

AMH 2010: United States History to 1877

Instructor: Joseph Angelillo

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Class times: Tuesdays, period 4 (10:40 AM-11:30 AM), Thursdays, periods 4-5 (10:40 AM-12:35 PM)

Location: Keene-Flint Hall, room 101

Course Description

What is history? What is truth? What is interpretation? Why does any of that matter?

In this course, we will confront these fundamental questions through the lens of United States history. Specifically, we will evaluate the history of the United States through the Reconstruction era from political, legal, social, and economic perspectives. In doing so, we shall ponder fundamental questions regarding the nature of the Constitution, the meaning of freedom, the place of slavery in the country's history, and the expansion of American empire. We shall not undertake these endeavors merely to memorize names and dates, however. Instead, by constantly questioning our history and how it has been written, students will learn to think like historians. We will analyze change over time, refine our ability to use sources to analyze the past, and sharpen our historical writing. Ultimately, we shall (in the words of the historian Richard Hofstadter) be "playful and pious": willing to question our perception of "truth," devoted to exploring a variety of options for what is "true," yet – in the end – bound by evidence when determining "truth."

This means that we will ask hard questions about controversial topics. We do this to weigh the explanatory power of different stories, so we can get closer to the truth.

Course Format

This is an in-person class, which meets in Keene-Flint Hall, room 101. On Tuesdays, we will meet for lecture. On Thursdays, we will meet for lecture and to discuss primary sources and/or other assigned readings. Communication will primarily take place through Canvas messages and email. I will host office hours every week, day and time TBA. These office hours are an opportunity to ask questions about the course or just to chat. You will have the opportunity to

read three books during this class. All can be purchased at the bookstore or from online retailers. If purchasing online, be sure to purchase the correct edition.

Required texts

- Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, **Dover Publications edition**
- Jenny Hale Pulsipher, *Swindler Sachem: The American Indian Who Sold His Birthright, Dropped Out of Harvard, and Conned the King of England*
- David Waldstreicher, *Slavery's Constitution: From Revolution to Ratification*
- *The American Yawp primary source reader (AY in syllabus)*
 - o *The American Yawp* is free and online. Access via:
<http://www.americanyawp.com/reader.html>
 - o *The American Yawp* also offers a free online textbook. Reading the textbook is not required. Reading the assigned primary sources IS required.
- Other readings found on Canvas

Graded Assignments

- Attendance and participation (20%)
- Reading responses (10%)
- Book review for *Slavery's Constitution* or *Swindler Sachem* (20%)
- Midterm exam (25%)
- Final project (25%)
 - o Topic (2%)
 - o Research question (3%)
 - o Bibliography (5%)
 - o Final "blog post" (15%)

Assignment Descriptions

Attendance/Participation: Students are expected to attend all sessions with the readings complete. Students are allowed three (3) unexcused absences without an impact on their final grade. Any further absences will result in a 1/3 grade deduction from the final participation

grade per unexcused absence (A becomes A-, B+ becomes B). Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions. The definition of “active participation” is flexible. Further, the instructor may at times use pop quizzes to ensure that the reading is completed. These would be part of your participation grade.

Reading responses: Students will submit a five-hundred word reading response for each week’s readings. You simply need to summarize the readings and provide some brief analysis. They will be submitted on Canvas by class time on Thursday. There is no prompt for these responses. However, some possible questions to consider: How do the readings answer the core question for each week? How do the readings challenge or change what you believe about U.S. history? What did you find most/least surprising about the readings? The possibilities are endless!

Book review: Students will complete a book review on either *Swindler Sachem* by Jenny Hale Pulsipher or *Slavery’s Constitution* by David Waldstreicher. This review is more than a book report, meaning that students should go beyond summarizing the book. Rather, students will identify the arguments and span of the book, the important points of analysis, and give the book an appraisal. This should be done in 1000-1200 words.

Midterm exam: The midterm examination will be an in-person, closed-note essay exam. Students will receive four questions in advance, but only two will be on the actual exam. Students will have the Thursday class period to complete it.

Final project: The final project will take the form of a “blog post.” The topic will be of the student’s choosing, with the approval of the instructor. Each student should produce the equivalent of a 1200–1500-word paper. More instructions will be disseminated later in the semester.

Grading/GPA Scale

Letter Grade	Number Grade	Corresponding GPA
A	100-90	4.0
B+	89-87	3.33
B	86-84	3.0
B-	83-80	2.67
C+	79-77	2.33

C	76-74	2.0
C-	73-70	1.67
D+	69-67	1.33
D	66-64	1.0
D-	63-60	0.67
F	Below 60	0.0

Submission and Late Work Policy

All assignments – except for reading responses – are due at 11:59 PM on the due date. They should be submitted on Canvas. Late assignments will be penalized 1/3 grade (A becomes A-, B+ becomes B) every day that they are missing. In other words, if an assignment is due Thursday but is submitted on Friday, the maximum possible grade for that assignment will be an A-. If it is submitted Saturday, the maximum drops further to B+. HOWEVER, I understand that life happens, and I am happy to discuss late work or extensions on a case-by-case basis.

Disabilities and Accommodations

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 accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating constitute academic dishonesty and will not be tolerated. Plagiarism can be defined as deploying the thoughts, ideas, and writings of another as your own, without proper citation. Any student caught plagiarizing or cheating will, at minimum: Receive a grade of 0 on the assignment and be required to repeat the assignment for no credit. Failing to repeat the assignment will result in further penalty. I reserve the right to alter this policy as I see fit. Plagiarism and cheating are easy to catch and ethically wrong, so avoid them at all costs.

Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Course schedule

Week 1, January 9-13: Introduction to course

- Tuesday: Goals for the course
- Thursday lecture: Indigenous America

Week 2, January 17-20: Who discovered America?

- Lectures: Early Colonization
- Thursday discussion:
 - o AY Chapter 1: Indigenous America
 - o AY Chapter 2: Colliding Cultures

Week 3, January 23-January 27: What is Slavery?

- Lectures: Slavery and enslavement in the Atlantic world
- Thursday discussion:
 - o AY Chapter 3: British North America

Week 4, January 30-February 3: How did the Indians lose their land?

- Lectures: The Seventeenth Century and King Phillip's War
- Thursday discussion
 - o Jenny Hale Pulsipher, *Swindler Sachem*
 - o **No reading response due**

Week 5, February 6-10: Colonial Upheavals?

- **Final project topic due**
- Lectures: The Eighteenth Century, the Enlightenment, and the Seven Year's War
- Thursday discussion
 - o AY Chapter 4: Colonial Society

Week 6, February 13-17: How revolutionary was the Revolution?

- Lectures: The crisis of authority and the violence of war
- Thursday discussion:
 - o Declaration of Independence (1776)
 - o Gordon Wood, "Historian Gordon Wood responds to the New York Times' defense of the 1619 Project"
 - o Gordon Wood, "An interview with historian Gordon Wood on the New York Times' 1619 Project."
 - **Link:** <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2019/11/28/wood-n28.html>
 - o Documents related to the Dunmore Proclamation, tweeted by Woody Holton.
 - **Link:** https://wakelet.com/wake/hmMAvu_kxRJQz_4t--rQ9

Week 7, February 20-24: What do we make of the Constitution?

- **Research question due**
- Lectures: The 1780s and the Convention
- Thursday discussion:
 - o U.S. Constitution (1787)

- David Waldstreicher, *Slavery's Constitution*, 3-105
- Sean Wilentz, "Constitutionally, Slavery Is No National Institution"
- **No reading response due**

Week 8, February 27-March 3: How revolutionary was the Early Republic?

- **Book review due Tuesday at 11:59 PM**
- Lectures: The First Party System, Expansion, and War (again)
- Thursday discussion:
 - Nancy F. Cott, "On 'Woman's Sphere' and Feminism"
 - Rosemarie Zagari, "The Rights of Woman"

Week 9, March 6-March 10: How did the Country Change?

- Tuesday lecture: The Transportation and Market Revolutions
- **Midterm on Thursday in class**
- **No reading response due**

Spring Break, March 13-17

- **NO CLASS**

Week 10, March 20-24: What do we make of Andrew Jackson?

- Lectures: Jacksonian America and a New Defense of Slavery
- Thursday discussion
 - *AY* Chapter 9: Democracy in America
 - *AY* Chapter 11: The Cotton Revolution

Week 11, March 27-31: A Country at Odds?

- Lectures: Anti-Colonization and the Age of Reform
- Thursday discussion:
 - Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*

Week 12, April 3-7: Is America an Empire?

- **Final project bibliography due**
- Lectures: The War in Mexico
- Thursday discussion:
 - *AY* Chapter 12: Manifest Destiny

Week 13, April 10-14: Why did the South Secede?

- Lectures: The Sectional Crisis and the 1850s
- Thursday discussion:
 - *AY* Chapter 13: The Sectional Crisis AND
 - *Dred Scott v. Sanford* (1857)
 - Texas Ordinance of Secession
 - "Alexander Stephens on Slavery and the Confederate Constitution" (1861) (*AY* reader, chapter 14)

Week 14, April 17-21: Why did the North try to stop the South?

- Lectures: The Civil War and emancipation
- Thursday discussion:
 - o AY Chapter 14: The Civil War AND
 - o Abraham Lincoln's First Inaugural Address
 - o Emancipation Proclamation (1863)
 - o Thirteenth Amendment (1865)

Week 15, April 24-26: Did Reconstruction Fail?

- Lecture: Reunion and Revolution

Final project due May 3