

University of Florida Online
Department of History
Spring 2021

AMH2010: U.S. History to 1877

Instructor: David Meltsner

Email: dmeltsner@ufl.edu

Office Hours: By Zoom appointment only.

Course Introduction and Objectives

This course is a survey of American History from the colonial origins of the modern-day United States through the Civil War and Reconstruction Era. We will be dealing with a number of broad themes throughout the semester such as the interaction of Native American, African, and European peoples in North America, the creation of the United States, the development of American society during the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and the turbulent political struggle of the Civil War and Reconstruction years.

After completing this course, students should have a familiarity with the broad scope of American history through the Reconstruction Era. In addition to gaining this historical knowledge, students will engage in an analysis of primary and secondary source material in order to gain a firsthand perspective on the historian's craft. Finally, this course will allow students to hone their writing and critical thinking skills in ways that should help them regardless of their major or chosen career.

There are some more specific course objectives for AMH2010. Upon the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain why European, Native American, and African cultures came into contact in the 15th and 16th century.
2. Explain why contact between Native American and European peoples had both short and long-term implications for both worlds.
3. Explain the different motives and objectives for the European colonization of North America.
4. Explain how British American colonists adopted both free and enslaved labor in building an economy.
5. Explain how the British American colonies developed a political, social, and cultural identity.
6. Explain why some British American colonists sought to form an independent, republican state.
7. Explain how the principles of republican government were put into place in the United States.

8. Explain why the United States expanded economically and geographically, and how both free and enslaved labor played a role in that expansion.
9. Explain why the expansion of slavery became an issue of political contention in the 1840s and 1850s.
10. Explain why political compromise failed in 1861, which resulted in war.
11. Explain how the Civil War triggered massive changes in American society, including but not limited to the end of slavery.
12. Explain how the home and battle fronts of the Civil War were linked and why that was significant.
13. Explain the challenges facing Americans in both the North and South during Reconstruction.
14. Explain the mixed record of Reconstruction in the American South.

Required Texts

The readings of this class are designed to complement the online lectures and will help you with the discussion sections. It is therefore of great importance that you complete the assigned readings by the final day of the module. Otherwise, you run the risk of getting lost as you try to catch up with the rest of the class. In a similar vein, successful students will post to the discussion pages early in the week in order to get feedback and encourage a constructive dialogue with other students.

Knowledge of the readings will be important for your performance on papers and exams. The core readings will come from *The American Yawp*, a textbook that is free and online. There will also be some supplemental online readings added to the course readings over the course of the semester. These readings are usually chapters from larger works; you might find them challenging and I would recommend completing the textbook chapter first before tackling them.

The online readings and assignments will always be free of charge, but they will also vary from week to week. Be sure to check each module closely for additional readings.

For the analysis paper due in November, you must purchase *Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge* by Erica Armstrong Dunbar. This text is required and available for purchase at the UF Bookstore or from an online retailer.

Assignments and Grading

This class will have one midterm examination and a final examination that will require writing a lengthy essay response to a broad question. In addition, there will be a 4-5 page analysis paper about *Never Caught* due in November. There will also be short essays that you will complete throughout the semester. **Although there are six (6) listed short essay assignments, the grades will only count for four (4) of them.**

You will answer a brief, five-question quiz at the end of each module. You will have 15 minutes to complete these quizzes, so please plan accordingly.

Please note that since notice of all exam, quiz, and paper deadlines are given well in advance, there will be no make-ups given for travel reservations or non-emergency situations.

Be sure to consult the guidelines for discussion groups as well as those for the individual essays. Adhering to the policies outlined in those documents will be important to your success in the course. These documents are available in the Start Here page on the Canvas course website. If you have any problems, please let me know. But when in doubt consult the Start Here page and this syllabus first!

Please note that the grades are weighted towards the end of the semester; this is designed to reward improvement over the course of the semester. Also keep in mind that improvement over the course of the semester is important. Determination of the final grade in the course, the scale, and the value of grades will all be subject to the following formula:

Component	Value
Quizzes (15 x 5 pts)	75
Discussion Posts (15 x 5pts)	75
Midterm	50
Brief Essays (4 x10 pts)	40
Analysis Paper – <i>Never Caught</i>	50
Final Exam	60
Total Points	350

UF Grading Scale

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	WF	I	N	G	S	U
Grade Points	4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	.67	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

A100-94, A-: 90-93

C+: 77-79, C: 74-76, C-: 70-73

B+: 87-89, B: 84-86, B-: 80-83

D+: 67-69, D: 64-66, D-: 60-64

F: below 64

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class, as it constitutes intellectual theft and academic dishonesty. If you turn in the work of others and try to pass it off as your own, you will fail that assignment and risk expulsion from the University of Florida. I will give you the guidelines, expectations, and other information regarding the written work in this course, so you really have no reason to cheat. I take these matters very seriously and will prosecute vigorously if provoked. Any possible rewards derived from plagiarism simply

don't justify the risk! All students must conform to UF's honesty policy regarding cheating, plagiarism, and the use of copyrighted materials, which you can find at:

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

Your essays will be turned in via the Canvas e-learning website and monitored with the Turnitin Anti-Plagiarism Service, so please keep in mind that cheating on the assignments in this course will be much more difficult than actually doing the work.

Requirements for course participation, make-up exams and essays, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Because of the self-paced nature of this course, it is easy to let deadlines get away from you. Please don't jeopardize your grade by missing them! So while there is not a traditional "attendance" component to this class, there are very firm deadlines for turning in your work that act as a kind of virtual attendance, and those cannot be abrogated without an official excuse.

Students requesting accommodation for a disability must register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

Module Schedule

This schedule of the modules should help you track your progress as the semester progresses. The expectation is that you complete the work during the date range of the module, but each one will open as soon as the previous one is closed. Please consult the Canvas site for more specific information about the readings and assignments for each module.

Module 1: First Contacts (January 11 – January 17)

Module 2: Early Colonization and Resistance in North America (January 18 – January 24)

Module 3: The American Colonies (January 25 – January 31)

Module 4: Colonial Life (February 1 – February 7)

Module 5: The British Empire in Crisis (February 8 – February 14)

Module 6: Resistance to Revolution (February 15 – February 21)

Module 7: Challenges to the Republic (February 22 – February 28)

Module 8: The New Nation at Work (March 1 – March 7)

Module 9: Midterm Exam Week: American Slavery (March 8 – March 14)

The midterm exam is due March 8, 2021 by 11:59 PM.

Module 10: American Politics in Crisis (March 15 – March 21)

The analysis paper on *Never Caught* is due March 19, 2021 by 11:59 PM. The paper will be posted the first day of the semester.

Module 11: Why Secession? (March 22 – March 28)

Module 12: Civil War (March 29 – April 4)

Module 13: From War to Revolution? (April 5 – April 11)

Module 14: The Many Meanings of Emancipation (April 12 – April 18)

Module 15: The Problem of Reconstruction (April 19 – April 21)

Final Exam: The final exam will be available from April 22, 2021 at 8:00 AM to April 28, 2021 at 11:59 PM.

Course Feedback

I will provide feedback to you from time to time in the form of an informal video posted on the next module. These comments will mention areas of the course that seem to be going well, areas that need improvement, and important tips for succeeding in this online format. Be sure to tune in when they are available.

As for your input, students in this class will be participating in the pilot evaluation of the new course evaluation system called GatorEvals. The new evaluation system is designed to be more informative to instructors in order to enhance teaching effectiveness is linked seamlessly to UF's CANVAS learning management system. Students can complete their evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via the web at: <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Please note your other classes this semester may be evaluated in the current GatorRater online evaluation system at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Thank you for serving as a partner in this important effort.

Any more questions? Feel free to drop me a line via the Canvas message system or directly through email at dmeltsner@ufl.edu.

Good luck in the upcoming semester!