

# **21:512:201 History of the United States I**

**Fall 2015**

Section 4. Hill Hall 115

Tuesday & Thursday 4-5:20

Instructor: Zachary Bennett

Email: zachary.bennett@rutgers.edu

Office: Conklin 326

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 12:30-3:30

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Whether you are a history major or not, this course will develop relevant professional skills by learning how historians approach the past. Rather than simply memorizing facts and dates like you may have done in high school, readings will challenge you to interpret historical documents by analyzing the context in which they were produced. Reading documents in this manner will expose you to the importance of factors such as race, culture, class, and gender in the United States, as well as force you to critically examine celebrated narratives and myths in American history. Assignments require you to apply what you have read to craft clearly written, coherent arguments. In essence, this course will enhance the critical reasoning and communication skills critical for any career path.

## **COURSE SUMMARY**

While this course is an introduction to the discipline of history, it is also an account of the history of a specific time and place: North America between 1600 and 1877. That is a massive topic. The place we will be exploring underwent tremendous political, environmental, and cultural upheaval: America in 1600 or even 1800 would be a world nearly completely unrecognizable to us today. By acquainting ourselves with people vastly different from ourselves, my hope is that it provides you with new realms of perspective on the human experience, especially in regards to the dynamic, contested nature of what it means to be “American.” You will learn that history is a contingent process where the future is rarely determined or inevitable. We will therefore cover the political, economic, and social phases of North American (and after 1783 United States) history with particular emphasis on *how* and *why* the continent developed in the way that it did, and what being an “American” meant to the diverse array of characters who identified themselves as such. It will become quickly apparent that American history could have gone in other directions, and we will be ever mindful of the possibilities and choices people had when they lived. That being said, historical events did happen: Native Americans lost their land, white men became politically dominant, rebellious Americans won independence in 1783, while the Southern Confederacy did not in 1865. These events have been decisively settled, and their participants are long dead. However, this course aims to survey the violent transformation of the North American continent and the contentious birth of the United States with an eye toward how those struggles live on in how Americans understand themselves as both a distinctive place and nation today.

## **GRADES & ASSIGNMENTS**

### Breakdown

#### 30% Participation

25% Reading Summaries  
5% Classroom participation

#### 30% Essays

#### 40% Midterm and Final Exam

### Participation

At the end of the week you are expected to submit a 1 page (or about 3 paragraph) response to the assigned reading. This assignment will record your physical attendance, preparation, and most importantly hone your writing skills that will prepare you to succeed in papers and exams. Active contribution in class is also part of this grade.

### Essays

There will be 2 writing assignments of 4 pages length each. Although specific instructions will be given in advance, these papers will ask you to make an argument about an historical event by drawing from primary source materials.

### Exams

The midterm and final exam will be composed of 5 short answer identification questions, and one longer essay question. The final exam will not be cumulative.

*Late work:* Papers will be deducted one letter grade for each day after the due date. Exams cannot be made up unless one has an excused absence accompanied by appropriate documentation.

## **POLICIES**

Academic Integrity All assignment submitted for this class must be your own original work, and information derived from other sources must be cited appropriately. All instances of plagiarism and cheating will be investigated fully, in accordance with the Rutgers Policy of Academic Integrity (<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>). All students are required to sign the Academic Integrity pledge on Blackboard prior to the third week of class and on all major course assignments: "On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment)."

Accommodations If you require accommodations to meet course requirements, please inform me at the beginning of the semester. If you do not already have a Letter of Accommodation from Disability Services, please contact the Paul Robeson Campus Center Office of Student Life and Leadership to obtain one (<http://robeson.rutgers.edu/studentlife/disability.html>).

Attendance You are expected to come to class having read the required material. The Rutgers-Newark Undergraduate catalog defines excused absences as "illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by

the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather.” All other absences will be excused at my discretion. Any student who misses eight class sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F. Students with disabilities, including learning disabilities, requiring assistance and/or accommodation should speak with Disability Services in a timely manner. The last day to drop this course with a “W” is November 02.

### Classroom Expectations

In order to facilitate a safe and productive learning environment, I expect all students to be respectful of the class space. It is important to recognize that we are all here to learn, and behavior that distracts from, or intimidates others’ ability to do that will not be tolerated. As adults, I trust that you can use common sense: show up on time, cell phones should be turned off, and laptops should only be used for class material. Failure to meet these basic expectations will affect your participation grade.

### **BOOKS FOR PURCHASE**

Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty!: An American History*. 3rd Edition, Volume I. ISBN 978-0-393-9354-4

Serena R. Zabin, ed., *The New York Conspiracy Trials: Daniel Horsmanden’s Journal of the Proceedings* (Boston, 2004). ISBN 978-0-312-40216-7

### **SCHEDULE**

*-PART I: The Hybrid Atlantic World-*

#### **Week 1**

September 1. Introductions.

September 3. Native America.

Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 8-20; William Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 34-53.

#### **Week 2**

September 8. NO CLASS.

September 11. Columbus.

Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 20-7; Michel- Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 108-140.

#### **Week 3**

September 15. Columbian Exchange.

Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, 104-56.

September 17. Conquest and the Power of Print.

Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 94-5; Jill Lepore, *Name of the War*, 21-68; Casco Bay Treaty

#### **Week 4**

##### September 22. Slavery's Many Faces.

Africa Group: Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World*, 72-97, 116-25. Indian Group: Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country*, 13-45. Virginia Group: Edmund Morgan, *American Freedom, American Slavery*, 295-344. Everyone: Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 101-8.

##### September 24. The Mental World of Early Americans.

David D. Hall, "The Mental Worlds of Samuel Sewall," 21-44. Excerpts from Samuel Sewall and William Byrd II's diary.

#### **Week 5**

##### September 29. The Creation of Race: Case Studies of VA, MA, and PA.

Be reading Zabin, *New York Conspiracy Trials*.

##### October 1. New York Conspiracy Trials:

Zabin, *New York Conspiracy Trials*, 30-33, 39-159.

#### **Week 6**

##### October 6. Identities and British Liberties

##### **NY Conspiracy Trials Assignment Due**

Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 150-63; Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors*, 3-23.

##### October 8. Seven Years War.

Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 163-74. Minavana and Pontiac Speeches.

*-Part II: An Empire of Liberty-*

#### **Week 7**

##### October 13. The Imperial Crisis and English Revolutionary Tradition.

Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 84-9, 108-111, 184-95. John Dickinson, "Letters from a Pennsylvania Farmer"; "William Pitt on the Stamp Act, 1766."

##### October 15. Independence.

Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 195-205; Olive Branch Petition; Proclamation for Suppressing Rebellion and Sedition

#### **Week 8**

##### October 20. War and the Ideology of Revolution.

Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 205-14, 222-33, 248-52. Abigail Adams, "Remember the Ladies" and John Adams' reply

##### October 22. MIDTERM

## **Week 9**

### October 27. Crisis of Authority and the Constitution.

Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 259-60, 273-82; Terry Bouton, “A Road Closed.”

### October 29. Realizing the Revolutionary Republic

Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 294-317; Alexander Hamilton, “Report on Manufactures”; Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query VIII, XIX.

## **Week 10**

### November 3. 1812: The Second War of American Independence.

Foner, 1812. 317-24. Taylor, *Civil War of 1812*, “Introduction” and “Aliens”

### November 5. Jackson and the Triumph of White Manhood

Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 390-406; Election of 1828 Documents.

## **Week 11**

### November 10. American Expansion.

Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 282-5; Richard White, *The Middle Ground*, 413-33; President Jackson’s Message to Congress on Indian Removal; Tecumseh to William Henry Harrison.

### November 12. The Cotton South.

Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 285-8, 416-42.

## **Week 12**

### November 17. The Market Revolution.

Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 331-66.

### November 19. Mexican American War.

Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 492-512; Frederick Douglass, “On the War with Mexico”; *New York Herald*, “Editorial In Support of the War in Mexico”

### *-Part III: An Impending Crisis-*

## **Week 13**

### November 24. A Firebell in the Night: the Slavery question to 1850.

#### **Second Writing Assignment Due**

Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 238-48; Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query VIII; William Lloyd Garrison, “To the Public”; Fitzhugh, *Sociology of the South*.

### November 26. THANKSGIVING NO CLASS

## **Week 14**

December 1. Secession

“Calhoun’s Exposition”; Henry Clay, “Speech on Preserving the Union”; Abraham Lincoln, “Speech at Ottawa, IL”; “Declaration of Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Union.”

December 3. Civil War I

Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 512-33.

**Week 15**

December 8. Civil War Part II.

Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 538-54, 572-4; Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address, Alexander Stevens

December 10. Reconstruction and Conclusion.

Foner, *Give Me Liberty!*, 586-606, 616-22; Frederick Douglass, “Lesson of the Hour.”

**Final Exam**

December 17. 3-6 pm