as possible with each of these. The topics for the Short ID will always be events (not people) and will always have at least one full slide (or appear on multiple slides) devoted to them.

Essay involves writing an argument, just as with the assigned papers, in response to one of several questions. Achieving proper argumentative form, as well as providing ample historical evidence, are essential.

You Mentioned Papers...?

Students are expected to write two argumentative papers, one for each assigned text. A thick packet containing assignments, writing instruction, advice and rubrics, will be distributed to you shortly. (But let's face it, you don't need it or particularly want it on day one.)

Student Learning Outcomes

Using sources:

- Distinguish between primary and secondary sources
- Demonstrate and introductory level ability to read and interpret primary sources
- Read and take notes on college level secondary sources without plagiarism

Writing:

- Develop arguments in response to prompts
- Use varied evidence to support arguments
- Gain fluency in standard written English
- Avoid plagiarism when using course texts

Speaking:

- Engage in discussion on historical themes
- Offer oral interpretation of historical documents, both primary and secondary
- Argue point of view using evidence

Citizenship:

- Gain an understanding of the individual's place in the world and in history
- Develop a sense of how values are shaped by historical time and place
- Gain an ability to think from other points of view

Content Mastery:

- Become familiar with the major events, individuals, ideas, and historical trends in a variety of geographic areas.