

**HIST 1301**  
**United States History to 1876**  
**College of Humanities and Social Sciences**

Contact:

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Office Hours: Tue/Thurs: 11-12:15, 2-3:15, or by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The United States originated as a republic born from European imperial ambitions and colonial conflict, emerging from a bloody eighteenth century as a new nation founded on the radical principles of elected representation and equal protection under the law. In the first century of its existence the United States expanded rapidly, but saw its internal fissures grow in proportion. The introduction of Jacksonian Democracy, which empowered white men, gave rise to the clamor for more freedoms and protections, including women's right to vote, the end of slavery, and moral quandaries posed by the United States' relationship to Native Peoples. The problem of slavery, in particular, emerged as a burden too heavy for the young republic to bare, and ultimately brought the United States into a desperate and bloody internal conflict. Yet, out of the ashes of the Civil War arose new opportunities to reignite the radical spirit of the American Revolution.

**SKILL OBJECTIVES:**

**Critical Thinking:** Students will be taught to think critically and analytically, and to ask appropriate questions about different historical societies and cultures, 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.

**Communication:** To include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication. Communication skills will be addressed in this class through class participation, the reading and discussion of historical texts, attending lectures, and watching films. Students will learn through the use of historical materials to critically evaluate the time periods in which these materials originated.

**Personal Responsibility:** To include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making. Personal responsibility will be addressed in this course as students articulate how to make sound ethical judgments based on the development of their personal value system. By studying how individuals in the past drew upon their cultural belief systems to make ethical choices students will learn how their personal choices based upon ideas, values, and beliefs influence their larger society and culture today.

**Social Responsibility:** To include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities. Social Responsibility will be addressed in this course as students learn about the ways in which individuals and groups in the past made decisions aimed at promoting civil discourse, civic participation, and other social values so as to improve society for all. Students will thus learn about their own social responsibilities in improving current American society.

## **CLASS DIRECTIVES**

Classes will follow a standard format:

A) lecture: Lectures and note taking will be integral, they will provide the necessary context to help guide reading the books. Lectures will be used to explain historical background, and further flesh-out specific events, people, and perspectives on history

B) Discussion: Classes will have a discussion component where we will work to sort out current readings, and also contextualize the readings against cultural artifacts: including art and video evidence.

Since a full understanding of the course material will not be possible without class meetings, attendance is mandatory. Absences in excess of the university limit (2, or 3 hours class time) will negatively impact your grade. Excused absences must be properly documented, and multiple tardy arrivals (i.e., more than one) will be treated as unexcused absences.

Participation must strictly adhere to principles of civil discourse, respect, and courteousness. Civil disagreement is welcomed, and even encouraged. However, belligerence, threats, and insults will not be tolerated.

Your attendance counts as only a component of your participation grade. Participation will be graded for each class, and will be based on engagement, note-taking, and active, vocal, contribution to class discussion.

Deadlines are finite and non-negotiable. Late assignments will be penalized. Assignments that are over 48 hours late will not be accepted.

Any accommodation for any variety of special needs will most certainly be made. It is, however, the students' responsibility to inform the professor and make sure that any individual accommodation necessary has been certified with the university through the proper channels.

Laptops are allowed for the purpose of notetaking. Any abuse of this privilege will result in its revocation. All other data devices are strictly forbidden.

Food and drink are welcome in the course, so long as they are consumed in a courteous fashion. Obnoxiousness will result in revocation of this privilege.

### **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain 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. A copy of the University policy is available on the Sam Houston State University website. If you need clarification about what constitutes plagiarism, do not hesitate to ask or see me during office hours.

#### **STUDENT ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS POLICY:**

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. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20...." 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. University policy 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

#### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY:**

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 you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center.

#### **VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM:**

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

#### **EXAMS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

All examinations will be based in two components. The first will be a short answer response, identifying key terms, places, organizations, and people. The second will be essay responses to thematic questions.

Study Guides will be provided prior to all examinations

#### **Reading Responses:**

In addition to examinations you will be prompted to answer several reading response questions over the course of the semester. These responses should be written in a standard essay format and be about 200 words in length.

Reading responses will be graded on the following criteria:

Adherence to format

Demonstration of your knowledge of the material (including but not limited to proper quotations, examples, and themes from the readings)

Proper citations (a page number citation must be included for all specific evidence from the readings)

Clarity of style and grammar

## **GRADES**

All grades will be calculated according to the standard scale used by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	<60

Final grades will be figured according to the following weights:

Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	25%
Exam 3	30%
Reading Responses	15%
Participation	10%

## **REQUIRED BOOKS**

### **(RECOMMENDED)**

Textbook: Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty* (Vol. 1)

ISBN-13: 978-0393920307

ISBN-10: 0393920305

Assigned books:

Jill Lepore, *In the Name of War*

**ISBN-13:** 978-0679761853

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

**ISBN-13:** 978-0307475992

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Please note that the course schedule is subject to change, if necessary. Any amendments to the schedule of courses will be announced and distributed with ample notice.

THUR 8/24: Course Introduction, the "First American Republic"

TUE 8/29: Pre-Columbian America

THUR 8/31: Contact and Exploration: The French and Spanish Empires in the Americas

TUE 9/05: The “English” Colonies

THUR 9/07: The Colonial Wars of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century

TUE 9/12: The Road to Independence and the American Revolution

**Reading Response Due**

THUR 9/14: Forging a New Nation

TUE 9/19: The Articles Government and Instability

THUR 9/21: The Constitution

TUE 9/26: Edmund S. Morgan’s “American Paradox”

THUR 9/28: EXAM 1

TUE 10/3 The Republic, Native Peoples, Empires, and the War of 1812

THUR 10/5: Society and Culture in the Era of Good Feelings.

TUE 10/10: The Rise of the Democrats and the Second Party System

**Reading Response Due**

THUR 10/12: Trails West: Indian Removals and Overland Trails

TUE 10/17: Expansion, Emigration, and Manifest Destiny

THUR 10/19: Contestation and Ambition in Northern Mexico

TUE 10/24: The Mexican-American War

**Reading Response Due**

THUR 10/26: Polk’s Legacy and the Growing Sectional Divide

TUE 10/31: Exam 2

THUR 11/02: Challenging the Rules of the Republic: Abolition and Women’s Suffrage

TUE 11/07: The Troubled 1850s

THUR 11/09: The Rise of the Republican Party and Secession

TUE 11/14: The Civil War

**Reading Response Due**

THUR 11/16: Reconstruction: Part 1

TUE 11/21: Reconstruction: Part 2

THUR 11/23: NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING BREAK)

TUE 11/28: The New American West

THUR 11/30: The Collapse of Reconstruction and Dawn of the Gilded Age

FINALS WEEK: EXAM 3

(Check your exam schedule)