

# Syllabus, US History to 1865

Rutgers University, Newark

## 1. Course and Instructor Information

**Semester:** Fall 2018  
**Class time:** Tuesdays, 6:00pm to 9:00pm  
**Location:** Hill 104  
**Course Code:** 21:512:201  
**Section:** 61  
**Credits/Hours:** 3  
**Instructor:** Ray Ojserkis, PhD  
**Email:** [ray.ojserkis@gmail.com](mailto:ray.ojserkis@gmail.com)  
**Office:** Conklin 326, Tuesdays, 1:00pm to 2:00pm, and by appointment

## 2. Course Description

We will survey American history until 1865, covering topics such as the Columbian exchange, European colonization of the New World, trans-Atlantic slavery, the causes and consequences of the US War of Independence, the negotiation of the US constitution, industrialization, monetary policy in the early US, westward expansion, slave rebellions, the evolution of sectional conflict, and the US Civil War.

## 3. Goals

During the course, you should be able to

- identify significant events that contributed to the development of the United States.
- discuss competing interpretations of major historical events in American history from colonization to the Civil War.
- discuss sources of historical change, and explain cause and effect relationships as they pertain to historical transformations.
- use vocabulary common to history and to be able to explain the historical developments of the American society up to 1865.

## 4. Grading Policy

Your course grade will be determined by weighting the graded components as follows:

**Unannounced Reading Quizzes:** 25%  
**Debate Notes:** Cancels lowest two scores on reading quizzes.  
**Midterm Exam:** 25%  
**Final Exam:** 25%  
**Research Essay:** 25%

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.

If you are absent or tardy your score for a quiz or exam 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.

## 5. Classes

Class sessions will be used for quizzes, examinations, debates, and lectures. Each lecture will detail a historic topic, as listed in the schedule below, and for each of these topics I will post a handout to Blackboard listing key points we’ll discuss. 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.

## 6. 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 by reading primary sources in our out-of-class reading. An electronic copy of this syllabus is on Blackboard, and you will need to access the primary sources through hyperlinks in the schedule.

As we will discuss the primary sources in class, it will help to bring printed copies with you, or a laptop that is Internet-accessible.

## 7. Research Essay

Your research essay will address one of the following questions:

- a) Explain the rise of the fall of the mound-builder civilizations of the Ohio River Valley.
- b) To what extent did British colonies in the Americas develop in a similar fashion to older Spanish and Portuguese colonies?
- c) What elements of West African culture exist in twenty-first century African-American society?
- d) If you had been alive in the 1770s, knowing what you know now, would you have been a patriot or a tory? Why?
- e) To what extent were the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution emblematic of the “Enlightenment” era?
- f) Was the creation of political parties in the early era of the United States inevitable? Did the development of those parties help or hinder the political system?
- g) Had you been alive in the 1790s, knowing what you know now, would you have supported Hamilton’s faction or Jefferson’s faction?
- h) Why did the United States fight the Barbary Wars?

- i) What parallels exist between Andrew Jackson's populism and that of other national political figures who claimed to challenge coastal elites, such as William Jennings Bryan, Harry Truman, and Donald Trump? What are the differences?
- j) Why did the Haitian Revolution succeed but the slave rebellions in the American south fail?
- k) Why did the US population grow so rapidly during the first half of the nineteenth century?
- l) To what extent was a US Civil War inevitable?
- m) In the event of a US Civil War, to what extent was a Union victory inevitable?

Your research essay is due on or before December 12<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.

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

## **8. Drop and Withdrawal Deadlines**

The last date for students to drop a course with no penalty is September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018, and the last date to withdraw from a course with a "W" grade is November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

## **9. Academic Integrity Agreement and Honor Pledge**

On all examinations and major course assignments submitted for grades, you will be required to sign the following statement:

On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment).

## **10. Information for Students with Disabilities**

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. For more information, please contact the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219, by phone at [973-353-5375](tel:973-353-5375) or by email at [odsnewark@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:odsnewark@newark.rutgers.edu).

## 11. Schedule

<u>CLASS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENT (to be done before class, except for the first week)</u>
1	Sep 4	Columbian Exchange (start) Columbian Exchange (finish)	<a href="#">Columbus, letter to Santangel, 1493</a> <a href="#">King Ferdinand, letter to the Taino</a>
2	Sep 11	Atlantic System (start) Atlantic System (finish)	<a href="#">O Equiano, Life of Equiano, Chapter 2</a> <a href="#">Adam Smith, The Cost of Empire, (excerpt from Wealth of Nations)</a>
3	Sep 18	English colonies and development US War of Independence (start)	<a href="#">Charter to Sir Walter Raleigh, 1584</a> <a href="#">Association of the Sons of Liberty of New York, 1773 and The Tory Act, 1776</a>
4	Sep 25	US War of Independence (finish) Articles of Confederation Era	<a href="#">Declaration of Independence</a> <a href="#">Articles of Confederation</a>
5	Oct 2	Creating the Constitution (start) Creating the Constitution (finish)	<a href="#">US Constitution</a> <a href="#">Bill of Rights</a>
6	Oct 9	Washington's Presidency Jefferson's Presidency	<a href="#">G. Washington, Proclamation of Neutrality, 1793</a> <a href="#">T. Jefferson, letter to W. S. Smith, 1787 and T. Jefferson, letter to B Rush, 1803</a>
7	Oct 16	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	<i>Review your notes on the lectures and readings.</i>
8	Oct 23	Transportation Revolution (start) Transportation Revolution (finish)	<a href="#">H. Mackinder, Heartland Theory (only read pp. 13-18)</a> <i>Select debate topics from list posted online.</i>
9	Oct 30	Economics: separate paths for North & South Slavery, Rebellions, and Sectionalism	<a href="#">Tales of Factory Life, 1841 and W. Calloway's slave narrative</a> <a href="#">Richmond Enquirer on Turner's Rebellion, 1831 and H. A. Jacobs, Fear of Insurrection</a>
10	Nov 6	<b>Debate</b>	If you are on a team debating today, email your notes by midnight today (after the debate). The notes must have citations – a list of sources does not constitute citations. Use footnotes each time you make use of an idea or fact that you read.
11	Nov 13	<b>Debate</b>	If you didn't debate last class, you will debate in this class. Email your notes by midnight today (after the debate). The notes must have citations – a list of sources does not constitute citations. Use footnotes each time you make use of an idea or fact that you read.
	Nov 20	<b>No Class (Thanksgiving week)</b> <i>Tuesday will be on a Thursday schedule.</i>	
12	Nov 27	Manifest Destiny Immigration: a great wave	<a href="#">J. L. O'Sullivan, Great Nation of Futurity (excerpt), 1839</a> <a href="#">Know Nothing platform, 1856 and Milwaukee and Watertown and Seen by Shurz, 1854</a>
13	Dec 4	Breakup of the Union Civil War: 1861-63	<a href="#">Alabama, Ordinance of Secession, 1861 and A Stephens, "Cornerstone Address," 1861</a> <a href="#">G McClellan, letter to Lincoln, 1862 and A Lincoln, Emancipation Proclamation, 1862</a>

14	Dec 11	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, 1864</a> <a href="#">W T Sherman, correspondence pertaining to the evacuation of Atlanta, 1864</a>
	Dec 12	<b>Research Essay Due</b> <b>(no class – email your essay)</b>	<a href="#">Wikipedia, Plagiarism</a> <a href="#">Rutgers University Academic Integrity Policy</a>
	Dec 18	<b>Final Exam</b> <b>(@ 6:20pm in regular classroom)</b>	n/a