

History of the United States to 1877

Introduction:

This class will offer a survey of American history from “discovery and encounter” through the Civil War. We will focus on how many diverse people thought about, talked about, and acted upon the problem of the New World – a problem that never really went away. Each generation from the seventeenth century through the nineteenth formulated ideas of what they thought America was and what it meant to live in the New World. This, of course, changed dramatically over time – a process we will pay particular attention to – as Indians, Africans, Europeans, and eventually Americans all tried to make their visions real. The many voices that tried to answer this central question – *how do we solve the problem of this new world?* – provide the materials for this survey.

Course Objectives

The student will demonstrate:

1. Knowledge of a basic narrative of American history; political, economic, social, and cultural, including knowledge of unity and diversity in American society.
2. Knowledge of common institutions in American society and how they have affected different groups.
3. Understanding of America’s evolving relationship with the rest of the world.
4. Knowledge of the major events, ideas, trends, and problems in American history to 1877.
5. An ability to explain how the past has shaped the present.
6. An ability to think critically by analyzing and evaluating historical events and ideas in American history.
7. Ability to question and rethink his/her preconceived notions regarding American history.
8. An ability to conduct/evaluate historical research.

Grade distribution:

A	94-100
A-	90-93.99
B+	87-89.99
B	83-86.99
B-	80-82.99
C+	77-79.99
C	73-76.99
C-	70-72.99
D	60-69.99
F	0-59.99

Required books:

Textbook: Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty! An American History* Vol 1: to 1877 (6th ed)

Primary source reader: Foner, *Voices of Freedom: A Documentary History* Vol. 1

Monograph: Robert Parkinson, *Thirteen Clocks: How Race United the Colonies and Made the Declaration of Independence* (UNC Press, 2021). ISBN: 978-1469662572

Additional Reading: Additional readings for this course will be uploaded to our campus web course service.

Major Assignments and Grading Breakdown

1. Midterm Exam

(25 percent of final grade)

This course has an in-class, closed-book, written midterm exam on XXX. You will have the entire class period to complete the exam. The exam consists of essay questions and identifications. A review sheet with four potential essay questions will be distributed one week prior to the exam (one of the four will appear on the exam). I'll discuss the format of the exam in more detail in class.

2. Paper

(25 percent of final grade)

You are required to write a 5-page paper as part of this course.

You are to write this paper on the assigned monograph for the course, *Thirteen Clocks*.

You will answer the following question:

Parkinson argues that race united the colonies together and made the United States. You will write a five-page paper that:

1. Summarizes his argument about all the different factors that were pushing the colonies apart.
2. Summarizes how he thinks newspapers helped shape the Revolution
3. Choosing either enslaved or native peoples, summarizes how stories about them helped push the colonies toward independence
4. Finally, offer your thoughts about his argument – what difference do you think race made in making America independent? What difference did it make that Adams, Franklin, Jefferson, and Washington did this? What difference does it make to us today?

3. Final Exam

(25 percent of final grade)

This course has an in-class, closed-book, written final exam (covering from after the midterm; thus, it is NOT comprehensive) on Tuesday, Dec. 16th. It consists of essay question and identifications. You will have the entire class period to complete the exam. A review sheet with four potential essay questions will be distributed one week prior to the exam (one of the four will appear on the exam). I'll discuss the format of the exam in more detail in class.

4. Participation, Group Work, Presentations, General Good Citizenship

(25 percent)

This class relies heavily on discussions and group work. Every couple of weeks we'll have a discussion-based class meeting during which we'll FLIP the class (that means you'll work with each other, and me, to discuss primary and secondary source readings, to work through historical problems – in short, to enhance your understanding of the past and move away from the textbook-and-lecture tradition of history courses). I expect your full participation in these sessions. I will be giving you a discussion grade each time we hold a discussion. These grades will together be counted as 10 percent of your final course grade.

Participation also includes the following:

- **General Citizenship and Behavior:** This refers to overall class demeanor, including, but not limited to: being prepared for class, taking notes, following directions, participating and taking on leadership roles in group work, and not being rude or disruptive to the learning environment. Sitting in the back with a cap pulled over your eyes, putting your head down, not following directions, being inappropriate in a variety of ways with me or your classmates, having a bad attitude, being hostile toward or uninterested in learning, or being verbally or physically confrontational = bad citizenship.

Schedule

Week 1

Introduction & Syllabus
Encountering the New World

Exercise and discussion questions: When does American History begin?
What difference does Columbus make?

Week 2

What difference did smallpox make?
Jamestown. So what?

Reading: Foner, ch. 1: A New World

Voices:

Father Brebeuf on Customs & Beliefs of Hurons
Exchange between John Smith and Powhatan
Sending Women to Virginia
Maryland Act Concerning Religion

Exercise and discussion questions: 1619 vs. 1620
 What poisoned relations between English and Natives?
 Could things have turned out different?
 What difference did the environment make?
 How did definitions of property matter in early encounters?

Week 3

Who cares about Puritans anyway?
 The effects of lopping off a king's head...

Reading: Foner, ch. 2: The Beginnings of English America

Voices

Trial of Anne Hutchinson
John Winthrop, Speech to the Mass. General Court

Exercise and discussion questions: Who wanted to become a Puritan?
 What was it like to be a woman in Massachusetts?
 Did the Puritans think they were a success?

Week 4

1676: Big Year
 Captured by America

Reading:

Foner, ch. 3: Creating Anglo-America

Voices

Nathaniel Bacon on Bacon's Rebellion
William Penn, Penna. Charter
Letter by an Immigrant to Penna.
Women in the Household Economy
An Apprentice's Indenture Contract

Exercise and discussion questions: What effects did Metacom's War have?

What advantages did Pennsylvania have in being last?
 What was it like to be an indentured servant in Penna?
 What difference did Bacon's Rebellion make?

Week 5

Where did those big mansions in Virginia come from?
 Who cares about Isaac Newton? In church??

Reading: Foner, ch. 4: Slavery, Freedom, and the Struggle for Empire

Voices

Olaudah Equiano on slave trade
Advertisements for Runaway Slaves and Servants
The Great Awakening Comes to Connecticut
Trial of John Peter Zenger

Exercise and discussion questions: What are the connections between emerging capitalism and the slave trade?
 What effects did religious revolts have for colonial women?
 The Great Awakening. So what?
 How did American consumerism develop in the 18th c.?

Week 6

What caused the Americans to revolt? What's a revolution?
 What is liberty?

Reading: Foner, ch. 5: The American Revolution

Parkinson, *Thirteen Clocks*, ch. 1, 2, 3

Voices

Virginia Resolutions on the Stamp Act
New York Workingmen Demand a Voice
Association of the New York Sons of Liberty

Exercise and discussion questions: How did colonists define liberty?
 What were the problems of the imperial crisis?
 How did the Seven Years' War shape how colonists reacted to imperial reform?

Discussion questions for Parkinson: How did newspapers help make a revolution?
 What were the chances of American unity?
 How did colonists react to the news of Lexington &

Concord? So what?

Week 7

Why independence?

Discussion of Parkinson, *Thirteen Clocks*

**Reading: Foner, ch. 6: The Revolution Within
Parkinson, *Thirteen Clocks*, ch. 4-end**

Discussion questions for Parkinson: Why did the colonists decide to vote for independence?
Why July, 1776?
What difference did the German mercenaries make?
How did enslaved and native peoples help make
America independent?
What difference did it make that patriot leaders used
race to argue for American independence?

Week 8

Midterm exam

Goodbye, liberty.

**Reading: Foner, ch. 7: Founding a Nation
Voices
James Madison, *The Federalist* #51
A July Fourth Oration
Patrick Henry's Anti-Federalist Argument**

Exercise and discussion questions: What made the 1780s “critical”?
Did everyone love the Constitution?
What did people think the Revolution was all about?
What was the American “nation” like in 1785? 1790?

Week 9

Making the Union “more perfect”
Jefferson to the rescue.

→ Paper on Parkinson, *Thirteen Clocks*, due

Reading: Foner, ch. 8: Securing the Republic
Voices
Jefferson on Race & Slavery
Washington, Farewell Address
Judith Sargent Murray, on Equality of Sexes
Tecumseh on Indians & Land
George Tucker, Gabriel's Rebellion

Exercise and discussion questions: What did the stronger American union mean for Native peoples?
 What did the Federalists think about race and slavery?
 What did the Jeffersonians think about race and slavery?

Week 10

The Big Ditch
 Moving to and around America

Reading: Foner, ch. 9: The Market Revolution
Voices
Complaint of a Lowell Factory Worker
Woman in the Westward Movement

Exercise and discussion questions: The Erie Canal. So what?
 What difference did the War of 1812 make?
 How did American factories first develop?
 How did those factories affect American women?
 What changes in the law made the Market Revolution possible?

Week 11

King Andrew I
 Hating Jackson

Reading: Foner, ch. 10: Democracy in America
Voices
Appeal of the Cherokee Nation
Calhoun, Concurrent Majority
Adams on role of the National Government

Appeal of Forty Thousand Citizens

Exercise and discussion questions: Why did so many people love and/or hate Jackson?
 Why did Jackson want to remove Indians?
 Why did Jackson hate the Bank of U.S.?
 What difference did the Panic of 1819 make?

Week 12

The Cotton Kingdom
 The “Benevolent Empire”

Reading: **Foner, ch. 11: The Peculiar Institution**
 Voices
 Rise of Cotton Kingdom
 Slavery and the Bible
 Rules of Highland Plantation
 Letter by a Fugitive Slave

Exercise and discussion questions: What was “the South” in 1850?
 What was it like to be enslaved in Alabama in 1850?
 What was the “internal slave trade”?
 How did slaveholders use Christianity to justify slavery?
 Was slavery profitable?

Week 13

Tee-totallers & abolitionists
 “Mexico will poison us.”

Reading: **Foner, ch. 12: Age of Reform**
 Voices
 David Walker’s Appeal
 Douglass on Fourth of July
 Declaration of Sentiments & Seneca Falls
 Beecher on Duty of American Females
 O’Sullivan, Manifest Destiny

Exercise and discussion questions: Recall Parkinson’s argument while reading Douglass.
 What does the Fourth of July mean to the slave?
 What was the “Second Great Awakening”?
 What happened in Texas in the 1830s?

Week 14

Crisis of 1850s

A revolutionary civil war

Reading: **Foner, ch. 13: A House Divided**
 Foner, ch. 14: A New Birth of Freedom
 Voices
 Seward, Irrepressible Conflict
 Helper, Impending Crisis
 Lincoln-Douglas Debates
 SC Ordinance of Secession

Exercise and discussion questions: Why did the South lose?
 Why did the North win?
 What difference did race make?
 What was the turning point of the Civil War?

Week 15

Emancipation

Reconstructing the union

Reading: **Foner, ch. 15: What is Freedom? Reconstruction**
 Voices
 Lincoln, Gettysburg Address
 Letter by the Mother of a Black Soldier
 Cox condemns emancipation

Exercise and discussion questions: Was Reconstruction a success or failure? Why?
 What could've helped?
 What difference did black soldiers make?
 How did Lincoln change the meaning of America at
 Gettysburg?
 How does ending this class in 1877 rather than 1865
 change its meaning?

Final Exam

TBA – date & time will be announced