

HIST-1133: US History, 1500-1865

Professor: Dr. Blake Hill

Location: Founders Classical Academy of Corinth (3600 Meadowview Dr.)

Academic Year: 2023-2024

Location: FCAC Upper Campus, Room #14

"Why on earth does it matter what happened long ago? The answer is that History is inescapable. It studies the past and the legacies of the past in the present. Far from being a 'dead' subject, it connects things through time and encourages its students to take a long view of such connections. All people and peoples are living histories. To take a few obvious examples: communities speak languages that are inherited from the past. They live in societies with complex cultures, traditions and religions that have not been created on the spur of the moment. People use technologies that they have not themselves invented. ... So understanding the linkages between past and present is absolutely basic for a good understanding of the condition of being human. That, in a nutshell, is why History matters. It is not just 'useful', it is essential."
-Penelope J. Corfield, Professor Emeritus, University of London.

Course Overview:

This course is a survey of the history of North America in the early modern period stretching up through the end of the American Civil War in 1865. Our aim is to understand the **how** and **why** of major historical events in this span of roughly four and a half centuries. These include, but are not limited to, such problems as: the foundation of European colonies in the Americas; the complex and often strained relationships of these colonies with the indigenous Indian peoples of the Americas; the evolving relationships of these settlers with their own countries of origin; and the internal tensions that would culminate in five years of ferociously bloody civil war.

Through careful examination of historical evidence and engagement with informed scholarship, we will examine how and why the United States emerged by the end of the eighteenth century as an independent nation that set itself apart from the mother country of Great Britain. We will then chart how this new country developed as an independent nation under a novel and quite unusual (by contemporary standards of their own day) republican government, and how this society wrestled with the difficult implications of its foundational declaration that all human beings "are created equal." Our investigation will require us to examine the political, social, economic, military, intellectual, and religious developments in the United States in the wake of independence. Finally, we will look at the origins, conduct, and result of the American Civil War (1861-1865), a war that remains the bloodiest in American history and which ended with the preservation of the Union and the destruction of the "peculiar institution" of slavery.

In examining the history of the United States and its neighbors (cultural, social, economic, political, religious, and so forth), we must not let our investigation be governed by either our personal prejudices or by rose-tinted nostalgia. Rather, we must seek to evaluate the past on the understanding that it was populated by people fundamentally like us in their human nature. Their lives, struggles, loves, hatreds, their great triumphs and terrible mistakes are all part of a story that is greater than the individuals that constitute the sum of its parts and should remind us of our own imperfections and frequent failure to live up to our own lofty ideals.

Course Content Disclaimer:

Students *should* be forewarned that this course will cover difficult historical topics, including matters relating to violence, religion, race, and other potentially controversial content. The reality is there are fundamental issues in American history which touch on all these difficult aspects of human existence, and it is impossible to develop a healthy and well-rounded knowledge of even basic U.S. history (much less modern life) without addressing them. We will not approach such content simply to delight in controversy for its own sake, but rather as means for developing a mature and thoughtful perspective on the history of the United States.

Texts:

Dr. Wilfred McClay, *Land of Hope: An Invitation to the Great American Story*. New York: Encounter Books, 2019. – This is the general textbook which will serve as a supplement to in-class lectures.

William B. Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, revised edition. New York: Hill and Wang, 2003.

Joanne B. Freeman, *Affairs of Honor: National Politics in the New Republic*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002.

Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life inside the Antebellum Slave Market*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Various primary sources to be provided in class or online.

Grading:

Exam 1 = 15%

Exam 2 = 15%

Exam 3 = 20%

Participation (Classwork and Homework) = 20%

Response papers (3) = 30%

Exams will consist of a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

Response papers will be typed papers of 2-3 pages in length, written in response to each of the three monographs. Students will need to explore the main arguments of the texts and the strength and weaknesses of each one. Students will also be given specific questions to think about and discuss in the paper. These will need to be formatted in Chicago-Turabian style.

For class participation, students will need to be actively involved in lecture and taking notes. Regular notetaking is absolutely essential for succeeding in this course. This is a college class; if you do not pay attention and do not complete assignments, your grades will reflect the amount and quality of effort you put in (or don't) to the course. Students will also be asked to respond to primary documents for homework or respond to questions in class.

Homework and Assignments:

Students are expected to complete their work and turn their assignments in on the specified due dates. No late work will be accepted unless it is under the most extenuating circumstances as determined by the course instructor. Rubrics and guidelines will be provided for all assignments. Plagiarism is absolutely unacceptable and will result in academic discipline in keeping with FCAC and MSU policies (see below).

Grade Scale

Grade	Points
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	0-59

Classroom Procedures and Conduct:

All standard rules and procedures laid out in the Responsive Ed Parent-Student handbook and the MSU Student Code of Conduct will apply to this course. The instructor will especially expect the following from all students:

1. Punctual and regular attendance.
2. Food and most drinks will not be permitted in the classroom (exceptions are made here for the use of water bottles or students with medical accommodation)
3. Students will show appropriate respect and courtesy towards their classmates and the course instructor
4. All students must be seated and prepared (with notes, pens, and textbooks) for class *before* the official start of class periods.
5. Personal laptop computers or recording devices will not be allowed in class for note-taking, with the exception of those students with documented accommodations.
6. On test days, students will not be allowed to get water or use the restroom until their test has been turned in, unless it is an absolute emergency This is to ensure no academic dishonesty is taking place.

Academic Dishonesty:

There is zero-tolerance for academic dishonesty in this class. Per the handbook, academic dishonesty is defined as cheating or plagiarism. Cheating is defined as the copying the work of another student. Plagiarism is defined as the possessing, viewing, or distributing pictures, text messages, or e-mails of test content or answer keys, or the submission of another author’s work (in the context of an essay) as one’s own without providing proper citation and attribution. If a student is caught engaging in dishonest academic behavior, they will receive a penalized grade on that particular assignment and suitable disciplinary action per the Student Code of Conduct. If you are having trouble with an assignment in the class, the best thing to do would be to contact the course instructor for help, rather than damaging your personal and academic integrity by resorting to dishonesty.

FERPA:

Please note that, per Federal law, your grades and performance in this course are confidential between myself and the individual student. The course professor cannot talk to your parents or to anyone else about your performance without violating FERPA regulations. You are responsible for your in-class behavior and academic performance in this course.

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 Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed.

Tentative Schedule:

I reserve the right to modify this schedule as necessary in case of class cancellations, greater discussion time, etc. To make sure you are reading this syllabus, please send me an email with your favorite person in history by class on Wednesday, 8/30.

Week	Topic
1	What is history? Indigenous America
2	Colliding Cultures
3	British North America
4	Colonial Society
5	The American Revolution
6	New Nation
7	Early Republic
8	Market Revolution
9	Growth of Democracy
10	Religion and Reform
11	Cotton Revolution
12	Manifest Destiny
13	Sectional Crisis
14	The Civil War