

History 147

U. S. HISTORY: FIRST CENTURY OF INDEPENDENCE

DR. TIM HEINRICHS, INSTRUCTOR

Winter, 2009

(5 credits)

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WELCOME--

When it was launched as an independent nation, just before the dawn of the 19th century, the United States was a small agrarian republic huddled on the Atlantic seaboard and numbering four million souls. Or perhaps you could say it was a diverse collection of 13 republics widely separated by barriers of tradition and geography. Its farm population outnumbered city people 15 to 1. Recognizing that with a population the size of Ireland's, the United States could only be a mosquito among the Great Powers, in 1796 George Washington urged his countrymen to steer clear of involvement with France and Britain in their worldwide struggle for dominance. His successors struggled for years to avoid involvement in the world war—then stumbled into it woefully unprepared in 1812.

By the end of the 19th century the band of states had surged forth to become the world's leading economic power. It manufactured more goods than Britain and France put together. Telegraph, telephone, and train tied together every part of a vast continent, and the Republic now numbered 45 states with a population exceeding 75 million. Farm families in 1900 numbered only two-fifths of an increasingly urbanized population. The Great Powers now counted the United States among their number as it forged an empire of its own and began demanding a voice in overseas affairs. How did this vast change come about?

In tracing U. S. history from the beginning of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th, **HISTORY 147** has three main themes of change: the evolution of American politics, territorial and economic expansion, and the combination of social and cultural change. We shall ask the question of what continuities remained throughout the era. What issues recurred from generation to generation?

As we deal with such issues as loose constructionism, victory at New Orleans, the Erie Canal, religious revivals, Cherokee removal, Ralph Waldo Emerson, woman as "angel of the home," abolitionism, the annexation of Texas, secession, the battle of Gettysburg, carpetbaggers, the inventions of Thomas Edison, the blizzards of 1885-6, the Great Depression of 1893, the bicycle craze, the New Woman, Progressivism, and the rise of Theodore Roosevelt, sort it all out by thinking strategically. What major themes are these facts part of? Specific details will mean little to you unless they are put together

into your own overall ideas of American history. An artist doesn't paint every blade of grass in a landscape, but just enough to convey the overall reality and mood. What you will remember from the course a year or five years from now will not be President Jackson's inaugural guest list but the ways in which he transformed U. S. politics and the Presidency.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS--

BOOKS--

* Robert A. Divine, T. H. Breen, et al, *The American Story, Complete Edition* (Pearson Longman, 2007; ISBN—0-321-44502-3). This is the main text; it is also used in History 146 and History 148

* Elliott J. Gorn, ed., [The McGuffey Readers: Selections from the 1879 Edition](#) (ISBN: 0-312-13398-1). From the 1830s to the 1920s millions of youngsters were educated, socialized, and morally uplifted by these comprehensive readers.

* Additional assignments will be available at several sites. Find "**Lectures & Discussions**" on the "Assignments" page; it carries class lectures and other assignments week by week. Also, our textbook publishing company, Pearson, has put together a set of resources on which these assignments will be based. After reading the instructions on the Homepage, access it from the Homepage or [here](#). (You need to register for it after you get your copy of [American Story](#).) The Pearson site will direct you to my class link, and "My History Lab."

STRATEGY--

At the conclusion of this course, successful students will be able to:

1. Explain the significance of key people, facts, and events of the period under study, and develop standards to judge them from a historical-cultural perspective
2. Demonstrate the importance of traditions of thought and ethical values in historical change
3. Expand their vocabulary
4. Evaluate historical arguments, judging the appropriateness of both logic and content
5. Adapt scholarly processes of analysis, interpretation, and synthesis to articulate their own points of view, demonstrating a command of relevant facts and a framework of logical deduction...
 - *Drawing inferences from data*
 - *Differentiating between facts, value judgments, and generalizations*
 - *Differentiating between description and explanation*
 - *Recognizing the role of cause and effect in historical analysis*

History is absolutely do-able if you think strategically. Think about overall trends. File facts away according to what they mean for major trends. The specific details absorbed in the course material will mean little unless you can do that. You are encouraged to put together your own interpretations of the facts.

COURSEWORK—

If after reading this you have questions about the coursework, or aren't sure, please consult the FAQ ("Frequently Asked Questions") page. If that doesn't help, please contact me.

This course is all online; you will not be obliged to meet anywhere for tests, lectures, etc. Your success in an online class depends in part on mastering some internet and Vista basics, such as finding out where important pages are, including assignments and e-mail, and knowing how to post assignments and attach files.

By the end of the term, you will have finished these assignments and assessments:

- *reading 26 on-line lectures;*

- *reading weekly textbook and on-line assignments;*
- *writing four online Discussion essays (250-400 words each)--two of them by the end of the fifth week--based on various readings;*
- *writing four brief responses (75-150 words)—two of them by the end of the fifth week--to essays by other students;*
- *writing a 5-7-page paper, due March 13;*
- *taking a midterm exam February 12 (essays and multiple-choice questions);*
- *taking a final exam March 19 (essays and multiple-choice questions).*

Be sure to look at the "**Reading Schedule**," located on the "**Assignments**" page (accessible from the Homepage). This will guide your reading through the term for lectures and textbook readings. Lectures are accessible by the week (see below).

Find the "**Lectures & Discussions**" link on the "**Assignments**" page. That takes you to the page with the lectures, online readings, and essay assignment for each week. Each week's page is labeled "Discussion #1," or "Discussion #2," etc. Week by week, read the lectures from the appropriate Discussion page. Also, access the Discussion Assignment on each Discussion page, and follow directions for the listed readings and essays.

Four Discussion essays...

After doing the Discussion reading, you may choose one essay question to answer. Post your essay with the Discussion's "**Posts**" icon (not with the Paper assignment, please!). Each essay should be 250-400 words. The deadlines for these *usually* fall on **Mondays** (except with holidays). **You don't have to write one every week.** During the term you will choose and post a total of **four** brief essays from four Discussion assignments--**two from Discussions #1-5 and two from the rest** (by the assigned date for each one you choose).

In your essays, please go beyond writing a mere summary of what the Ayers text says. Instead, try to grips with the question you choose. Answer it with details and facts, using the assigned online readings as much as possible, along with the Ayers text and the lectures. Interpreting and explaining primary sources like these, rather than simply reading what others have said about them (secondary sources), is part of the fun we have in history! You may consult additional sources, including reliable encyclopedias for background information, but don't base your essay on them (especially that unreliable **Wikipedia**). Use paraphrases and quotes from the sources to *back* your points, not to *make* them, and avoid both long quotes (more than 40 words) and overly brief ones (less than 10 words). Remember what the assignment says about the required **purpose statement**. Avoid typo's and misspellings, which make you look less than serious about your essay.

...and four essay responses

When you don't post an essay, you will do the week's reading anyway. **On four separate weeks in the term** (again, two from Discussions #1-#5 and two from the rest) you will need to post a **response** to the essay of another student. Responses will be due on Thursdays. ***This must be from a week's Discussion for which you did not post an essay of your own.***

Access other students' essays through the "Posts" icon for each Discussion Assignment. Choose one and simply answer it. Each response should be at least 75 words long and should express agreement, disagreement, and reasons for your view. You will do a total of two responses in Discussions #1-#5 and two from the rest (there is none for #10, so don't wait for it). This means that during the term you must post four bulletin essays of your own and four responses to others' essays, covering not less that eight weekly discussions. Again, there is no credit for posting a **response** on a Discussion for which you have already submitted an essay. **Exception:** you have already completed two other essays for the half-term (#1-#5 or the rest), and this is your third or fourth essay--you are writing it for extra credit.

Discussion grading

Essays are graded on a 25-point scale; responses on a 5-point scale. Please note that your response grade will appear in the same grading column (see "My Grades") as the essay. If you post extra credit essays or responses, you will get the highest grades; in other words, a higher grade will be substituted for a lower.

Grading note: In "My Grades," the responses will appear with each essay in one category, Discussion #1, Discussion #2, etc. Even though the grading standard says "out of 25," responses are still on a scale of 0 to 5, so **don't worry** if your strong response appears to have gotten just 5 out of 25. It's actually 5 out of 5. This is one inflexibility of the system.

The following is this term's schedule of due dates for essays and responses for each Discussion:

Assignment	Due Date	Assignment	Due Date
Essay Discussion #1	Monday January 12	Essay Discussion #6	Tuesday February 17
Response #1	Thursday January 15	Response #6	Thursday February 19
Essay Discussion #2	Tuesday January 20*	Essay Discussion #7	Monday February 23
Response #2	Thursday January 22	Response #7	Thursday February 26
Essay Discussion #3	Monday January 26	Essay Discussion #8	Monday March 2
Response #3	Thursday January 29	Response #8	Thursday March 5
Essay Discussion #4	Monday February 2	Essay Discussion #9	Monday March 9
Response #4	Thursday February 5	Response #9	Monday March 12
Essay Discussion #5	Monday February 9	Essay Discussion #10	Thursday March 16
Response #5	Thursday February 12	Response #10, Essay #11	Monday March 19

* because of a holiday

Paper and exams

In addition to the brief essays and responses, you will compose a seven-page paper (due **March 13**), following directions provided under "Assignments." This paper will bring together various reading assignments and the McGuffey readers.

There will be two exams, each about two hours, on these dates: the midterm on **February 12**, and the final on **March 19**. You will take them online, and you may choose the time to take them on those days. They will have multiple-choice and essay questions and will be based on the text and the lectures. There will be preparation sheets for each listing possible questions.

NOTE: Copying material without attribution on essays and tests is plagiarism and is forbidden. A zero grade will be assigned to any paper or exam in which plagiarized material appears, or if on a Discussion essay, the entire Discussions grade (25% of the total term grade).

Late work

Normally, late discussion essays are accepted but with a penalty of **.5/25** per day (up to a total of 3.5/25). If they are more than three days late, they must be sent to me by Vista email. *Late responses are not accepted.*

Late papers are assessed 2% per day (up to a total of 10%). This can be avoided if you obtain permission for an extension in advance of the due date.

GRADING--

The following is a breakdown of the final grade:

<i>Discussions:</i>	25%
<i>Midterm exam</i>	25%
<i>Large paper</i>	25%
<i>Final exam</i>	25%

All items will be assigned percentage grades, whose average will be translated into a letter grade according to the following:

93-plus	A	77-79%	C+
90-92%	A-	73-76%	C

87-89% B+
83-86% B

70-72% C-
67-69% D+

If you're ever not sure you're on top of it all during the course, please ask questions by WebCT e-mail. Or call me at 425-564-2114, or email theinric@bcc.ctc.edu.

I am looking forward to exploring with you the lives and minds that made up 19th-century America, an era that seems vaguely familiar and yet exotic at the same time.