

U.S. History: Colonial Period through the Civil War

HIST 201

Fall 2006, Tu, Th 12:00-1:50;

Office Hours: Thursdays, 2:30-3:30 and by appt.

Cramer Hall 441F

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Cramer Hall 490

Course Description:

This course will introduce you to many of the major themes in U.S. History from the colonial period through the Civil War. There will be several facets to the class as we try to understand some of the major events, trends and issues in American history. Specifically, we will examine the major debates surrounding European conquest of North America, colonization, economic and geographic expansion, the institution of slavery, the ideological foundations and paradoxes of the forming of the United States of America, the meaning, privileges, and restrictions of citizenship, and much more.

In addition, we will examine history from the “bottom up” by looking at the everyday experiences of “ordinary” Americans. This “bottom up” approach will utilize tools from the fields of social and cultural history to explore the significance of race, class, ethnicity and gender in American life.

Course Goals and Objectives:

- Study the major events and themes of early American history.
- Analyze primary source documents and use historical method to construct an understanding of the past.
- Analyze the nature of key cultural diversity concepts such as difference, privilege, power, prejudice and discrimination.
- Recognize social, political, historic and economic factors contributing to cultural differences.
- Apply historical concepts and frameworks to understand the implications of cultural diversity.

Guidelines and Expectations:

- Attendance is required and will be taken everyday. If you miss more than 2 class sessions, this will lower your grade.
- I expect you to do all the assigned reading in advance for each class as scheduled. Bring all assigned reading materials to class.
- Please be on time, prepared to discuss and engage the material.
- Please turn off your cell-phones.
- To receive full credit, papers are due on the scheduled dates. As a general rule, late work will not be accepted; in unavoidable circumstances, such as illness, you have the responsibility to contact me as soon as possible to make arrangements for timely completion of assignments. **I will not, however, accept papers over a week late.**
- All work you turn in must be yours and only yours. Plagiarism is a serious offense. Students found guilty of plagiarizing will be disciplined. The PSU Code of Conduct can be found at

<http://www.pdx.edu/dos/conduct.html> . If you have any questions about this or what constitutes plagiarism, please do not hesitate to contact me or the Dean's Office.

- Note the scheduled mid-term and final exams. You must take the exams as scheduled. Make sure you do not make travel arrangements before your last exam.
- I need for you to do help to make this a safe classroom. Do not talk over people, and refrain from using sexist, racist, homophobic, or any derogatory language. If you disagree with a fellow student (which is fine!), say so in a respectable manner.
- If you are a student with a documented disability and registered with the Disability Resource Center, please contact me immediately to facilitate arranging academic accommodations.

A Note on Grading:

When grading papers and essay exams, I follow the guidelines described below.

An "A" paper is outstanding work that goes beyond analysis of course material to synthesize concepts in a valid and/or novel way.

A "B" paper is very good to excellent work that analyzed material explored in class and is a reasonable attempt to synthesize material.

A "C" paper is adequate work that satisfies the assignment with a limited analysis of material explored in class.

"D" or "F" papers do not respond adequately to the assignment, or are marred by errors, unclear writing, and poor organization which indicate that you do not understand the material presented in the course.

Assigned Reading:

John Mack Faragher et al., Out of Many: A History of the American People 5th ed. (Pearson, 2006)

Retrieving the American Past: A Customized U.S. History Reader (Pearson, 2006)

Grading:

20% Weekly quizzes. These will include short answer responses to no more than 5 questions (not multiple choice) based on the reading for that day **and** the prior class session—primary documents included.

30% Mid-Term. This will include a short essay question, as well as identification terms.

30% Final. The format for the final will be the same as that of the mid-term.

10% One two-paged synopsis of a primary documents. This assignment is clarified at the end of the syllabus.

10% Participation. I expect that all of you come to class well versed in the assigned readings and ready to participate. I'm interested in the quality of your comments, not just their quantity. A basic premise of this course is that ideas count, both yours and mine, and that a mutual sharing of ideas will be intellectually stimulating for all of us. **To facilitate this process, you will be required to lead small group discussion of primary documents twice during the quarter.** Of course, it is expected that we all treat each other with respect during these discussion sessions. This assignment is also clarified at the end of the syllabus.

Course Schedule

NOTE: “Faragher” refers to the textbook Out of Many: A History of the American People; “Doc” refers to “Retrieving the American Past”

Tu Sept 26 Introduction to course material, each other, and early American narratives

Th Sept 28 Contact, Conquest and Colonization: The Spanish in North America

Readings: Faragher: Prologue, Ch. 1-2; Doc., pgs. 1-6 *DISCUSSION

Tu Oct 3 The English and Indentured Servitude: 17th Century Chesapeake South

Readings: Faragher, pages 56-65; Doc., pgs. 7-9 *QUIZ

Th Oct 5 Origins of Slavery and Tobacco Culture

Readings: Faragher, Ch. 4; Doc., pgs. 29-31 *DISCUSSION

Tu Oct 10 To Build a City on a Hill: Puritans and New England

Readings: Faragher, pgs. 66-78; Doc., pgs. 11-20 *DISCUSSION

Th Oct 12 Origins of a New World: Ethnic, Class and Cultural Clashes

Readings: Faragher Ch.; Doc., pgs. 21-27 *QUIZ

Tu Oct 17 Strains on the Imperial Project

Readings: Faragher Ch. 6; Doc., pgs. 33-37 *DISCUSSION

Th Oct 19 Tis time to Part: The American Revolution

Readings: Faragher, Ch 7; Doc., pgs. 39-40 *QUIZ

Tu Oct 24 Political and Social Legacies of Revolution

Readings: Faragher, Ch. 8, Doc., pgs. 41-50 *DISCUSSION

Th Oct 26 **Mid-Term Examination**

Tu Oct 31 The Lives of America’s New Citizens

Film: “The Life and Times of Martha Ballard”

Readings: Faragher, Ch. 9; Doc., pgs. 51-53 *QUIZ

Th Nov 2 African-American Culture in the Old South

Readings: Faragher, Ch. 10; Doc., pgs. 77-88 *DISCUSSION

Tu Nov 7 Democracy’s Expansion, Limits and Contradictions: The Jacksonian Era

Readings: Faragher, Ch. 11 Doc., pgs. 65-76, 99-110 *DISCUSSION

Th Nov 9 Economic and Urban Life in Nineteenth-Century U.S.

Readings: Faragher, Ch. 12; Doc. pgs. 59-63 *QUIZ

Tu Nov 14 Millennialism, Prohibition, and Prostitution: Antebellum Reform and Radicalism in the 1840s

Readings: Faragher, Ch. 13; Doc. pgs. 55-58, 89-97 *DISCUSSION

Th Nov 16 Western Communities and Conflicts

Readings: Faragher, Ch. 14; Doc. pgs. 111-122 *QUIZ

Tu Nov 21 Sectional Conflict and the Free Labor Debate

Readings: Faragher, Ch. 15; Doc. pgs. 123-131 *DISCUSSION

Th Nov 23 Civil War on the Battlefronts

Readings: Faragher, Ch. 16; Doc. 133-140

*QUIZ

Tu Nov 28 Civil War on the Homefront

Readings: Doc. pgs. 141-152

*DISCUSSION

Thu Nov 30 The Civil War's Legacies; Wrap-Up; Final Exam Review

Readings: Faragher, pgs. 482-503; Doc. pgs. 153-155

Final Exam: Thursday, December 7 10:15-12:05

Guidelines for Discussion Starters

Every week, students will break into small groups to discuss the week's reading assignment. To facilitate regular discussion, groups of students will be responsible for drafting "discussion starters"—questions or comments to get conversation going. Each member of the group will then lead a small group in discussion and take notes. Each group leader will then turn in the questions and *some* notes to the professor. (i.e. focus more on discussion than note taking, but I do want to have some comments about the direction your discussion takes.) See below list of dates to determine when you will be responsible for leading discussion.

Dates you are Responsible to Lead Discussion:

Last name begins with:

T-Z Sept. 28; Nov. 2

N-S Oct. 5; Nov. 7

K-M Oct. 10; Nov. 14

D-J Oct. 17; Nov. 21

A-C Oct. 24; Nov. 28

Hints for generating discussion questions.

1. Who created the source and why? Was it created through a spur-of-the-moment act, routine transaction, or a thoughtful, deliberate process?
2. What is the main argument or theme in the document? What kinds of ideas about the world does the author take for granted or challenge? How do these assumptions inform the arguments in the document?
3. Was the source meant to be public or private?
4. Who is the intended audience for the document/article? How does the author craft their argument for a specific audience? What kind of evidence is stressed? What is left out?
5. Did the recorder wish to inform or persuade others? (Check the words in the source. The words may tell you whether the recorder was trying to be objective or persuasive.) Did the recorder have reasons to be honest or dishonest?
6. Was the information recorded during the event, immediately after the event, or after some lapse of time? How large a lapse of time? How or why is this significant?
7. Compare and contrast two elements, characters, or points of view in two different documents/articles. What does the comparison tell you?

Synopses of Primary Documents:

For this assignment, you will write a 2 paged typed and double spaced essay that **summarizes** and **analyzes the significance** of **one** (1) of the primary documents assigned for that day's reading. (You can choose which one you would like to review) The following text provides some helpful tips as you approach this assignment.

Due Dates:

Last name begins with:

A-B	Oct. 5
C-D	Oct. 10
E-H	Oct. 17
I-L	Oct. 24
M-O	Nov. 2
P-R	Nov. 7
S	Nov. 16
T-Z	Nov. 28

How to Read and Analyze a Historical Document:

Place the Document in Context.

Your first job in analyzing a document is to answer two questions: Who created it? And what circumstances was he or she responding to in writing it? Answering these questions will provide important clues as to what the document can tell you and what it can not. Like all statements, historical documents do not tell the whole truth. In the first place, they reflect the biases and assumptions of the people who wrote, spoke, sang, drew, or painted them. They allow us to understand the mind-set of particular social and political groups--but only if we know what social and political group the author belonged to. Just as important, documents are usually responses to specific situations (wars, rebellions, political controversies, accusations against the author, etc.) and, more often than not, are efforts to change those situations (to raise armies, put down rebellions, triumph in political controversies, refute accusations against the author, etc.). The author of a document does not always tell the entire truth he or she knows--he/she tells what they want their audience to hear, in order to get that audience to act in a certain way. As historians, it is your job to ask several questions that will help you understand what you can and can not learn from a document:

1. Who was the author of the document? What was his/her social position (his/her race, class position, gender, etc.?) What were his or her political and religious commitments? How might their social position, politics and religion have affected his or her view of the subject he or she wrote about?
2. What was the situation in which the author was writing, painting, etc.? What events was he or she responding to?
3. Who was the author speaking to, writing to, or otherwise addressing? People often tailor what they say or write depending on their audience.
4. What was the author trying to accomplish by speaking, writing, singing, or painting?
5. How might his or her agenda have affected what part of the story he or she chose to tell, and what parts he or she chose to leave out?

You will not always get certain answers for all these questions. Sometimes it is easy to tell. Sometimes you will be able make an educated guess. At other times, you simply will not know. But it is important to try every time--you will not know if you can find out until you try.

Read Closely and Actively

To answer any of these questions, you often need to read very closely. People in the past often spoke and wrote in ways that are strange and hard to understand to us; they sometimes used words that are unfamiliar to us, or gave familiar words meanings that are unfamiliar to us. It is thus essential that you use a good dictionary when reading a document. When you don't know what a word means, or if an author is using a word in a way you don't understand, look it up. Look at the second, third, and fourth definitions of a word as well as the first--often these were the most common definitions in past centuries. It's also important that you read slowly and carefully, until you understand precisely what an author was saying--and, on another level, until you have good answers to the questions you are asking of the document.

A Note on Bias, Untruths, and Objectionable Beliefs:

Many of the documents you will be reading will seem "biased" to you. That's fine; they probably are. So are all the documents; everyone's beliefs reflect their social position, as well as their political and religious commitments. **But your job is not to pass judgment on who in the past was biased and who understood things clearly. And although you should feel free to pass moral judgment on people in the past, you need to be careful not to let it get in the way of your main job as a historian, which is to understand all the historical actors you study--even those you find biased or otherwise objectionable.** You should try to understand the way each writer or actor you study thought--his or her beliefs, assumptions, and yes, biases.

You may find yourself doubting that any human being could really believe what you are reading. You may doubt that any moral person could think that the actions you are reading about were justifiable. In many or all cases, your outrage will be justified. **But your first job as a historian is not to pass judgment--it's to understand the people in the past. You will need to figure out how people could have believed or done these objectionable things.** Once you do that, then you can pass judgment. But if you pass judgment first, your outrage will get in the way of understanding the people you are studying.

Many of the documents you will read contain things that are patently untrue. You should always make an effort to figure out when an author might be lying, or be telling an untruth that they think is true. But even if a document is full of untruths, it can still be an extremely useful document, because it can reveal a lot about the author's beliefs and agenda. When you find a person saying something that is untrue that he or she probably believes ask yourself what do these beliefs tell us about the author's values and world-view? How do these beliefs serve, or fail to serve, the social, political, and/or religious interests of the author? When you suspect an outright lie, ask yourself why might this person be lying? What is he or she trying to accomplish? What beliefs is he or she trying to instill in his or her readers?

If you have any further questions about this assignment, please do not hesitate to discuss these questions with me in class or in my office hours.