

**USU 1300- American Institutions (BAI) Section 001 Fall Semester 2008**  
**M,W,F 8:30-9:20 Engr. 108**

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Office hrs.: Wed. 9:30-10 or by appointment

**Textbooks:** Divine, *The American Story* and Micklethwait, *The Right Nation* (package deal with ISBN: 0205682456-price, not at bookstore, \$44.25)

**Objective:** USU 1300 meets the University's requirement for a Breadth American Institutions (BAI) course, according to the USU General Catalog. As quoted in the Catalog, USU 1300: "Provides basic understanding of the history, principles, form of government, and economic system of the United States." Also, the course should emphasize "ideas and critical thinking, rather than dates, names, and places..." Such a mandate provides the opportunity to learn about US history without the necessity of memorizing endless amounts of "facts."

**Course Scope/Description:** Given the incredible scope of this course, colonial to present, one has to be selective. Therefore, one focus of the course is on US presidents and constitutional amendments. Another focus, technological developments, can be examined from many angles, including war, entertainment, and politics. And, because the United States became the world's greatest economic power by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the story of economic development, as well as rampant consumerism, will deserve scrutiny. That the US is a very different society from the one which forged national identity out of the American Revolutionary War is well-known. How and why this change occurred will ultimately occupy the course's most lengthy focus. One component of the answer involves US participation in the major wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, wars, like technology, presidents, and consumerism, will constitute an important component of this course. While I provide much "detail" or "facts" in classroom discussions, my aim, like the General Catalog notes, is to provide "ideas and critical thinking, rather than dates, names, and places..."

**Goals:**

1. To enhance the student's educational skills by exposing them, in reading and library assignments, to a wide range of primary sources on the US story
2. To teach students how to analyze such primary and secondary sources in context
3. To improve the student's ability to communicate well, both in written and oral form.
4. To promote a student's awareness of unique features of US society and the importance of war, technology, religion, and other cultural aspects which affect US life.
5. To enhance the student's understanding of how American's political system, including the office of the presidency, and the US military have evolved over time

**Requirements: (Total Possible Points—roughly 500 points)(A=90%-100%; B (89%-80%), C=79%-70%; D=69%-60%; F=59% and below)**

1. Possible Class-designated assignments (textbook readings, class material, quizzes, etc.) (possibly 200 points)
2. Mid Term Exam (end of 8<sup>th</sup> week or beginning of 9<sup>th</sup> week) (100 points) and Final Exam (find time of exam in class schedule pamphlet) (200 points—not comprehensive)

**Tentative Topic/Reading Schedule**

**First Week:** Revolutionary War; Constitution (Divine, chp. 5-7)

**Second Week:** Presidents; Territorial, Economic Expansion (Divine, chps. 7-10)

**Third Week:** More territorial expansion; war with Mexico; coming of Civil War (Divine, chp. 12-15 stop at page 477)

**Fourth Week:** Civil War & Reconstruction (Ch. 15, page 477 to chp. 17)

**Fifth Week:** Gilded Age: Industrialization, Immigration (chp. 17-20, stop at page 671)

**Sixth Week:** America's Rise to Power, War of 1898 (chp. 20, page 671-698); Progressive Era (chp. 22)

**Seventh Week:** WWI (chp. 24); Twenties (chp. 25)

**Eighth:** Great Depression and New Deal (chps. 26); to WWII (chp. 27)

**Ninth:** Cold War & Civil Rights-1940s-50s (Divine, chps. 28-29; *Right Nation*, chp. 2)

**Tenth:** Turbulent Sixties-Seventies (chp. 30; chp. 31 to page 1029; *Right Nation*, chp. 3)

**Eleventh Week:** mid-Seventies to mid-Eighties (chp. 31, page 1029 to chp. 32, page 1064; *Right Nation*, chp. 4)

**Twelfth Week:** Bush and End of Cold War (chp. 32, page 1064-1090)(*Right Nation*, chp. 4)

Thirteenth Week: Clinton and 1990s to 21<sup>st</sup> Century (chp. 32, page 1090-1118); Bush and 9/11 (*Right Nation*, chp. 7-11)

**Fourteenth Week:** Catch-up, Review, etc. More on Bush (*Right Nation*, chps. 12-15)

**Fifteenth Week:** Final exam (according to university schedule): **Wed. Dec. 10 7:30-9:20**

**Note: Monday Sept 1=Holiday; Oct. 16 (Thurs) is supposed to be when Friday class is held, but we will have no class on Thurs. or Friday, Oct. 17= Fall break**

**Nov. 26-28: Thanksgiving; Dec. 1-5: No Exam Week**

**Dec. 8-12 Final Exam Week**