

**SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

HIS 5372.01

CRN#: 80056

Early National America

Credit Hours: 3.0

Fall Semester 2017

Instructor: Dr. Thomas H. Cox

Classroom and Class Time: Online Class

Office and Office Hours: I am available via phone and email at any time and will usually respond within 48 hours.

Contact Info: Phone: 936-294-4804, FAX: 936-294-3938, thc001@shsu.edu

Course Description: This course examines American history from the 1780s to the Civil War. Major topics for the course include: the founding generation, political struggles of the 1790s, gender roles in the Early Republic, settler-Indian conflicts, early U.S. foreign policy, Second Great Awakening, and slavery and the Old South. Over the course of the semester students will complete three reaction papers, a review of professional book reviews, historiographical or research paper, and class participation.

Course Objectives: Throughout this semester, our course goals are as follows:

A) Critical Thinking: Students will be taught to think critically and analytically, and to ask appropriate questions about different historical societies and culture, integrating and synthesizing knowledge they gain in the course, forming conclusions, and building an informed belief system from the complex of information presented in the course content.

B) Communication Skills: Communication skills will be addressed in this class through the reading and discussion of historical texts, attending lectures, and question/answer periods during class. Readings and class discussion will be used during presentation of the course material. Students will learn through the use of historical materials to critically evaluate the time periods in which these material originated.

C) Personal Responsibility: Personal responsibility will be addressed in this course as students articulate the values shared broadly by Americans as a result of experience gained through our shared history.

D) Social Responsibility: Social responsibility will be addressed in this course as students learn about the origins and development of American society and its stated goals of liberty, equality and creating a "more perfect union."

Readings: The readings for this course include eight assigned books listed below. The books may be purchased or rented on-line through websites such as www.amazon.com and www.barnesandnoble.com or through the campus bookstore. You may use any editions of the works listed below. These books are easily obtainable on-line and students are required to secure copies of the assigned books before the course begins. In addition to these books students will read shorter secondary sources posted by the professor to the course website throughout the semester.

Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (2014)

Annette Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* (2009)

Amy S. Greenberg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1846 U.S. Invasion of Mexico* (2012)

Steve Inskeep, *Jacksonland: President Andrew Jackson, Cherokee Chief John Ross, and a Great American Land Grab* (2015)

Mark A. Knoll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (2002)

Jon Meacham, *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House* (2009)

Alan Taylor, *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804* (2016)

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (1991)

Class Format (Attendance): As this is an online course, you have a class participation rather than a class attendance grade. Students are expected to log onto the course website at least once a week to access course materials and participate in online discussions. Students must post at least two comments per module. As with

an actual seminar discussion such comments should demonstrate both an understanding of the course material and an ability to think critically about the historical issues involved.

Grading: The final grade for this course will be based on three reaction papers (15%), review of professional book reviews (20%), historiographical or brief research paper (25%) and class participation (10%). My grading scale is as follows: A = 93-100, A- = 90-92, B+ = 87-89, B = 83-86, B- = 80-82, C+ = 77-79, C = 73-76, C- = 70-72, D = 60-69, F = 59 or lower. Pluses and minuses will be dropped on your final grade for the course.

Academic Honesty: In accordance with Sam Houston State University's Academic Policy Statement 810213, "all students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials." See <http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/> for more information.

Keeping On Top of Assignments: Every week throughout the semester, I will post assignments and course updates for the upcoming week in the announcement section of Blackboard. I will also send you these announcements via email. Be certain to consult the course website frequently for updates and changes to the semester schedule.

Americans with Disabilities Act: It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If the student has a disability that may affect adversely their work in this class, then he or she needs to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how they can best be helped. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center. See <http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/> for more information.

Religious Holidays: Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code. Contact me as soon as possible if you feel that you will be unable to complete assignments or exams by the due dates due to religious reasons.

Visitors in the Classroom: As the course website contains private information regarding assignments, comments, and student grades, do not share your course access with others. Others wishing to observe the class should contact the professor directly.

Assignments: You will have to complete five writing assignments for this class as listed below. Students will also participate in on-line discussions based on the course readings. Students have some flexibility in choosing when to complete various assignments. But the professor and students must accordingly work together to budget their time and schedule their assignments responsibly. The professor will post more specific information on each assignment on-line as the semester progresses.

1. Reaction Papers: Students will write three 4-6 page reaction papers based on the assigned readings for the course. Each reaction paper needs to discuss not merely discuss the books' content, but also the analytical and methodological techniques used by the author and the overall quality of the book. The professor will post reaction paper assignments for each book once every two weeks throughout the semester. It is a good idea to choose books on weeks you are not completing other assignments.

2. Review of Professional Book Reviews: Students will read three book reviews of one of the books from the assigned reading list. The book chosen for this assignment must be a different book than the three books that you choose to write reactions papers on. Whenever possible the book reviews need to be of the longer 3-5 page variety such as those found in *Reviews in American History*, *William and Mary Quarterly*, and the *New York Review of Books* if at all possible. Students will then write a 4-6-page review that critiques the three book reviews you have chosen. In general, what does each scholar think about the book they are reviewing? What methods do they use to critique and analyze the book? Do you agree with their interpretation of the book under consideration? How would you rate the book in question? The review of professional book reviews assignment is due by the deadline of the scheduled module for the book you are reviewing. For instance, if you write a review of reviews assignment for Module Three: The Hemingses of Monticello your paper would be due by Midnight, Sun. Oct. 1.

3. Historiographical or Research Paper: Students will write an 10-12 page paper that provides either an in-depth examination of a particular historical event (i.e. the significance of Second Great Awakening, Nat Turner's slave revolt) or an historiographical trend (such as how historians over the course of the 19th and 20th century have interpreted U.S. Constitution). The professor will post instructions for this assignment on the course website. Be certain to consult with the professor in order to help determine a clear, concise topic that ideally both interests you and that is manageable given your current time constraints.

4. On-Line Discussions: Every two weeks the professor will post not only a new reaction paper assignment on SHSU On-Line but will also start a new discussion on the assigned book. Students need to debate and discuss the book by providing at least two posts per module that demonstrate an understanding of the assigned readings and an ability to think critically about the questions raised. On-line discussion is an important component of on-line courses which will enhance your understanding of the assigned readings and in turn improve your reaction papers and review of review papers. Those hoping to do well on this portion of the grade new to participate in each on-line discussion, even for books you do not complete written assignments on.

Use of Electronic Devices in the Classroom: As online students, make certain you have a working computer with a stable, reliable internet connection. Be certain to clear your cache of cookies, pop-ups, and other files periodically throughout the semester. For further information on student conduct in and out of the classroom see the Code of Student Conduct. <http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>

Running Into Problems: Over the course of the semester, you may run into problems that range from falling behind in the course to medical or family related emergencies. If you find yourself in such a situation, please contact me as soon as possible so that we may address the matter directly.

COURSE SCHEDULE		
Module and Assigned Readings	Inclusive Module Dates	Assignment Deadline
Module One: American Revolutions Michael D. Hattem, "Historiography of the American Revolution" Alan Taylor, <i>American Revolutions</i>	Wed. Aug. 23- Sun. Sept. 3.	Midnight, Sun. Sept. 3
Module Two: A Midwife's Tale Jean Matthews, "Race, Sex and the Dimensions of Liberty" in Antebellum America" Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, <i>A Midwife's Tale</i>	Mon. Sept 4 Sun. Sept. 17	Midnight, Sun. Sept. 17

Module Three: The Hemingses of Monticello Mark Silk, Did John Adams Out Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings? Annette Gordon-Reed, <i>The Hemingses of Monticello</i>	Mon. Sept. 18 Sun. Oct. 1	Midnight, Sun. Oct. 1
Module Four: American Lion Mark R. Cheatham, “Andrew Jackson, Slavery, and Historians” Jon Meacham, <i>American Lion</i>	Mon. Oct. 2 - Sun. Oct. 15	Midnight, Sun. Oct. 15
Module Five: America’s God Johann N. Neem, “Creating Social Capital in the Early American Republic” Mark A. Knoll, <i>America’s God</i>	Mon. Mon. 16- Sun. Oct. 29	Midnight, Sun. Oct. 29
Module Six: Jacksonland James Taylor Carson, “The Obituary of Nations” Steve Inskeep, <i>Jacksonland</i>	Mon. Oct. 30- Sun. Nov. 12	Midnight, Sun. Nov. 12
Module Seven: A Wicked War James M. McCaffrey “All the Varieties of a Soldier’s Life” Amy S. Greenberg, <i>A Wicked War</i>	Mon. Nov. 13- Sun. Nov. 26	Midnight, Sun. Sun. Nov. 26
Module Eight: The Half Has Never Been Told Dylan Penningroth, “Writing Slavery’s History” Edward E. Baptist, <i>The Half Has Never Been Told</i>	Mon. Nov. 27- Sun. Dec. 10	Midnight, Sun. Dec. 10
Midnight, Sun. Dec. 10, Research Papers Due		