

AMH 2010: United States History to 1877
University of Florida
Department of History
Spring 2021

Instructor: Kaitlyn Muchnok

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Office Hours: Wednesday 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. & by appointment.

Class Meeting Times: Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays, 3:00 P.M. to 3:50 P.M. (8th Period)

Section Number: 4B60 (face-to-face) & V4B6 (virtual)

Room: Flint 105

Course Description: This survey course covers American history from European contact to Reconstruction's end with an emphasis on the political, intellectual, social, and cultural realms. Many people believe the study of history includes memorizing facts and dates. This information is very important, but it is not the discipline's primary goal. The purpose of studying history is to learn about the past, develop skills in critical thinking, analysis, interpretation of evidence, and academic writing. In general, historians ask specific questions about the past including: What happened? Why did it happen? Does it matter? How does our own personal bias shape our answers to these questions? Learning how to pursue the question-answer part of history will be a central goal of this course.

More specifically, this class will examine how the United States rapidly grew throughout a land occupied by Native Americans living in an agricultural, hunter-gather society into one of the most powerful, industrialized nations in the world. We will pay special attention to the historical themes and issues that remain relevant to today's world. These themes and issues include the meaning of equality, liberty, and freedom, the diversity of the American experience, the meaning of American citizenship, economic, social, and political power, how major conflicts arise, and the roles of race, class, gender, and ethnicity throughout the period. To answer these questions, students will analyze primary source evidence, engage critically with secondary sources written by historians, and work on developing their communication skills via class discussions and written assignments.

Questions we will explore include: Was the "New World" really "new?" How did relations between Native Peoples and European settlers change over time? Was the American Revolution really "revolutionary?" What was the role of government in economic and social life? What are the government's duties and responsibilities to citizens? What are citizens duties and responsibilities to one another? Who is a citizen? How did earlier generations respond to cultural and political conflicts that arose from the conditions of diversity? How does one's gender, race, ethnicity, religious background, and/or economic status affect their access to liberty, equality, power, and opportunity? Who built America? Why is this period of American history important?

Required Readings: The following textbooks are required for this course. I encourage you to buy used when possible. Amazon is a great resource for ordering much more affordable copies.

- Free Online Textbook, "American Yawp," <http://www.americanyawp.com/>

- *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs, free online at <https://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/jacobs.html> or available very cheap if purchased used on Amazon.
- Other assigned works will be available via the course Canvas page*

Course Assignments:

- **Participation** (200 points total)
 - Students are expected to arrive to class on time, whether by zoom or in person, silence cell phones, and engage proactively with the course lectures and discussions. To get a high participation grade, students should comment, ask questions, or respond to fellow classmates during Friday's discussion sections. To come prepared for discussion, students should make sure they complete all the assigned materials before Friday's class.
- **Weekly Perusall Readings & Responses** (100 points total)
 - Most weeks, students will read a series of primary and/or secondary sources in addition to the assigned corresponding textbook chapter. Using the Perusall function found in the left-side column on Canvas, students will access the weekly sources, read them, and post comments about the material. Comments should be analytical and critical in nature. It is also encouraged for students to engage with one another; students should respond to the comments of other classmates or ask questions the instructor will pose during Friday's discussion.
- **Written Assignments** (300 points total/100 points each)
 - Throughout the semester, students will be expected to respond to three different writing assignments posted on the course's Canvas page. The due dates for each of these assignments can be found below in the course schedule section. For each post, students will be asked to engage critically with the course reading material to explain their perspective. These posts should be thoughtful, well-articulated, and organized effectively. The responses will be graded for grammar, style, and writing clarity. The instructor will leave feedback, edits, questions, and recommendations on each written response aimed to help students improve their writing skills. Students should review these comments and make the appropriate improvements and adjustments as they turn in future assignments.
- **Civil War Timeline Project** (200 points total)
 - Students will construct a timeline of key events, issues, policies, etc that led to the American Civil War. Instructions for how to research, write, and create this timeline are posted to Canvas. The timeline should reflect broad, analytical thinking about the how historical events, such as wars, are not inevitable occurrences, but rather depend on a specific series of past events, decisions, circumstances, and human actors.
- **Final Exam** (200 points total)
 - Students will answer two critical thinking questions that address one (or more) of the broad themes of the course. Students will be asked to form an argument and make an evaluation based on their knowledge of Early American history. Students should use provide specific evidence to support their main ideas and assessments. The evidence can be key terms from lectures, primary sources, secondary sources, or information

from the course textbook. Students should not consult outside sources for this exam. Citations are not necessary for this assignment.

Attendance Policy: Attendance is essential to your learning experience. Attendance will be taken every class meeting day. You are permitted **three** unexcused absences without penalty. As discussed above, Fridays are much more discussion based and require active student engagement and participation in class conversations and debates. Missing more than **two** Friday discussions without an excusable reason will result in a serious deduction from your participation grade. In total, the fourth unexcused absence will result in a drop of your overall grade by half a letter grade (for example, instead of receiving a B+ you would receive a B). Each additional absence will result in an additional half letter decrease in your grade. Please note that if you plan on using an unexcused absence, you do not need to email me to let me know. However, if your absence fits with in the university's established acceptable excuses, please communicate with me via email to let me know you will miss class.

Late Assignments: Late assignments will receive a reduced grade. An assignment is considered late as soon as the designated time has passed. For example, if the paper is due at 12pm, the paper is considered late at 12:01 pm. I am happy to give students extensions should it become necessary. To receive an extension, please provide me with **at least 24-hour notice**. It is difficult for me to answer and approve extension requests the day an assignment is due. If I approve an extension request, no points will be reduced. I encourage to take advantage of this if you are struggling to complete an assignment on time. I would much rather you have enough time to adequately engage with the work than rush to turn something in to meet a deadline. The University policy on make-up assignments, lateness, and attendance issues can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

Technology Policy: Please put your phone away at the beginning of each class period. For zoom sessions, you are strongly encouraged to turn your camera on and stay on the course page for the entire class session. Zoom has a function that shows instructors how long students are off the main screen. I will take this into account when considering participation grades. Getting on non-course related websites is not only a disservice to your own learning experience, but also a distraction to students around you and **especially** the instructor.

Communication Policy: Students should communicate with the instructor primarily through email, office hour visits, or appointments made by student requests. Please use kaitlynmuchnok@ufl.edu to contact me during regular business hours. I generally stop checking emails after 7:00 P.M. so please make an effort to reach out to me earlier in the day with urgent questions and issues. Additionally, students must regularly check the course's Canvas page for assignment updates, links to required readings, and course announcements.

Finally, throughout the course, discussion sections and lectures can include sensitive and controversial topics. It is expected that students come to class with an open mind, prepared to engage with complicated issues and listen to classmates' perspectives that may differ from their own. Thoughtful, honest, and evidence-based points of view are crucial for productive conversations and learning. To ensure that everyone feels respected, please refrain from personal attacks or offensive remarks. Keep in mind that a central goal of this class is to emphasize

empathy in historical studies, or the ability to understand the feelings and perspective of others, without necessarily sharing their point of view. Moreover, please feel free to disagree with me, if you see fit. I have spent many years studying American history and it is unrealistic to assume I have not formed opinions on its past, its politics, etc. My goal is not to get you to think a certain way, but rather, to introduce you to an expanded view of the past, foster your critical thinking and communication skills, and help you develop a deeper understanding of the United States and your role as a global citizen. As long as facts are used as evidence, your personal interpretations are welcome in this class.

Canvas Policy: Students are expected to check the course canvas page weekly for updates. For each new week, I will post a corresponding “page” tracking that unit’s learning objectives, key terms, and assigned activities and assignments. Students should check the assignments section to see what activities they should complete for that particular week. Most weeks will have a Perusall sources analysis assignments, but some weeks will have other activities such as a podcast, video, or additional reading exercise. The instructor reserves the right to make updates and changes to the course syllabus and canvas page throughout the semester.

Zoom Policy: The participation portion of your grade for this class will be calculated on the basis of your attendance and your participation in class activities. Since the pedagogical approach of this course depends heavily on student engagement and interaction, you are required, at a minimum, to participate in class activities through the audio function of Zoom. Your video presence is invited (and strongly) encouraged as well. When the instructor is lecturing (mostly on Mondays & Wednesdays) you should keep your audio on silent unless you need to ask a question. You are still encouraged to have your video turned on for lecture sessions, although at times this may not be possible for remote students.

UF Grading Scale: Grades will be assigned according to the follow university grading scale.

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+	68-69	D	66-67	D-	64-65
F	<64				

Academic Honesty: UF policy requires you to access and use your gatorlink account. Excuses regarding not reading emails will not be accepted. Additionally, academic dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism, or submitting someone else’s work without citing them will not be tolerated. UF’s honor code can be found here: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>.

Disability Information: Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting the accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Student Evaluations: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students as <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

Lecture, Discussion, & Assignment Schedule:

Assignments and readings are listed on the date they should be completed

Week One: Introduction & the “New” World

- January 11: *Course Introduction & Syllabus Overview, ZOOM*
- January 13: Read American Yawp, Chapter 1: “Indigenous America”
- January 15: *Discussion on Zoom, complete “Indigenous America” Primary Sources on Perusall & Canvas activities by 1.14.21*

Week Two: Colliding Cultures

- January 18: *NO CLASS, Martin Luther King Jr. Day*
- January 20: Read American Yawp, Chapter 2 “Colliding Cultures”
- January 22: *Discussion on Zoom, complete “Colliding Cultures” Source on Perusall & Canvas activities by 1/21/21*

Week Three: British North America

- January 25 & 27: Read American Yawp, Ch. 3 “British North America”
- January 29: *Discussion on Zoom, complete “British North America” sources on Perusall and listen to Salem Witch Trials Podcast (see Canvas) by 1/28/21.*

Week Four: Colonial Society

- February 1 & 3: Read American Yawp, Ch. 4 “Colonial Society,” *Written Assignment No. 1, Primary Source Analysis on Salem Witch Trials* due 2.1.21 by 11:59 P.M.
- February 5: *Discussion on Zoom, complete “Colonial Society” sources on Perusall & Canvas activities by 2/4/21*

Week Five: Revolution!

- February 8 & 10: Read American Yawp, Ch. 5 “The American Revolution”

February 12: Discussion on Zoom, complete *“The American Revolution”* sources assignment on Perusall & Canvas activities by 2/11/21

Week Six: A New Nation

February 15 & 17: Read: American Yawp, Ch. 6. “A New Nation”

February 19: Discussion on Zoom, complete “A New Nation” sources assignment on Perusall & Canvas activities by 2/18/21

Week Seven: The Early Republic

February 22 & 24: Read: American Yawp, Ch. 7 “The Early Republic”

February 26: Discussion on Zoom, complete *“The Early Republic”* sources assignment on Perusall & Canvas activities by 2/25/21

Week Eight: The Market Revolution

March 1 & 3: Read American Yawp, Ch. 8 “The Market Revolution,” *Second writing assignment due on 3.1.21 by 11:59 P.M.**

March 5: Discussion on Zoom, complete “The Market Revolution” sources assignment on Perusall & Canvas activities by 3/4/21

Week Nine: Democracy in America

March 8 & 10: Read American Yawp, Ch. 9, “Democracy in America”

March 12: Discussion on Zoom, complete “Democracy in America” sources assignment on Perusall & Canvas activities by 3/11/21

Week Ten: Manifest Destiny

March 15 & 17: Read: American Yawp, Ch. 12, “Manifest Destiny”

March 19: Discussion on Zoom, complete “Manifest Destiny” sources assignment on Perusall and Canvas activities by 3/18/21

Week Eleven: Religion & Reform

March 22 & 24: Read: American Yawp, Ch. 10, “Religion and Reform”
Read “In Order to Understand the Brutality of American Capitalism, You have to Start on the Plantation” by Matthew Desmond

March 26: Discussion on Zoom, complete “Religion & Reform” sources assignment on Perusall by 3/25/21, Read *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs

Week Twelve: The Cotton Revolution & Manifest Destiny

March 29 & 31: Read American Yawp, Ch. 11, “The Cotton Revolution” & Ch. 12, “Manifest Destiny”

April 2: Discussion on Zoom, Read *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs

Week Thirteen: The Sectional Crisis

April 5 & 7: Read American Yawp, Ch. 13 “The Sectional Crisis,” *Third Written Assignment due on 4.5.21 by 11:59 P.M.**

April 9: Discussion on Zoom, complete “The Sectional Crisis” sources assignment on Perusall & Canvas activities by 4/8/21

Week Fourteen: Civil War

April 12 & 14: Read: American Yawp, Ch. 14, “The Civil War”

April 16: Discussion on Zoom, complete “The Civil War” sources assignment on Perusall and Canvas activities by 4/15/21

Week Fifteen: Reconstruction

April 19 & 21: Read: American Yawp, Ch. 15 “Reconstruction,” *Civil War Timeline due 4.21.21 by 11:59 P.M.**

Take Home Final Exam Due: 4.28.21 by 5:00 P.M.