



HIST 2700
The United States to 1877
Fall 2007
MWF 9:30 AM / BNR 102

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Office Hours
MWF / 10:30 - 11:20,
1:15 - 2:15,
& by appt.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course examines the beginnings of the American republic from the moment of European encroachment into North America through the era of Reconstruction. A period of immense change and formative influence for American society no less than the wider world, the period includes a number of the most significant and interesting topics in America's past, including the entrenchment and abolition of racial slavery, the Scientific, American, and Industrial Revolutions, the advent of modern industrial society, the First and Second Great Awakenings, and—certainly not least—the sectional crisis, Civil War, and reconstruction of the American Union.

The instructor's philosophy of teaching plays a central role in this course. My task (as I see it) is to teach students *how to think, not what to think*. In this sense, history is both a *subject* of study and a *medium* of study useful for developing skills of critical thinking. Provided diverse material through lectures, classroom discussion, film study, and readings, students will analyze key issues from America's past, marshal compelling evidence, and arrive at their own conclusions. All the while, students will be expected to defend their arguments with clear and well-constructed reasoning.

Toward this end, the course introduces students to the intricacies of historical thought. Besides providing students a basic understanding of historiography, the class emphasizes matters of historical memory and helps students distinguish myth from accurate historical fact and interpretation.

ASSIGNED READING

Books to Purchase (available in the Utah State University Bookstore... and elsewhere)

Wood, Gordon. *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*. New York: Penguin, 2005.
ISBN: 0143035282.

Ulrich, Laurel. *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812*.
New York: Vintage, 1991. ISBN: 0679733760.

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself*. Reprint with Intro. by Peter J. Gomes. New York: Signet Classics, 1997.
ISBN: 0451526732.

McPherson, James. *What They Fought For, 1861-1865*. New York: Anchor Books, 1995.
ISBN: 0385476345.

*Optional textbook: Foner, Eric. *Give Me Liberty! An American History*, Vol. 1, Seagull Edition.
New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN: 0393927830. (*Recommended but not required. Not available in USU Bookstore but easily obtained from Amazon.com, etc.)

Additional Readings

In addition to the books listed on the previous page, students will receive numerous materials—maps, graphs, etc.—from the instructor. Students are accountable for all materials provided by the instructor.

ASSIGNED FILM STUDY (The great majority of film study is to be completed outside of class. See page 5 below.)

- “Part 1,” episode 1 of *Thomas Jefferson: A Film by Ken Burns*. PBS, 1996. 85 min.
- “The Rise and Fall of the Warrior Culture of the Plains: The Indians,” episode 1 of *The Great Indian Wars, 1540-1890*. BCI, 2005. 40 min.
- “The Downward Spiral,” episode 1 of *Slavery and the Making of America*. Thirteen/WNET New York/PBS, 2004. 60 min.
- “The Country and the City, 1609-1825,” episode 1 of *New York: A Documentary Film*. Thirteen/WNET New York/PBS, 2001. 110 min.
- “Cauldron of War,” episode 5 of *500 Nations*. Warner Studios, 1995. 45 min.
- “Removal,” episode 6 of *500 Nations*. 45 min.
- “Liberty in the Air,” episode 2 of *Slavery and the Making of America*. 60 min.
- “*Marbury v Madison* (1803),” episode 1 of *Equal Justice Under Law*. Committee of the Bicentennial of the Constitution, Judicial Conference of the United States, 1987. 30 min.
- “*Gibbons v Ogden* (1824),” episode 2 of *Equal Justice Under Law*. 30 min.
- “*Maryland v McCulloch* (1819),” episode 3 of *Equal Justice Under Law*. 30 min.
- “Seeds of Destruction,” episode 3 of *Slavery and the Making of America*. 60 min.
- “Empire Upon the Trails,” episode 1 of *The West*. PBS, 1996. 84 min.
- “Order and Disorder, 1825-1865,” episode 2 of *New York: A Documentary Film*. 110 min.
- “Revolution,” episode 1 of *Not for Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*. WETA/PBS, 1999. 80 min.
- Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Taft Entertainment, 1987. (110 min.)
- “From Mud Hole to Metropolis,” episode 1 of *Chicago: City of the Century*. WGBH/PBS, 2003. 90 min.
- “Death Runs Riot,” episode 4 of *The West*. PBS, 1996. excerpt.
- “The Cause,” episode 1 of *The Civil War: A Film by Ken Burns*. Florentine Films. 1990. 50 min. excerpt.
- “Revolution,” episode 1 of *Reconstruction: The Second Civil War*. PBS, 2004. 90 min.
- “Retreat,” episode 2 of *Reconstruction*. 90 min.

MATERIALS DISCLAIMER: This course abides by university policies regarding student objections of material content. Students must notify the instructor within the first two weeks of class (by Mon., Sept. 10) if any assigned materials are deemed objectionable or offensive. Otherwise students will be expected to fulfill all assignments as assigned. **Note:** I make a point not to assign materials especially provocative. But please feel free to approach me if you have questions.

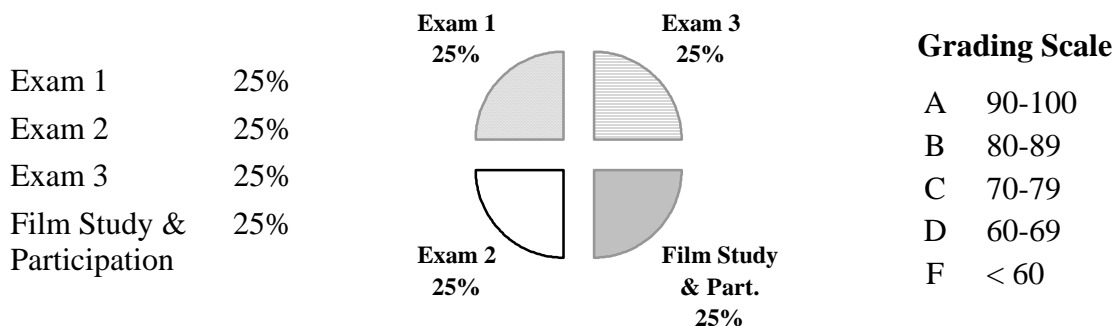
EVALUATION OF OVERALL COURSE PERFORMANCE

Students' final course grades will be determined by two facets of evaluation, "tangible" and "intangible" grading:

Tangible Grading:

Students will receive grades for three exams (see page 4 below) and a fourth grade for film study and participation (see page 5 below).

Each exam counts 25% of the final course grade. Film study and participation also counts 25%. Students' final course grades may therefore be determined solely by the following formula:



Intangible Grading

Students may elect to rely on tangible grades to determine their final course grade. Or their tangible scores may be modified in various ways (both positively and negatively) by three aspects of intangible grading:

1. Classroom Participation

History 2700 is a liberal arts course, and liberal arts courses are designed to foster an active and constructive classroom dialogue between instructor and students. Unfortunately, the logistics of this class (125+ students) renders the possibility of such dialogue far from ideal. Classroom participation is therefore not a required component of the final course grade.

Still, students who participate constructively in class will be rewarded. Rewards will be manifested in the form of an accelerated *Film Study & Participation grade* (meaning I will add +1 to +20 points to students' final calculated Film Study & Participation grade).

Likewise, a liberal arts course demands courteous patronage by its student body. Translation: students are expected to attend class regularly, arrive to class punctually, remain in class for the duration of the class period, *turn off cell phones* and diminish the possibility of all other sources of annoyance to their fellow students' classroom experience. If you must leave the classroom during class, please feel free to do so. But be discreet (and courteous communication with the instructor beforehand or afterward doesn't hurt either).

Students are expected to abide by these standards of classroom decorum, meaning students who do so should expect no impact on their grades. **Students who fail to abide by these standards, however, should expect a considerable negative impact on their final Film Study & Participation grade (ranging from -5 to -60 pts).**

2. Improved Academic Performance

Learning is all about figuring out how to do things better. Students who demonstrate an admirable mastery of this dynamic will be rewarded handsomely.

Example: in a previous class, I had a French student (a student visiting from France) who initially didn't quite know what to make of my class. But after she failed the first exam horribly, she redoubled her efforts to good effect, scoring a B on the second exam and then an A on the third. By standard computation of averaging grades, she might have received a C or a B as a final course grade. But she received an A.

Of course she also completed (and passed) the Cumulative Final Exam.

3. Cumulative Final Exam

The Cumulative Final Exam is entirely voluntary. I repeat: students are not required to take the Cumulative Final.

Why might students take a voluntary exam? Because **students who pass the Cumulative Final receive an accelerated final course grade** ranging from +2 to +4 points. Students who perform extremely well on the Cumulative Final may receive an accelerated final course grade of greater than +4 points.

Note: Students who elect against taking the Cumulative Final should be aware that they will receive no “rounding help” in the absence of their taking the Cumulative Final. Example: a student with a final calculated “tangible” grade of 89 who elects against taking the Cumulative Final will receive an 89 (a B in other words, when 90 = A) for his/her final course grade.

Details about the Cumulative Final will be provided in class.

4. Finally, it is worth noting all professors employ some variation of intangible grading, especially when considering student requests for **letters of recommendation**. Because professors want to recommend courteous, inquisitive, and thoughtful students who go far beyond the minimum asked of them, professors keep these considerations in mind at all times. It makes sense that students should also.

MEANS OF TANGIBLE ASSESSMENT

Exams (75% Final Course Grade)

Students must complete three exams. The first exam corresponds to the first third of the course's subject content, the second exam to the second third, and so forth.

Details about the exam format will be provided in class.

Exams typically take 50-70 minutes to complete. This fact, of course, poses a problem since our normal class period lasts only 50 minutes and our first two exams fall during normal class periods. To sidestep this problem I've decided to assign the essay portion of the first two exams as take-home essay assignments. **Due at the beginning of the exam**, the essays should be typewritten with standard margins, font, etc. Details about the essays will be provided in class.

The third exam falls during Final Exams Week, when we will have an extended period to complete the exam. Students will be required to write the essay portion of Exam 3 in class.

Film Study & Participation (25% Final Course Grade)

Who doesn't like to watch a good film? The roster of films for this course (see page 2) is loaded with them. Indeed, most of the films assigned in this class are "must see" titles for anyone with a learned interest in America's past.

For this course, we will typically view films outside of class. Details of film-study sessions and expectations will be provided in class.

Note: I realize film-study sessions may be inconvenient (even impossible) for some students to attend some of the time (or even all of the time). As such, film study is subject to a modified grading scale as follows:

Students who fail to attend a film study session will receive a grade of 60 for the assignment (rather than a 0).

Students who fail to attend any film study sessions will receive a grade of 60 for their final Film Study and Participation grade. (Remember: this grade is subject to modification by **classroom participation.**)

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students are expected to abide by the university honor code at all times, especially its strictures against "unauthorized aid."

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism very much constitutes "unauthorized aid." Students will be provided clear instruction as to what constitutes plagiarism. **The History Department regards plagiarism a serious offence worthy of zero tolerance.**

DISABILITIES

I pledge my fullest cooperation with university counseling services. Please contact me and/or university counselors for advice and/or applicable documentation.

INSTRUCTOR ACCESSIBILITY

Please feel free to approach me if you have questions about the class or academic matters in general. **Please note my office hours are posted at the top of page 1 of this syllabus.**

If you can't approach me in person, **email is my preferred method of communication.** Students can usually expect a much faster response if they attempt to contact me by email than by phone. But if you must call, my office phone number is 797-3791.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 / Week of Aug. 27			
	Mon. 27	Course Introduction	
	Wed. 29	What Is History?	
	Fri. 31	Diverse Beginnings, 1492-1607	
		Film Study 1 disc.: <i>Thomas Jefferson</i>, Part 1	

Week 2 / Week of Sept. 3			
	Mon. 3	<i>No Class / Labor Day</i>	
	Wed. 5	Chesapeake Labors	*Foner: 1-109
	Fri. 7	Chesapeake Labors (cont.)	
		Film Study 2 disc.: “The People” & “The Downward Spiral”	

Week 3 / Week of Sept. 10			
	Mon. 10	Puritans and Separatists	
	Wed. 12	Becoming American, Slave and Free	
		Film Study 3 disc.: “The Country and the City”	
	Fri. 14	Awakenings	

Week 4 / Week of Sept. 17			
	Mon. 17	Republican Origins Wood disc.	Wood: ix-60
	Wed. 19	Republican Origins (cont.) Wood disc.	Wood: 61-104
		Film Study 4 disc.: “Cauldron of War” & “Removal”	
	Fri. 21	Demands of Empire	*Foner: 110-178

Week 5 / Week of Sept. 24			
	Mon. 24	Reluctant Revolutionaries Wood disc.	Wood: 105-151
	Wed. 26	Earnest Revolutionaries Wood disc.	Wood: 153-246
		Film Study 5 disc.: “Liberty in the Air”	
	Fri. 28	Exam 1	

Week 6 / Week of Oct. 1			
	Mon. 1	How America Was Lost, 1492-1890	
	Wed. 3	Challenges of Independence	*Foner: 179-240
		Film Study 6 disc.: “ <i>Marbury v. Madison</i> ,” “ <i>Fletcher v. Peck</i> ,” and “ <i>McCulloch v. Maryland</i> ”	
	Fri. 5	The Founders’ Constitution Ulrich disc.	Ulrich: 3-101

Week 7 / Week of Oct. 8		
Mon. 8	Jefferson vs. Hamilton Ulrich disc.	Ulrich: 102-203
Wed. 10	The Industrial Revolutions	*Foner: 241-267, 272-301
	Film Study 7 disc.: “Seeds of Destruction”	
Fri. 12	The Industrial Revolutions (cont.) Ulrich disc.	Ulrich: 204-285

Week 8 / Week of Oct. 15		
Mon. 15	The Industrial Revolutions (cont.) Ulrich disc.	Ulrich: 286-363
Wed. 17	The Second War of Independence	*Foner: 267-271
	Film Study 8 disc.: “Empire Upon the Trails”	
Fri. 19	<i>No Class / Fall Break</i>	

Week 9 / Week of Oct. 22		
Mon. 22	The Era of Hard Feelings	*Foner: 303-336
Wed. 24	The Age of Jackson	
	Film Study 9 disc.: “Order and Disorder”	
Fri. 26	The Age of Jackson (cont.)	

Week 10 / Week of Oct. 29		
Mon. 29	Tocqueville’s America	
Wed. 31	Exam 2	
Nov. 2	From Necessary Evil to Positive Good	*Foner: 337-396
	Film Study 10 disc.: “Revolution”	

Week 11 / Week of Nov. 5		
Mon. 5	Douglass disc.	Douglass: all
Wed. 7	From Necessary Evil to Positive Good (cont.)	
	Film Study 11 disc.: “From Mudhole to Metropolis”	
Fri. 9	The Promise and Perils of Texas	

Week 12 / Week of Nov. 12			
	Mon. 12	Fugitives for Gold	*Foner: 397-435
	Wed. 14	The Kansas Explosion & Birth of the Republican Party	
		Film Study 12 disc.: <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>	
	Fri. 16	The Kansas Explosion & Birth of the Rep. Party (cont.)	

Week 13 / Week of Nov. 19			
	Mon. 19	In-class film: "Death Runs Riot" (excerpt) Film disc.	
	Wed. 21	<i>No Class / Thanksgiving Break</i>	
	Fri. 23	<i>No Class / Thanksgiving Break</i>	

Week 14 / Week of Nov. 26			
	Mon. 26	In-class film: "The Cause"	
	Wed. 28	Shall the Republic Perish? McPherson disc.	McPherson: all
	Fri. 30	Shall the Republic Perish? (cont.)	*Foner: 437-509
		Film Study 14 disc.: "Revolution"	

Week 15 / Week of Dec. 3			
	Mon. 3	The Promise of Reconstruction	
	Wed. 5	The Ends of Reconstruction	
		Film Study 15 disc.: "Retreat"	
	Fri. 7	Retrospection	

Finals Week / Week of Dec. 10			
	Wed. 12	Exam 3 / 9:30-11:20 am Cumulative Final Exam (if applicable; see page 4) / after Exam 3	