



Course Syllabus: American History to 1865

Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities & Social Sciences

HIST 1133

Spring 2026

Contact Information

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Course Description

General survey of American History from its European origins to 1865. Required of all baccalaureate students.

Why did Europeans colonize the Americas in the 1600s, patriots overthrow their mother country in the 1700s, and Americans fight a deadly war against one another in the 1800s? This course examines the history of colonial America and the United States to the end of the Civil War. The first third explores the effects of colonization, including the rise of race-based slavery, the displacement of Indigenous peoples, and the road to revolution. The second third considers how diverse Americans envisioned the meanings and consequences of independence. The final third examines the polarizing politics of slavery which led to the secession of eleven states. It took a deadly civil war to restore the Union, destroy slavery, and emancipate four million individuals. Throughout the semester, we will contemplate what it meant to be free—or unfree—at various moments in American history.

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- Synthesize historical material about colonial America, the American Revolution, the early republic, the antebellum era, and the era of the Civil War
- Develop an argument that draws on primary sources to answer a historical question
- Identify and evaluate the arguments of primary and secondary sources, paying close attention to language and context

- Communicate effectively by writing clear, well-supported exams and papers

THECB Required Course Objectives: This course fulfills a Texas core requirement for Critical Thinking, Communication, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility. As such, the course will assess the following learning objectives:

- **All four criteria are measured through a critical writing assignment,** which may include one or more of the following: Substantial essay exam question; a critical and analytical book review; a research paper or project; a reading response paper; or other appropriate assignment as determined by the course professor.

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Locke and Wright, eds., The American Yawp, Vol. 1: To 1877

- This textbook is available for free online at <http://www.americanyawp.com>. Should you desire a hard copy, you can either print out the chapters (~pages each) or purchase a print edition in the book store or on [Amazon](#) (currently listed for \$20.90). There is also a PDF available online for e-Readers.

The American Yawp Reader, <http://www.americanyawp.com/reader.html>

- This collection of primary sources is available for free online. The sections correspond with chapters in The American Yawp. In addition to accessing these sources via the link above, the primary sources are also available at the end of each chapter under "Primary Sources." Simply scroll to the end of the chapter. (Note: If you purchase the hard copy of the textbook, you will need to go to the above website to access the sources.)

Three bluebooks to be turned in on Friday of Week 2

- These will be used for your in-class exams. I will hold on to them and distribute them in class on the day of your exam.

Grading

Table 1: Percentage allocated to each assignment

| Assignments | Percentage |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Syllabus Quiz | 2% |
| Primary Source Analyses | 15% |
| Reading Quizzes | 15% |
| Weekly Participation | 10% |
| Exam #1 | 18% |
| Exam #2 | 20% |
| Exam #3 | 20% |

Table 2: Total percentages for final grade.

| Grade | Percentages |
|-------|--------------|
| A | 90+ |
| B | 80-89 |
| C | 70-79 |
| D | 60-69 |
| F | Less than 60 |

Reading Assignments

You are expected to complete all assigned reading, which includes your textbook and primary sources. These should be read differently.

Read the textbook for major themes and content. Consider the context, causes, and consequences of the people and events it discusses.

Read the primary sources for perspective. Why is the author writing the source? What does it reveal about the time the author lived? How does it better help you—and historians—understand what people were thinking and doing in the past?

Primary Source Analyses

Primary Source Analyses (15%): Throughout the semester you will be required to turn in 6 one-to-two page primary source analyses. You will complete two PSAs prior to each of your exams. To earn extra credit, students must turn in both primary source analyses early. You will receive 1 extra credit point added to the multiple choice portion of your exam. See the schedule below.

PSA #1 must be turned in by Sunday, Feb. 1 (or by Jan. 25 for extra credit).

PSA #2 must be turned in by Sunday, Feb. 15 (or by Feb. 8 for extra credit).

PSA #3 must be turned in by Sunday, Mar. 8 (or by Mar. 1 for extra credit).

PSA #4 must be turned in by Sunday, Mar. 29 (or by Mar. 22 for extra credit).

PSA #5 must be turned in by Sunday, Apr. 19 (or by Apr. 12 for extra credit).

PSA #6 must be turned in by Sunday, May 3 (or by Apr. 26 for extra credit).

Your Primary Source Analysis should respond to one primary source in the [American Yawp Reader](#) (link on D2L, also available under "Primary Sources" at the end of each online chapter). These assignments are to be turned in via D2L during the week that the sources are assigned. An instruction sheet on how to complete these assignments is on D2L.

Quizzes

Syllabus Quiz (2%): You will take a syllabus quiz the first week of class. It covers the materials found on the syllabus. You are welcome to consult the syllabus as you take it. You may retake it as many times as you'd like. D2L will record your highest grade.

Reading Quizzes (15%): There will be 6 reading quizzes throughout the semester. They are timed (15 minutes) through D2L and consist of 10 multiple choice questions based on the textbook chapter. They are due by midnight on Sunday (but will be posted a week prior). A missed quiz will be recorded as a zero. Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

Weekly Participation

Weekly Participation (10%): There will be at least 13 opportunities to complete a participation activity. These will consist of worksheets, reflections, or activities to complete in class. You must be present to complete them. Think of these activities as your attendance grade. You must be present for 10 of these activities to earn a 100% in this category.

Exams

Exams (58%): You will take 3 exams during the semester. Each exam will consist of multiple choice questions and short essays. Before each exam you will receive a series of possible question themes that you should spend time researching/preparing. You will be required to answer the short essays in paragraph form. The best answers make arguments with specific evidence. More information about the exam will be circulated the week before the exam.

Class Structure

Think about this class as consisting of three 5-week sections. Each section requires you to take two reading quizzes, submit two primary sources analyses, and take an exam.

Extra Credit

The only way to earn extra credit in this course is to submit your Primary Source Analyses early. See the due dates above (or D2L) for more information.

Late Work

I want you to succeed in this course, so I am willing to accept late work under certain conditions. Please meet with me to discuss this in person.

Important Dates

- Last day for term schedule changes: January 23, 2026
- Deadline to file for graduation: February 16, 2026
- Last Day to drop with a grade of "W": April 29, 2026.
- Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individuals to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct. [Office of Student Conduct](#)

For example, “cutting and pasting” from any internet source or poorly paraphrasing (i.e., changing a few words with the synonym function) without citing that source is plagiarism. Moreover, generating text via AI and citing it as your own is academic misconduct, and the instructor reserves the right to give that assignment an F. If you use Grammarly, do not let it rewrite sentences for you. That will register as AI.

Questions about Generative AI

When can I use Generative AI like ChatGPT in this course?

The use of Generative AI is allowed in this course for the following: brainstorming your ideas and checking grammar.

When must I avoid Generative AI like ChatGPT in this course?

The use of generative AI is not permitted for the following: Writing a draft of an assignment; and writing entire sentences, paragraphs, or papers to complete assignments.

Why can't I use Generative AI to write my papers?

Learning happens as we read, think, organize, summarize, respond, and engage. We don't want machines to do that for us.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all meetings of the classes in which they are enrolled. Although in general students are graded on intellectual effort and performance rather than attendance, absences may lower the student's grade where class attendance and class participation are deemed essential by the faculty member. In those classes where attendance is considered as part of the grade, the instructor should so inform students of the specifics in writing at the

beginning of the semester in a syllabus or separate attendance policy statement. An instructor who has an attendance policy must keep records on a daily basis. The instructor must give the student a verbal or written warning prior to being dropped from the class. Instructor's records will stand as evidence of absences. A student with excessive absences may be dropped from a course by the instructor. Any individual faculty member or college has the authority to establish an attendance policy, providing the policy is in accordance with the General University Policies.

Computer Requirements

Taking this class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. ****Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.*** Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers

media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Student Wellness Center, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by MSU Texas. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university

campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “Run. Hide. Fight.” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: [“Run. Hide. Fight.”](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course Schedule:

You will find the schedule of readings and assignments below.

| Day | Readings | Assignments |
|--|---|---|
| Weeks 1-5 Jan. 21 thru Feb. 20 | <i>From Colonies to States</i> Welcome to the first third of this course! Think of this course as organized into three 5-week sections. This is the beginning of your first section. | During these five weeks, you must: Complete a syllabus quiz Take two reading quizzes Submit two Primary Source Analyses (PSAs) Take your first exam |

| Day | Readings | Assignments |
|--|--|--|
| Week 1: Jan. 21 Jan. 23 | <i>American Yawp</i> , Ch. 1: "The New World": http://www.americanyawp.com/text/01-the-new-world/ Primary Sources: http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/the-new-world/ | Syllabus quiz due Sunday by midnight. Turn in PSA #1 on one of the primary sources (this week or next week). Submit by Jan. 25 for extra credit. |
| Week 2: Jan. 26 Jan. 28 Jan. 30 | <i>American Yawp</i> , Ch. 2: "Colliding Cultures": http://www.americanyawp.com/text/02-colliding-cultures/ Primary Sources: http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/colliding-cultures/ | Reading quiz due Sunday by midnight (chs. 1 & 2). Last week to turn in PSA #1 (if you did not last week). Your PSA#1 is due by Sunday evening. Turn three bluebooks on Friday, Jan. 30 |
| Week 3: Feb. 2 Feb. 4 Feb. 6 | <i>American Yawp</i> , Ch. 3: "British North America": http://www.americanyawp.com/text/03-british-north-america/ Primary Sources: http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/british-north-america/ | Turn in PSA #2 on one of the primary sources (this week or next week). Submit by Feb. 8 for extra credit. |

| Day | Readings | Assignments |
|--|---|--|
| Week 4: Feb. 9 Feb. 11 Feb. 13 | <i>American Yawp</i> , Ch. 4: "Colonial Society" http://www.americanyawp.com/text/04-colonial-society/ Primary Sources: http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/colonial-society/ | Reading quiz due Sunday by midnight (chs. 3 & 4). Last week to turn in PSA #2 (if you did not last week). Your PSA #2 is due by Sunday evening. |
| Week 5: Feb. 16 Feb. 18 Feb. 20 | <i>American Yawp</i> , Ch. 5: "The American Revolution" http://www.americanyawp.com/text/05-the-american-revolution/ Primary Sources: http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/the-american-revolution/ | Exam in class on Friday, February 20. |
| Weeks 6-10 Feb. 23 thru Apr. 3 | <i>The New United States</i> You are now in the second third (5-week section) of the course. | During these 5 weeks, you must: Take two reading quizzes Submit two Primary Source Analyses (PSAs) Take your second exam |
| Week 6: Feb. 23 Feb. 25 Feb. 27 | <i>American Yawp</i> , Ch. 6: "A New Nation" http://www.americanyawp.com/text/06-a-new-nation/ Primary Sources: http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/a-new-nation/ | Turn in PSA #3 on one of the primary sources (this week or next week). Submit by Mar. 1 for extra credit. |

| Day | Readings | Assignments |
|---|---|--|
| Week 7: Mar. 2 Mar. 4 Mar. 6 | <i>American Yawp</i> , Ch. 7: "The Early Republic" http://www.americanyawp.com/text/07-the-early-republic/ Primary Sources: http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/the-early-republic/ | Reading quiz due Sunday by midnight (chs. 6 & 7). Last week to turn in PSA #3 (if you did not last week). Your PSA #3 is due by Sunday evening. |
| Week 8: | Spring Break | No assignments |
| Week 9: Mar. 16 Mar. 18 Mar. 20 | <i>American Yawp</i> , Ch. 8: "The Market Revolution" http://www.americanyawp.com/text/08-the-market-revolution/ Primary Sources: http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/the-market-revolution/ | Turn in PSA #4 on one of the primary sources (this week or next week). Submit by Mar. 22 for extra credit. |
| Week 10: Mar. 23 Mar. 25 Mar. 27 | <i>American Yawp</i> , Ch. 9: "Democracy in America" http://www.americanyawp.com/text/09-democracy-in-america/ Primary Sources: http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/democracy-in-america/ | Reading quiz due Sunday by midnight (chs. 8 & 9). Last week to turn in PSA #4 (if you did not last week). Your PSA #4 is due by Sunday evening. |
| Week 11: Mar. 30 Apr. 1 Apr. 3 | <i>American Yawp</i> , Ch. 10: "Religion and Reform" http://www.americanyawp.com/text/10-religion-and-reform/ Primary Sources: http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/religion-and-reform/ | Exam in class on Wednesday, March 1. |

| Day | Readings | Assignments |
|--|--|--|
| Weeks 12-16 Apr. 6 thru May 8 | Slavery and the Road to Disunion You are now in the final third of the course. | During these five weeks, you must: Take two reading quizzes Submit two Primary Source Analyses (PSAs) Take your last exam |
| Week 12: Apr. 6 Apr. 8 Apr. 10 | American Yawp, Ch. 11: "The Cotton Revolution" http://www.americanyawp.com/text/11-the-cotton-revolution/ Primary Sources: http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/the-cotton-revolution/ | Turn in PSA #5 on one of the primary sources (this week or next week). Submit by Apr. 12 for extra credit. |
| Week 13: Apr. 13 Apr. 15 Apr. 17 | American Yawp, Ch. 12: "Manifest Destiny" http://www.americanyawp.com/text/12-manifest-destiny/ Primary Sources: http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/manifest-destiny/ | Reading quiz due Sunday by midnight (chs. 11 & 12). Last week to turn in PSA #5 (if you did not last week). Your PSA #5 is due by Sunday evening. |
| Week 14: Apr. 20 Apr. 22 Apr. 24 | American Yawp, Ch. 13: "The Sectional Crisis" http://www.americanyawp.com/text/13-the-sectional-crisis/ Primary Sources: http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/the-sectional-crisis/ | Turn in PSA #6 on one of the primary sources (this week or next week). Submit by Apr. 26 for extra credit. |

| Day | Readings | Assignments |
|---|---|--|
| Week 15: Apr. 27 Apr. 29 May 1 | Catch up on your reading for this class. Primary Sources: http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/the-civil-war/ | Reading quiz due Sunday by midnight (ch. 13). Last week to turn in PSA #6 (if you haven't already). Your PSA #6 is due by Sunday evening. |
| Week 16: May 4 May 6 May 8 | American Yawp, Ch. 14: "The Civil War" http://www.americanyawp.com/text/14-the-civil-war/ | Exam in class on Friday, May 8. |