

Syllabus, US History I

1. Course Information

21:512:201

Section 80 (*Saturdays 9:00am to 12:15pm in Hill 102*)

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:

Task	Desired Learning Outcome
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

Office Hours on Thursdays, 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 Friday, December 11th. 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	ASSIGNMENT
	Sep 5	No Class – Labor Day Weekend	
1	Sep 12	Course Introduction Columbian Exchange	n/a n/a
2	Sep 19	Atlantic System English colonies and Development	O Equiano, Life of Equiano, Chapter 2 Charter to Sir Walter Raleigh
3	Sep 26	US War of Independence Articles of Confederation Era	Association of the Sons of Liberty of New York and Declaration of Independence Articles of Confederation
4	Oct 3	Creating the Constitution Washington’s Presidency	US Constitution G. Washington, Proclamation of Neutrality
5	Oct 10	Jefferson’s Presidency Transportation Revolution	T. Jefferson, letter to W. S. Smith and T. Jefferson, letter to Benjamin Rush T. Woodcock, journal excerpt and H. Mackinder, Heartland Theory (only read pp. 13-18)
6	Oct 17	Midterm Exam	n/a
7	Oct 24	Economics: separate paths for North and South Slavery, Rebellions, Sectionalism	Tales of Factory Life, 1841 W. Calloway’s slave narrative and Richmond Enquirer on Turner’s Rebellion and H. A. Jacobs, Fear of Insurrection
8	Oct 31	Manifest Destiny Immigration: a great wave (& select debate teams)	J. L. O’Sullivan, Great Nation of Futurity (excerpt) Know Nothing platform, 1856 and Milwaukee and Watertown and Seen by Shurz, 1854
9	Nov 7	Class Debate, start	Draft debate notes.
10	Nov 14	Class Debate, finish Breakup of the Union	n/a A Stephens, “Cornerstone Speech” and Alabama, Ordinance of Secession
11	Nov 21	Civil War: 1861-63 Civil War: home fronts and foreign policies	McClellan, letter to Lincoln and A Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation A Toqueville, . . . Democratic Armies . . . and A Williamson, diary entries
	Nov 28	No Class – Thanksgiving break	Relax. Eat. Spend time with your family.
12	Dec 5	Civil War: 1864-65 Reconstruction	W T Sherman, correspondence pertaining to the evacuation of Atlanta, 1864 A Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address, 1865
	Dec 11*	Research Essay Due	Wikipedia entry on plagiarism (read before submitting essay)
	Dec 19	Final Exam (9:00am, in our regular classroom)	n/a

*We do not have class this day.