

U.S. HISTORY TO 1865

HIST 1301

University of Texas at Dallas

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Fall 2023
Aug 21 – Dec 7
Our Classroom: SLC 1.102

* Check your schedule for the time and place of your Discussion Session, aka your “Supplementary Lecture”

Course Description

This course covers the main themes of U.S. History through 1865. The first objective of this course is to provide you with an overview of American history through the Civil War. We will study the main political, economic, social, and cultural developments during this period so that you will have a basic understanding of the chronology of U.S. history. Another objective is to enhance your ability to evaluate historical information. An adequate overview of any historical period requires a balance of factual knowledge and critical analysis. Memorization of facts is useless without an understanding how they fit into a bigger picture. The course will require a good bit of reading and writing. In addition to the examination of U.S. History, this course is also designed to improve your skills as a college student and modern professional, making you more educated, employable, and interesting. All required course materials are open-access and entirely free.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will evaluate key questions in early American history.
2. Students will create an original historical argument based on primary sources.
3. Students will develop skills as a writer and editor.

Grading

		<u>Grading Scale</u>	
<u>Assignments</u>		100-93	A
Participation	10%	92- 90	A-
Weekly quizzes	15%	89-88	B+
Choose Your Own Assignment	10%	87-83	B
Exam 1	20%	82-80	B-
Exam 2	20%	79-78	C+
Final Essay	25%	77-70	C
		69-	F

Readings

Our [textbook](#) and [primary source reader](#) are both available free and online. Each week you will read at least one chapter of the textbook and all of the corresponding primary sources. If you would prefer to read a physical book, low-cost copies of the textbook are available online at [Stanford University Press](#) or [Amazon](#). Be aware, however, that the print textbook does not include the primary sources, so you will still need to read those online.

Technology

This course requires use of eLearning. Please review the important technical requirements on the [Getting Started with eLearning](#) webpage. All electronic communication must take place through official UT Dallas email accounts. Please note that individual assignment grades posted to eLearning will be accurate. [Grade totals](#),

however, are computer generated estimates and may be inaccurate. Check the weighting listed above in this syllabus if you would like to calculate your own grade estimate.

AccessAbility Services

It is the policy and practice of The University of Texas at Dallas to make reasonable disability-related accommodations and/or services for students with documented disabilities. However, written notification from the Office of Student AccessAbility (OSA) is required (see <http://www.utdallas.edu/studentaccess>).

Academic Honesty

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Academic dishonesty includes, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication and collaboration/collusion. Consequences for academic dishonesty will include an automatic failing grade for the class as well as additional discipline to be administered by the university. Additional information related to academic dishonesty and tips on how to avoid dishonesty may be found here: <https://www.utdallas.edu/conduct/integrity/>. Don't be a cheater.

Other university policies and procedures relevant to this course can be found at:
<http://provost.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies/>

Course Structure

Every Tuesday and Thursday, we will all gather from 1:00-1:50pm in SLC 1.102 for lectures. I strongly encourage you to attend these lectures in-person. I will try to make them available via livestream on Teams, but I am not responsible for technical difficulties. Please consider the livestream as a last resort in case of illness or other obligations. Students who attend lectures in person tend to do considerably better in the course.

You will also meet with your TA and discussion group sometime Thursday afternoon or on Friday. Your schedule will list this as your "supplementary lecture." We call this your discussion session. Discussion sessions will allow you to discuss the lecture, the primary sources, and the exam questions. All discussion sessions will be held in-person only. They are required for the course.

Description of Assignments

Participation = 10%

This grade will be determined by how often and effectively you positively contribute to your discussion session.

Quizzes = 15%

You will be required to complete brief online quizzes. The purpose of these quizzes is to ensure that you have a basic understanding of the events covered in class. You may take each quiz up to 10 times, but I strongly recommend that you take each at least once before the week's lecture begins. I want you to do this on your own. Sharing answers constitutes academic dishonesty. You are creating your character every day, and you get to decide whether you are an honest or dishonest person. Don't be a cheater. It's not worth it.

Exam 1 = 20%

Your first exam has two components.

1. Essay questions. These questions are drawn directly from the discussion questions that frame our lectures and class discussions. Watching the lectures, taking good notes, participating in discussion sessions, and reviewing all of the above is the only way to prepare for this exam. I give you the questions, so I expect you to draw on

all of the relevant evidence in crafting your answer. You have two options on how you can complete this exam:

- a. You may ask three of the questions to ChatGPT and then grade the answers. More details to come.
 - b. You may also just take the exam in-person during our class session. You will be given six of the weekly discussion questions and have the entirety of the class period to answer any three of them in a blue exam book.
2. Write brief annotations for any 15 primary sources you have read in the first seven chapters of *The American Yawp Reader*. The purpose of this assessment is to make sure you are preparing for your final exam. For each of the sources, identify who wrote the document, what it says, and how it relates to the final essay question: “Did technology do more to expand or contract freedom in early American history?”

Exam 2 = 20%

Like the midterm, you will answer several short essay questions drawn directly from the weekly discussion questions. Like the midterm, you may either grade ChatGPT answers or complete the exam in-person.

Final Essay = 25%

Answer the final essay question with a well-structured, coherent argument that draws upon all relevant primary sources. Only consult your course notes and the documents we have read in class. This paper should be between 1,800 – 2,500 words. The question is “Did technology do more to expand or contract freedom in early American history?”

Choose your own assignment (10%)

Students can select an additional assignment based on their personal interests. See the last page of the syllabus for more information.

*** Descriptions and timelines may change at Professor Wright’s discretion ***

Course Schedule

WEEK	DISCUSSION	CHAPTER(S) TO READ	
WEEK 1	Aug 22, 24	AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 1	
WEEK 2	Aug 29, 31	AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 2	
WEEK 3	Sept 5, 7	AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 3	* NO IN-PERSON LECTURES *
WEEK 4	Sept 12, 14	AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 4	
WEEK 5	Sept 19, 21	AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 5	* NO IN-PERSON LECTURE 9/21 *
WEEK 6	Sept 26, 28	AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 6	
WEEK 7	Oct 3, 5	AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 7	
WEEK 8	Oct 10, 12	EXAM 1	
WEEK 9	Oct 17, 19	AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 8-9	
WEEK 10	Oct 24, 26	AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 10	
WEEK 11	Oct 31, Nov 2	AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 11	
WEEK 12	Nov 7, 9	AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 12	
WEEK 13	Nov 14, 16	AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 13	
WEEK 14	Nov 21, 23	FALL BREAK	
WEEK 15	Nov 28, 30	AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 14	
WEEK 16	Dec 5, 7	EXAM 2	

Final Exam Essay: Did technology do more to expand or contract freedom in early American history?

*** due via eLearning by 5pm Dec 12**

Choose your own assignment

Due by 5pm on Friday, December 8

1. **For the health professionals.** Read any one of these monographs about disease in early American history and write a 500-700-word reflection on how disease affected American life in the past.
 - a. [Peter McCandless, *Slavery, Disease, and Suffering in the Southern Lowcountry* \(Cambridge: 2011\).](#)
 - b. [Jo Ann Carrigan, *The Saffron Scourge: A History of Yellow Fever in Louisiana, 1796-1905* \(Lafayette: 2015\).](#)
 - c. [Margaret Humphreys, *Yellow Fever and the South* \(Rutgers: 1992\).](#)
 - d. [J. Worth Estes and Billy G. Smith, eds., *A Melancholy Scene of Devastation: The Public Response to the 1793 Philadelphia Yellow Fever Epidemic* \(Science History: 2013\)](#)
2. **For the musicians:** Write and record an EP of at least three original songs based on American history through the Civil War. Upload your songs to SoundCloud, YouTube, or a hosting platform of your choice. Send me a link along with brief 200-250-word explanations for each song that discuss how it engages with American history through the Civil War. Focus your written explanation on details from the course.
3. **For the DJs:** Create a 30-song Spotify playlist based on the material covered in chapters 1-14 of *The American Yawp*. Write 50-100-word explanations for each song, relating each to American history through the Civil War.
4. **For the visual artists.** Produce at least one original work of visual art that engages this era of American history. Write a 700-900-word explanation of how your piece engages American history through the Civil War.
5. **For the creative writers.** Produce a collection of poems, short story, or novel chapter that engages with American history through the Civil War. Your creative piece(s) should total at least 2,000 words. In addition to your creative writing, please also write a short 500-700 word explanation of how your work relates to this era of American history.
6. **For the cinephiles and binge-watchers:** Watch a movie or TV series, read academic commentary, and write an 800-1,000-word essay about how that media relates to the course. Draw on both the media and the linked articles. Here is a list of movies/TV shows and articles to read. Be aware that many of these movies contain explicit depictions of violence and/or sex.
 - a. *John Adams* (2008) – Available on Max or for purchase on Amazon. [Read this](#).
 - b. *12 Years a Slave* (2013) - rent on Amazon or iTunes for \$4. Read [this](#), [this](#), and [this](#). [This roundtable](#) might also be helpful, but this is optional.
 - c. *Glory* (1989) - Rent on Amazon for \$3 or \$4 on iTunes. Read [this](#), [this](#), and [this](#).
 - d. *Little Women* (2019) – Free with a [Starz subscription](#) (or 7-day free trial). Read [this](#), [this](#), and [this](#).
 - e. *Harriet* (2019) – rent on Amazon or iTunes for \$6. Read [this](#) and [this](#) and [listen to this](#).
 - f. *Lincoln* – rent on Amazon or iTunes for \$3. Read [this](#), [this](#), and [this](#).
 - g. *Amistad* - Amazon or iTunes for \$3. Read [this](#), [this](#), and [this](#).
7. **For the gamers:** Write a 1,000-1,200 word reflection on video games and American history through the Civil War. Your essay should do one of the following:
 - a. Write a review of as many video games as you can find that speak to an era of American history prior to the 1865. This review should focus on the historical content of the videogames not their playability or other gaming issues. What is revealed and what is obscured about history through this game? How does this game relate to the perspective on history offered by this course?
 - b. Pitch your own game based on this era of American history. Questions of playability and other issues can be briefly addressed, but the bulk of your proposal should explain how the game would engage with specific events, issues, and themes in American history through the Civil War.
8. **For the memelords:** Create 10 memes based on the course content. Write 100-150-word explanations for each meme, explaining how they illustrate an important historical concept.
9. **For the geographers, coders, and/or graphic designers.** Help me think through a future side project – *The American Yawp Atlas*. This project envisions a series of maps that teach the key events, processes, and themes of American history through spatial representations. After reading the relevant chapters in the textbook, write five, 300-word proposals for five different maps. Your proposal should explain what the map would depict, why the issue is important, and why the issue requires spatial representation. If you have graphic design or GIS skills and might wish to create a sample map, let me know.