

# Syllabus, US History I

## 1. Course Information

21:512:201

Section 81 (*Saturdays 12:30 to 3:25 in Conklin 424*)

History of the United States I

Rutgers University Newark

We will survey the history of the United States until the end of the formal Reconstruction era, tracing the nation's economic development, political movements, demographic change, interactions with the rest of the world, and evolving standards of inclusion.

These are our learning outcomes:

<b>Task</b>	<b>Desired Learning Outcome</b>
Assigned Readings	familiarity with use of primary sources, especially the connections between the author's goals and his or her arguments and his or her method of argumentation
Lectures and Discussions	basic knowledge of US history, recognition of broad patterns of history, familiarity with some common interpretations of US history, and ability to engage critically with others who often do not share the same interpretations of events
Research Essay	improved skills in synthesizing and communicating historical information, constructing sound arguments, and using the English language demonstrably well

## 2. Instructor Information

Ray Ojserkis, PhD

[ray.ojserkis@gmail.com](mailto:ray.ojserkis@gmail.com)

Office Hours on Tuesdays, 2:30-3:30, Conklin 326

## 3. Grading Policy

Attend class. Any student who misses four or more 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.

These are the graded components of your course:

Unannounced Reading Quizzes	25%*
Debate Notes	Cancels two lowest reading quiz grades.
Midterm Exam	25%
Final (non-cumulative) Exam	25%
Research Essay	25%

### Quizzes

The unannounced reading quizzes will be short quizzes that you should pass if you're doing the assigned reading. If you are absent or tardy your score for a quiz will be an F unless the absence is excusable. According to the Rutgers catalog, "The recognized grounds for absence are 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 causing dangerous traveling conditions.” Documentation will be required.

### Debate

We will discuss the details of the debate in class, and collectively agree on topics and teams.

### Exams

Take the exams in the designated session. If you miss an exam for any reason other than those specified in the Rutgers catalog, you will lose a full grade on your make-up exam.

### Research Essay

Your research essay will address the following questions: To what extent was a US Civil War inevitable? In the event of a US Civil War, to what extent was a Union victory inevitable?

Your research essay is due on or before the last day of the semester: Wednesday December 10<sup>th</sup>. We don't have class that day, and you will email me your essay as an attachment (not in the body of the email, please), in MS Word.

I call the essay a “research essay” to emphasize that the quality of your essay is largely dependent upon the quality of your research. Use at least four scholarly articles or published books. The phrase “at least” means you are allowed and encouraged to use more than four sources.

Cite your sources wherever you rely on them, using footnotes, parenthetical notes or end notes. Be very specific when citing a source, using either the Chicago, APA, or MLA format throughout. For details, please consult the [Rutgers Library Guide](#). Cite a source every time you make use of someone's ideas. Failure to do so will result in an F grade for plagiarism.

The length of the essay should be 1,500 to 2,500 words.

## **4. Classes**

Class sessions will be used for examinations and lectures. For each of the topics listed in the schedule below, I will review terms on a handout that I upload to Blackboard at the start of class. Some of these handouts will include primary reading in addition to that assigned below.

Learning can be a collaborative process, and I will involve the class in discussions. Never feel that your comments or questions aren't appreciated.

## **5. Primary Sources**

Primary sources are first-hand accounts, often created by participants or witnesses of events, and sometimes created by first-recorders of events. Examples include, but aren't limited to, memoirs, speeches, documents, data, polls, and contemporary newspaper accounts. Secondary sources are sources created by people who didn't participate or witness events, but often have the benefit of perspective, and typically draw from a variety of sources to create a nuanced and complex history that can account for multiple interpretations. Examples include history books and lectures.

We'll try to balance the lectures (which are secondary sources) by focusing almost exclusively on primary sources for our out-of-class reading. We will discuss many primary sources in class. If you think it will be difficult to read from the screen in the front of our room, bring printed copies or a laptop that is Internet-accessible.

**6. Statement of Academic Integrity**

For each exam, and on your research essay, you must agree in writing to the following:

“On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination/essay.”

## Tentative Calendar

CLASS	DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNED READING
1	Sep 6	Columbian Exchange Atlantic System	n/a n/a
2	Sep 13	English colonies in North America Colonial Development & Mercantilism	<a href="#">Charter to Sir Walter Raleigh</a> (This is a hard reading due in part to the Elizabethan English. Take your time.) <a href="#">Commercial Orders to Governor Andros</a>
3	Sep 20	US War of Independence Articles of Confederation Era	<a href="#">Association of the Sons of Liberty of New York</a> and <a href="#">Declaration of Independence</a> <a href="#">Articles of Confederation</a>
4	Sep 27	Creating the Constitution Washington's Presidency	<a href="#">US Constitution</a> <a href="#">G. Washington, Proclamation of Neutrality</a>
5	Oct 4	Jefferson's Presidency Transportation Revolution	<a href="#">T. Jefferson, letter to W. S. Smith</a> and <a href="#">T. Jefferson, letter to Benjamin Rush</a> <a href="#">T. Woodcock, journal excerpt</a> and <a href="#">H. Mackinder, Heartland Theory (only read pp. 13-18)</a>
6	Oct 11	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	Your midterm exam will be a week earlier than it is for most other classes, so you can dedicate lots of energy to reviewing notes and reading.
7	Oct 18	Economics: separate paths for North and South Slavery, Rebellions, and Sectionalism	<a href="#">Tales of Factory Life, 1841</a> <a href="#">W. Calloway's slave narrative</a> and <a href="#">Richmond Enquirer on Turner's Rebellion</a> and <a href="#">H. A. Jacobs, Fear of Insurrection</a>
8	Oct 25	Jackson's Presidency ( <b>and select debate teams</b> ) American Artists and Writers, 19 <sup>th</sup> Century	<a href="#">A Jackson, speech on veto of Bank of United States charter renewal</a> <a href="#">A Toqueville, Literary Characteristics of Democratic Times</a> and <a href="#">Emerson, Speech at Free Religious Association</a>
9	Nov 1	Manifest Destiny Immigration: a great wave	<a href="#">J. L. O'Sullivan, Great Nation of Futurity (excerpt)</a> <a href="#">Know Nothing platform, 1856</a> and <a href="#">Milwaukee and Watertown and Seen by Shurz, 1854</a>
10	Nov 8	<b>Class Debate</b>	Draft debate notes.
11	Nov 15	Breakup of the Union Civil War: 1861-63	<a href="#">A Stephens, "Cornerstone Speech"</a> and <a href="#">Alabama, Ordinance of Secession</a> <a href="#">McClellan, letter to Lincoln</a> and <a href="#">A Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation</a>
12	Nov 22	Civil War: home fronts and foreign policies Civil War: 1864-65	<a href="#">A Toqueville, . . . Democratic Armies . . .</a> and <a href="#">A Williamson, diary entries</a> <a href="#">W T Sherman, correspondence pertaining to the evacuation of Atlanta, 1864</a>
	Nov 29	<b>No Class – Thanksgiving Break</b>	n/a
13	Dec 6	Reconstruction Review for Final Exam	<a href="#">A Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address, 1865</a> n/a
	Dec 10*	<b>Research Essay Due</b>	<a href="#">Wikipedia entry on plagiarism</a> (read before submitting essay)
	Dec 20	<b>Final Exam (11:45am, in Finals Week)</b>	n/a

\*We do not have class this day.