

AMH2010: United States History to 1877

Fall 2025 (3 credits)

I. General Information

Meeting days and times: Tuesdays, Period 7 (1:55-2:45); Thursdays, Period 7-8 (1:55 - 3:50)

Class location: FLI 105

Instructor:

Name: Sean Adams

Office: Turlington 2121

Phone: 352-273-3354

Email: spadams@ufl.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3- 4 pm; Wednesdays, 2-3 pm

Course Description

Examine United States history from before European contact to 1877. Topics include but are not limited to indigenous peoples, the European background, the colonial period, the American Revolution, the Articles of Confederation, the Constitution, issues within the new Republic, sectionalism, manifest destiny, slavery, the American Civil War, and Reconstruction.

NOTE: All topics in this course will be taught objectively as objects of analysis, without endorsement of particular viewpoints, and will be observed from multiple perspectives. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, or belief. Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to explore readings and subject matter in this course. All perspectives will be respected in class discussions.

Prerequisites

None

Textbooks (Required)

1. Joseph L. Locke and Ben Wright, eds., *The American Yawp: A Massively Collaborative Open U.S. History Textbook. Vol. 1, to 1877*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2019.

PDF download available at:

https://www.americanyawp.com/text/wp-content/uploads/yawp_v1_open_pdf.pdf

Online version available at:

<https://www.americanyawp.com/>

2. James West Davidson and Mark Hamilton Lytle, *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection, Volume 1* (Sixth Edition). New York: McGraw Hill, 2010

Other readings for this course will be available as PDFs or will have links posted on Canvas.

General Education Designation: Social and Behavioral Sciences (S)

Social Science courses must afford students an understanding of the basic social and behavioral science concepts and principles used in the analysis of behavior and past and present social, political, and economic issues. Social and Behavioral Sciences (S) is a sub-designation of Social Sciences at the University of Florida. These courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and underlying theory or methodologies used in the social and behavioral sciences. Students will learn to identify, describe and explain social institutions, structures or processes. These courses emphasize the effective application of accepted problem-solving techniques. Students will apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions, as well as the evaluation of opinions, outcomes or human behavior. Students are expected to assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.

Your successful completion of AMH2010 with a grade of "C" or higher will count towards UF's General Education State Core in Social and Behavioral Sciences (S). It will also count towards the State of Florida's Civic Literacy requirement.

Course Objectives

All General Education area objectives can be found [here](#).

1. Analyze primary and secondary sources to understand various historical interpretations and perspectives on significant events, individuals, and movements in early American history.
2. Develop critical thinking skills by evaluating evidence, making connections between historical events, and synthesizing information to form reasoned arguments and interpretations.
3. Analyze historical patterns and trends, identify causes and consequences of historical developments, and assess their significance in shaping the course of American history.
4. Explore experiences, perspectives, and identities of people in early America, including indigenous peoples, European settlers, enslaved Africans, and other marginalized groups.
5. Examine the evolution of political institutions, ideologies, and movements in the United States, including the development of colonial governments, the American Revolution, the Constitution, and the Civil War.
6. Investigate social and economic transformations in early America, including the impact of colonialism, westward expansion, industrialization, slavery, and the market revolution.
7. Explore the role of religion, philosophy, and intellectual trends in shaping American society and culture, including the influence of religious beliefs on colonial settlements, Enlightenment ideas, and reform movements.
8. Develop research and writing skills by conducting historical research, analyzing primary sources, and effectively communicating their findings through written assignments and presentations.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A student who successfully completes this course will:

1. Students will describe the factual details of the substantive historical episodes under study.
2. Students will identify and analyze foundational developments that shaped American history from before European contact to 1877 using critical thinking skills.
3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the primary ideas, values, and perceptions that have shaped United States history.
4. Students will demonstrate competency in civic literacy.

Objectives—General Education and Social and Behavioral Sciences (S)

CATEGORY	SOCIAL SCIENCE SLOS	STATE SLO ASSIGNMENTS	COURSE-SPECIFIC
Content	Identify, describe, and explain key themes, principles, and terminology; the history, theory and/or methodologies used; and social institutions, structures and processes.	Outcomes 1-4	Students will demonstrate their understanding of foundational developments that shaped American history from before European contact to 1877 by analyzing primary and secondary sources in short papers, exams, and through in-class discussion.
Critical Thinking	Apply formal and informal qualitative or quantitative analysis effectively to examine the processes and means by which individuals make personal and group decisions. Assess and analyze ethical perspectives in individual and societal decisions.	Outcomes 1-4	Students will demonstrate their ability in qualitative and quantitative methods by examining primary and secondary sources in short writing assignments, in-class exams, and class discussions, students by using critical thinking skills.
Communication	Communication is the development and expression of ideas in written and oral forms.	Outcomes 1-4	Students will identify and analyze foundational developments that shaped American history from before European contact to 1877 in written assignments and class discussion. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the primary ideas, values, and perceptions that

			have shaped United States history and will describe them in written assignments, periodic exams and class discussion.
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Writing Assessment Rubric

The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Essays exhibit at least some evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide at least an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Essays either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. May also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Essays exhibit at least some identifiable structure, including a clear thesis statement but may require readers to work to follow progression of ideas.	Essays lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Essays use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, essays may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Essays make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Essays use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical sentence structure. At a minimum, documents will display a less precise use of vocabulary and an uneven use of sentence structure or a writing style that occasionally veers away	Essays rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Essays may also use words incorrectly.

	from word choice or tone appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline.	
MECHANICS	Essays will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, papers may contain some spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive so they do not muddy the paper's argument or points.	Essays contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

In order to earn credit for the Writing Requirement:

1. The student must earn a grade of C or better in the course.
AND
2. The student must earn an S (satisfactory) evaluation on the writing requirements of the course.

III. Graded Work

Grading Components

Category	Weight
Essays	40%
Mid-Term Examination	25%
Quizzes	10%
Final Exam	25%

Essays: Four essays of 500-750 word length in response to a broad question that uses either secondary or primary source material for evidence.

Essays Assignments:

- Who Was Pocohontas (Due: September 5, 2025) - 100 points

Primary source analysis that draws from four sources on the role of Pocohontas in early American history.

- A Declaration to the World (Due: September 26, 2025) - 100 points

Analysis of secondary sources that put the American Declaration of Independence (1776) in a global context.

- John Brown's Body (Due: November 7, 2025) - 100 points

Primary source analysis that examines the reaction to John Brown's 1859 raid at Harpers Ferry.

- Reconstruction in Florida (Due: November 21, 2025) - 100 points

Research and primary source assignment that finds a newspaper article from a Florida newspaper during Reconstruction (1863-1877).

Mid-Term Examination: In-class exam that includes a brief multiple-choice section and an essay component.

Mid-Term Examination Assignments:

- Mid-Term Exam (Due: October 2, 2025) - 100 points

Quizzes: Throughout the semester there will be eight (8) quizzes based on course material. Students will have the option of dropping the lowest two (2) grades. These quizzes will not be announced in advance.

Final Exam: In-class exam that includes brief multiple-choice section and an essay component.

Final Exam Assignments:

- Final Exam (Due: December 11, 2025) - 100 points

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Number Grade
A	100-93
A-	92-90
B+	89-87
B	86-83
B-	82-80
C+	79-77
C	76-73
C-	72-70
D+	69-67
D	66-63
D-	62-60
E	59-0

See the UF Catalog's [Grades and Grading Policies](#) for information on how UF assigns grade points.

Note: A minimum grade of C is required to earn General Education credit. All final grades will be rounded up to the highest whole number, i.e. an 82.6 will be counted as a “B” for the course.

University Assessment Policies

Requirements for make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the [Catalog](#).

Instructions for Submitting Written Assignments

All written assignments must be submitted as Word documents (.doc or .docx) through the "Assignments" portal in Canvas by the specified deadlines. Do NOT send assignments as PDF files.

Extensions & Make-Up Exams

Only the professor can authorize an extension or make-up exam, and all requests must be supported by documentation from a medical provider, Student Health Services, the Disability Resource Center, or the Dean of Students Office. Requirements for attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Late Submissions

No late submissions will be accepted for full credit. The requirements for securing an extension are consistent with university policies:

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

Canvas

Class announcements will be made through Canvas, and all papers must be turned in via Canvas. Class handouts, lecture slides, assignment rubrics, readings, study guides, and a copy of this syllabus are on our Canvas site. Check your Canvas inbox daily, and read all Canvas announcements.

Technology in the Classroom

To respect a wide range of learning styles, I will permit the use of tablets and laptops in class so long as they do not distract you or your fellow students. However, abuses of this technology policy will be taken seriously. Students disrupting the lecture may be asked to leave, and anyone caught using tablets or laptops for purposes unrelated to the course during a discussion section will receive an unexcused absence and a failing participation grade for that meeting. No computers or laptops are allowed on exam days, and those who repeatedly violate the technology policy will be barred from bringing laptops and tablets to class. Cellphones should be on vibrate.

Class Communication Policy

The best way to get in contact with your professor is through email, listed on the front page of the syllabus. I will do our best to reply within one business day, but there may be periods when I am slower to respond due to high email volume. Please also note that I will not answer emails at night, over weekends, or during university-scheduled holidays.

Assignment Support Outside the Classroom

You are welcome to come to regular office hours or to schedule an individual appointment with your professor. When needed, I also encourage you to seek support from the academic resources listed on this syllabus.

IV. Evaluations

UF course evaluation process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:

1. The email they receive from GatorEvals,
2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or
3. The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluera.com>

Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

V. University Policies and Resources

Students requiring accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with the instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this

assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [See the UF Conduct Code website for more information](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Plagiarism and Related Ethical Violations

Ethical violations such as plagiarism, cheating, academic misconduct (e.g. passing off others’ work as your own, reusing old assignments, etc.) will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade in this course. Students must be especially wary of plagiarism. The UF Student Honor Code defines plagiarism as follows: A student shall not represent as the student’s own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student. Note that plagiarism also includes the use of any artificial intelligence programs, such as ChatGPT.

In-class recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Procedure for conflict resolution

Any classroom issues, disagreements or grade disputes should be discussed first between the instructor and the student. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact the Department of History to schedule an appointment with the Associate Chair. Be prepared to provide documentation of the problem, as well as all graded materials for the semester. Issues that cannot be resolved departmentally will be referred to the University Ombuds Office (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1308) or the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu>; 352-392-1261).

Campus Resources

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#), to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the [Student Health Care Center website](#).

University Police Department: Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.

Student Success Initiative, <https://studentsuccess.ufl.edu/>

[Field and Fork Pantry](#). Food and toiletries for students experiencing food insecurity.

[Dean of Students Office](#). 202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261. Among other services, the DSO assists students who are experiencing situations that compromises their ability to attend classes. This includes family emergencies and medical issues (including mental health crises).

Academic Resources

[Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

[Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

[Teaching Center](#): Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

[Writing Studio](#): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the [Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage](#) for more information.

VI. Schedule of Lectures (Subject to Change)

Introduction

August 21 What is History (And Why Should You Care?)

Core Readings: *American Yawp*, Chapter 1: The New World, pp. 1-27; *After the Fact*, "The Strange Death of Silas Deane," pp. xvi-xxxii

Week One: First Contacts

August 26 Two Worlds on a Collision Course

August 28 The Meaning of Contact

Core Readings: *American Yawp*, Chapter 2: Colliding Cultures, pp. 28-53; *After the Fact*, "Serving Time in Virginia," pp. 31-51

Week Two: The English in America

September 2 Up in Smoke: The Virginia Experiment

September 4 Utopias, Refuges, and Cash Cows

September 5 First Short Paper Due

Core Readings: *American Yawp*, Chapter 3: British North America, pp. 54-80; *After the Fact*, "The Visible and Invisible Worlds of Salem," pp. 52-74

Readings for Assignment: Four Primary Sources on Early Virginia (Canvas) (12 pp.)

Week Three: Becoming American

September 9 The Colonies in the Atlantic World

September 11 A Great Awakening

Core Readings: *American Yawp*, Chapter 4: Colonial Society, pp. 81-107

Week Four: The British Empire in Crisis

September 16 Seven Years/French and Indian/Global Conflict

September 18 Resistance and Rebellion in American Cities

Core Readings: *American Yawp*, Chapter 5: The American Revolution, pp. 108-120

Week Five: The Birth of a New Nation

September 23 Independence?

September 25 A Shot Heard Round the World

September 26 Third Paper Due

Core Readings: *American Yawp*, Chapter 5: The American Revolution, pp. 120-142; *After the Fact*, "Declaring Independence," pp. 75-97

Readings for Assignment: Declaration of Independence (1776); Armitage, "The Declaration of Independence in a Global Context" (2004), 5 pp.; Li, "East is East and West is West," (1999), 16 pp. (Canvas)

Week Six: Challenges

September 30 The Founding Generation

October 2 **Mid-Term Exam**

Core Readings: *American Yawp*, Chapter 6: A New Nation and Chapter 7: The Early Republic, pp. 143-197

Optional Readings: *After the Fact*, "Material Witness," pp. 98-123

Week Seven: The Early American Republic

October 7 Fresh Oysters, Spinning Jennies, and Blue Mondays

October 9 The Jacksonian Paradox

Core Readings: *American Yawp*, Chapter 8: The Market Revolution and Chapter 9: Democracy in America, pp. 198-252; *After the Fact*, "Jackson's Frontier—and Turner's," pp. 124-147

Week Eight: Remaking the New Nation Again

October 14 The Making of the Old South

October 16 Reforming Body, Spirit and Nation

Core Readings: *American Yawp*, Chapter 10: Religion and Reform and Chapter 11: The Cotton Revolution, pp. 148-314

Week Nine: The Emergence of Sectionalism

October 21 The West

October 23 Manifest Destiny and the War with Mexico

Extra Credit Review Due

Core Readings: *American Yawp*, Chapter 12: Manifest Destiny, pp. 315-342

Extra Credit Movie Review (up to 25 points to overall paper grade)

Week Ten: The Slavery Debate

October 28 Kansas-Nebraska

October 30 The Political Crisis of the 1850s

Core Readings: Chapter 13, The Sectional Crisis, pp. 343-370

Week Eleven: Crisis and War

November 4 A House Dividing

November 6 On to Richmond, On to Washington

November 7 Third Paper Due

Core Readings: *American Yawp*, Chapter 14: The Civil War, pp. 371-385; *After the Fact*, "The Madness of John Brown," pp. 148-170

Readings for Assignment: Four Newspaper Articles on John Brown's Raid and Trial (1859) (Canvas) (8 pp.)

Week Twelve: Civil War

November 11 **Veteran's Day Holiday—No Lecture**

November 13 From War to Crusade

Core Readings: *American Yawp*, Chapter 15: The Civil War, pp. 386-40; *After the Fact*, "The View from the Bottom Rail," pp. 171-201

Week Thirteen: Reconstruction

November 18 Presidential Reconstruction

November 20 The Rise and Fall of Radical Reconstruction

November 21 Fourth Paper Due

Core Readings: *American Yawp*, Chapter 15: Reconstruction, pp. 402-434

Readings for Assignment: Directions for finding Florida newspaper articles during Reconstruction are on Canvas (3 pp.)

Week Fifteen: Moving Forward

December 2 America in 1877