

History 153/AMST 103 -- Fall 2007 -- Introduction to American History (to 1865)
MW, lec, 9:05-9:55 [MG 165]; F, sections [SN 206] (9: 05, 10:10, 11:15)
Course Blackboard Site (access through <http://blackboard.cornell.edu>)
Professor Jon Parmenter
304 McGraw Hall (Office Hours, M, 10:15-11:45 or by appointment)
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Graduate Assistants (B41 McGraw Hall):
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Introduction

This course introduces students to fundamental themes and trends in American history from the eve of the founding of European settlements in North America through the Civil War era. The course attends to issues of unity and diversity in American society, as well as the American nation's emerging role in the wider world. The course emphasizes comparisons between different regions, interactions between peoples of different cultures, and the impact of new political, economic, and social institutions on the lives of everyday people. Readings will be drawn from primary documents, assigned texts, and a course reader. Course assignments aim at developing students' ability to think and write critically and historically.

Requirements: -the final grade will be based on:

-section attendance/participation	(15%)
-two in-class hour exams	(25%)
-short essays (4)	(35%)
-final exam	(25%)

Learning Goals

Upon successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- better understand the key developments of American history to 1865 and relate them to contemporary American society
- discuss intelligently the historical relationship between unity and diversity in American society
- comprehend the emergence of the United States as a nation in the world
- compose convincing critical interpretations of documentary sources and secondary scholarship
- debunk popular myths about American history prior to 1865
- appreciate historical contingency and avoid explanations grounded on presumptions of inevitability

Policies:

- Participation is evaluated on the basis of regular attendance, completion of required readings, and making meaningful contributions to discussions and activities in sections.

- Students **with more than two** unexcused absences from discussion sections will have their **final grade** penalized ¼ point for each subsequent absence. For example, a person with a final grade calculated at 3.7 (A-) who had four unexcused absences from section meetings would have his/her grade reduced by (0.25 x 2) 0.5, for a revised final grade of 3.2 (B+). Chronic lateness (i.e. more than three times in the course of the semester) will result in the same penalty. Individuals with documented medical or legitimate personal reasons **will be** excused. Please note that it is your responsibility to ensure that your name appears on the attendance sheet for **each section meeting that you attend**.
- All Cornell varsity athletes must provide the instructor with a list of dates for which team commitments will require them to be absent from discussion sections **in advance** of these absences, in order to be excused. Otherwise the regular penalty will be applied. No exceptions.
- Due dates on assignments refer to the **beginning of the class session** on that particular date. If you fail to submit the assignment within the time allotted for the class meeting, the paper is considered "late" in lieu of a prearranged extension (see below). All assignments are to be submitted **in hard copy**. Electronic submissions **will not be accepted** except in the case of a student's hospitalization or some other documented instance of physical incapacity.
- Grades on late papers and assignments will be reduced ½ point for every 24 hours past the assigned due date **unless arrangements have been made with the Professor at least 48 hours prior to the due date**. No extra credit work will be offered to "make up" missed assignments without a documented medical or personal reason.
- There are **no exceptions** to the date of the final exam. Everyone **must** write it on the scheduled date, barring documented medical situations or verified conflicts with other Cornell University final examinations.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism (defined as submitting another individual's work as your own and/or failing to cite sources properly) is a serious academic offense and will be dealt with accordingly. Resist the temptation to turn in work that is not your own. "Cutting and pasting" from internet sites is easily detected. Individuals who plagiarize their papers may expect substantial academic penalties, up to and including **a failing grade in the course**.

Assigned Course Texts (available for purchase in the bookstore and on reserve at Uris):

Conforti, *Saints and Strangers*

Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (2/e)

Franklin, *Autobiography* (2/e)

Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom* (3/e)

Norton, *A People and a Nation*, vol. 1 (7/e)

Perkins, *Creation of a Republican Empire*

Wood, *Radicalism of the American Revolution*

****Course Reader****

In addition to the assigned texts, each student will need to obtain a copy of the Course Reader, available from [www.universityreaders.com]. Federal copyright law prevents the instructor from making this material available to you in any other format.

Assigned reading will average 150pp./week; readings for a given class or section meeting are to be completed before that class or section meeting. Occasionally FRI section meetings will discuss readings assigned earlier in the week in addition to the specific assignment for that day. Read assignments carefully so that you can discuss them intelligently. Avoid passive reading practices such as "highlighting"; take and keep written notes with page references instead to improve your recall and to facilitate writing course papers and studying for exams.

Key to Readings

[cr]: Course Reader

[doc]: linked .pdf file on course Blackboard site

[web]: website accessible under "External Links" button on course Blackboard site

Week 1

1. Fri. 8/24 Welcome to History 153 [sections]

Week 2

2. Mon. 8/27 Unity and Diversity in America before 1865
3. Wed. 8/29 Natives and Newcomers in the 16th Century
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 3-31
 -Conforti, *Saints and Strangers*, 5-32
4. Fri. 8/31 Early English Beginnings
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 33-46
 -Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 3-70

Week 3

5. Mon. 9/3 Tobacco and the Labor Problem in Jamestown
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 46-48
 -Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 71-157
6. Wed. 9/5 New England's Generation: The Pilgrims and Plymouth
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 48-54
 -Conforti, *Saints and Strangers*, 1-4, 33-66
7. Fri. 9/7 Living in Early New England
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 54-57
 -"Abstract of the Lawes of New England" (1641) [doc]
 -Shepard, "Letter to Son at Harvard" (1672) [doc]

Week 4

8. Mon. 9/10 New England's Insiders and Outsiders
 -Conforti, *Saints and Strangers*, 67-97
 -"The Trial of Anne Hutchinson" (1637) [doc]
 -"Pequots and Dissidents" (1637) [doc]
9. Wed. 9/12 Crises in New England, 1675-1692
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 59-61, 64-70, 81-85
 -Conforti, *Saints and Strangers*, 98-130

10. Fri. 9/14 Ethnic Diversity in the Middle Colonies
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 38, 61-64
 -Murrin, "English Rights as Ethnic Aggression" [res]
 -"New York Charter of Liberties" (1683) [doc]
 -Penn, "Some Account of Pennsylvania" (1681) [doc]
- Week 5**
11. Mon. 9/17 Bacon's Rebellion of 1676: Origins and Consequences
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 71
 -Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 215-70
12. Wed. 9/19 The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 71-81
 -Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 217-315
13. Fri. 9/21 Racism and Republicanism in Early Virginia
 -Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 316-87
- Week 6**
14. Mon. 9/24 **IN-CLASS HOUR EXAM I**
15. Wed. 9/26 Benjamin Franklin, Citizen of the 18th Century Atlantic World
 -Franklin, *Autobiography*, vii-85
 -Conforti, *Saints and Strangers*, 131-62
 -Smith, "Walking Morale's Streets" [web]
 [<http://www.common-place.org/vol-03/no-04/philadelphia/>]
16. Fri. 9/28 Eighteenth Century Colonial Society
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 87-113
 -Franklin, *Autobiography*, 85-168 (skim), 174-90
 -Wood, *Radicalism*, xi-56
- Week 7**
17. Mon. 10/1 The Seven Years' War: The War that Made America
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 115-23
 -Conforti, *Saints and Strangers*, 163-99
18. Wed. 10/3 The End of "Salutary Neglect"
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 75-82, 123-39
 -Wood, *Radicalism*, 57-124
19. Fri. 10/5 The Coming of the Revolution
 -Wood, *Radicalism*, 125-68
 -Conforti, *Saints and Strangers*, 200-205
 -"Boston Massacre" [doc]
- Week 8**
20. Wed. 10/10 Independence and War
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 141-63, A-23 – A-24
 -Wood, *Radicalism*, 169-225
 -Perkins, *Creation of a Republican Empire*, 1-16

21. Fri. 10/12 Winners and Losers of the Revolutionary War
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 165-74
 -Wood, *Radicalism*, 229-86
 -Perkins, *Creation of a Republican Empire*, 17-53
 -"Was Dr. Benjamin Church a Traitor?" [web]
 [<http://www.common-place.org/vol-06/no-01/tales/>]

Week 9

22. Mon. 10/15 The Critical Period, 1781-89
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 174-82, A-24 – A-27
 -Wood, *Radicalism*, 287-347

23. Wed. 10/17 The Constitution and Bill of Rights
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 182-91, A-27 – A-35
 -Wood, *Radicalism*, 347-69
 -Perkins, *Creation of a Republican Empire*, 54-80

24. Fri. 10/19 America's First War on Terror: The Barbary Pirates
 -Perkins, *Creation of a Republican Empire*, 81-110
 -Boot, *Savage Wars of Peace*, ch.1 [cr]

Week 10

25. Mon. 10/22 **IN-CLASS HOUR EXAM II**
26. Wed. 10/24 Emergent Nation: From the War of 1812 to the Monroe Doctrine
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 215-37
 -Perkins, *Creation of a Republican Empire*, 111-69
27. Fri. 10/26 Canals and Railroads Open the West
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 239-61
 -Sheriff, *Artificial River*, intro + ch.1 [cr]

Week 11

28. Mon. 10/29 Expansion, Compromise, and Indian Removal
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 261-69
 -Perdue/Green, *Cherokee Removal*, 110-28 [cr]
29. Wed. 10/31 Antebellum Religious Revivals
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 271-90, 294-95
 -Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millenium*, ch.5 [cr]
 -"Declaration of Sentiments of the Seneca Falls
 Convention" (1848) [doc]
30. Fri. 11/2 An American Innovation: The Antebellum Prison
 -"Conversation with Mr. Elam Lynds" [doc]
 -Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum*, ch.4 [cr]

Week 12

31. Mon. 11/5 Urbanization, Industrialization and Immigration in the North
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 297-99, 304-23

32. Wed. 11/7 King Cotton in the Antebellum South
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 325-51
 -Douglass, *Narrative*, 1-23

33. Fri. 11/9 The Nature of Nineteenth Century Slavery
 -Douglass, *Narrative*, 27-119, 146-71

Week 13

34. Mon. 11/12 Manifest Destiny and the Mexican War
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 290-94, 302-4, 353-60
 -Perkins, *Creation of a Republican Empire*, 170-217

35. Wed. 11/14 Sectional Crises, 1850-1856
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 360-71

36. Fri. 11/16 The Tangled Road to Disunion I
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 371-73
 -Potter, *The Impending Crisis*, chs.11, 13 [cr]

Week 14

37. Mon. 11/19 The Tangled Road to Disunion II
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 374-79
 -Simpson, *A Good Southerner*, ch.11 [cr]

38. Wed. 11/21 The Civil War: Phase I
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 381-96
 -Perkins, *Creation of a Republican Empire*, 217-29

Week 15

39. Mon. 11/26 The Civil War: Phase II
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 396-416

40. Wed. 11/28 Revolution in Citizenship
 -Norton, *A People and a Nation*, 419-36, A-33
 -Perkins, *Creation of a Republican Empire*, 230-33

41. Fri. 11/30 Review for Final Exam

FINAL EXAM: (date, location TBA)

ESSAY TOPICS AND DUE DATES

EACH ESSAY IS TO BE 4-6pp. IN LENGTH, double-spaced, with footnotes/endnotes or parenthetical references. Consistency in citation format is more important than the particular format used. **PLEASE NOTE THAT NONE** of the papers require outside research; you are expected to rely **SOLELY** on assigned course readings. The first instance of a paper submitted with references to outside sources will be returned ungraded for correction and resubmission. Any subsequent papers submitted with external references will receive a failing grade of **ZERO. DUE DATES** refer to the **CLASS SESSION ON THAT PARTICULAR DATE**. Papers not submitted in the class session will be considered late unless prior arrangements for an extension have been made. Students also have the option of submitting the fifth essay described below.

Essay 1. DUE MON 9/3 (5%)

Visit the exhibit on Ezra Cornell in the Kroch Library (before 8/31/07) and write a **3-4pp.** review assessing the exhibit's qualities (pro and con). Note specific details in your assessment of the degree to which you think it succeeded in communicating Ezra Cornell's historical significance to visitors.

Essay 2. DUE MON. 10/1 (10%)

Read the text of the 2007 Virginia Senate Resolution apologizing for slavery (available in the "Course Documents" section of the course website). Prepare an essay which argues that this Resolution is best regarded as EITHER: a) a necessary and long overdue acknowledgment of past wrongs, OR b) a cynical gesture incommensurate with the damage inflicted by slavery in American history. Cite evidence from the document as well as other assigned course readings to support your claims.

Essay 2. DUE MON. 11/5 (10%)

Assess the evidence contained in Franklin's *Autobiography* to determine whether Franklin was indeed a man of industry, frugality, and virtue, or whether he merely represented himself as such and actually was deficient in those qualities. Think carefully about the relative weight and nature of evidence for each position and make a clear argument, pro or con.

Essay 4. DUE 11/30 (10%)

"Citizens' consciousness of a special American destiny to improve the human condition is a fundamental part of the national heritage of the United States." Agree or disagree with this statement in the context of American history from 1776 to 1848, citing supporting evidence from course readings.

Essay 5. DUE 12/5 (*10%) [note: this essay is **OPTIONAL**; if you submit it, the lowest essay grade you received over the course of the semester (on assigned essays 2, 3, or 4) will be dropped when final grades are calculated].

Prior to the Civil Rights movement of the twentieth century, racial issues in American national politics tended to be resolved by sectional "compromises" arranged by northern and southern politicians. Explain how this process came to be and assess its implications for American society between 1787 and 1860. Was the Civil War "inevitable"?