

H105: American History I

Dr. Ryan Anderson

M: 6:00 – 8:40

CA235

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Office Hours: W, 2:30-3:30

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Introduction

Why is it that many people argue over what how our history defines “Americans?” Have we, as a nation, ever agreed on what that label means? This is the issue that we will address this semester. To help the cause, I will provide you with materials (reading, primary sources, and lectures) that balance nuts and bolts historical data and topical information. Because of the nature of the evidence we will consider, this class is based in neither a “Grand Narrative,” nor a scattered representation of interpretive storytelling; it rests some where between these two poles.

My reasons for teaching this way come from two primary goals: making available **the rudiments of historical knowledge befitting a college educated person and/or a person preparing for upper-division courses in History**; and **helping you develop higher order reading, thinking, and writing abilities**. As you might realize by this point, I expect the burden of learning to fall on your shoulders. My job is to act as a facilitator and yours is to take advantage of the tools I provide for your learning. In short, the quality of your grade depends on demonstrating the ability to acquire an education.

I heartily encourage you to ask questions and participate in the conversation regarding course material, either in or out of class. You will learn more during your time in here (and beyond) if you consider contrary views and engage in conversation with other people. It goes without saying, that everyone in this class will receive equal respect. If you comport yourself in a manner that does not befit a university classroom, you will be excused.

Please keep in mind that you are not here alone: turn off your cell phones, do not read the newspaper or do homework in class, and if you're late, please enter in an unobtrusive fashion and take the nearest available seat. To put it plainly, do nothing that will hinder your colleagues' education.

Texts

John Mack Faragher, *Out of Many*, Vol. 1

Robert Marcus, *America Firsthand*, Vol. 1

William Otter, *History of my Own Times*

Attendance

I will take attendance in this course each class period and expect you not to miss class. We will take a short intermission each week and I will pass around a sign in sheet before each session begins. You may not sign in if you enter class after the roll sheet passes. While I do not assign a point value for good attendance I will use it as a determining factor if you should be within a point or so of a higher letter grade. If you miss more than three classes you will not receive the higher grade.

Tests

There is no curve.

	Grading Scale	
Midterm: 25%	90 to 100	A
Final: 25%	80 to 89	B
Out-of-Class Essay: 25%	70 to 79	C
Informal Essays: 25%	60 to 69	D
	Below 60	F

The two tests consist of an in-class essay and short answer identification questions taken from lecture and outside reading. You are responsible for bringing your own blue books.

Your out-of-class essay assignment will come from your reading of William “Big Bill” Otter’s *History of my Own Times*. It will be 3-5 pages in length. I will provide you with more specifics later in the semester.

Over the course of the semester you will be asked to write **two**, two to three page informal essays discussing the readings for the week you choose. You pick the two weeks you want to write but keep in mind that there will be no extensions granted and no backtracking allowed. The essays may be typed or (neatly) handwritten. Each is worth from 0-20 points. Students may revise and resubmit their essays within two weeks to better their work and, thus, their grade.

The purpose of these essays is to stimulate thinking about issues, questions, and problems raised by our study of American History. The goal is to discover, develop, and clarify your own ideas. You should do the appropriate reading and reflecting; then sit down and **answer one of the questions provided for that week**. Questions are prepared for only **eight (8) weeks**, so be sure to plan which weeks you are going to write (these questions are the last items on this syllabus). The questions are based on the material in *America Firsthand* and the Hynes book. The source is listed before the question. Essays are due anytime prior to the class period; you may email them to me as long as I get them prior to class.

Don’t plagiarize or cheat on tests. That means: don’t write in conjunction with a classmate; don’t Google the book title and “borrow” from other people; don’t pay someone else to write it or accept a paper written by someone else; and if you’ve read the book and written a paper on it before (this means don’t borrow directly from informal essays for the out-of-class essay), you must write a new paper. If you do any of these things or anything else dishonest (read up on the university policy if you’re cloudy on what that means), **you will receive a zero with no chance of redemption**. I’ll revisit this topic later in the semester to make sure I am explicitly clear.

If you must be absent for reasons of extreme emergency on the day of the test, you are required to contact me before the test starts to arrange a makeup. If you miss a test and don’t contact me, your possible grade will drop one letter per day school day.

Class Calendar

Week One: 8/23-8/25

Nothing Yet

Week Two: 8/28-9/1

Introduction

Early Encounters and Planting the Colonies

Week Three: 9/4-9/8

Sept. 4: School Holiday [no class]

Informal Essays due anytime this week and accepted by Email

Week Four: 9/11-9/15

Life in the Colonies

Informal Essays Due

Week Five: 9/18-9/22

Changes in Colonial America

Week Six: 9/25-9/29

Creating and Fighting the Revolution

Informal Essays Due

Week Seven: 10/2-10/6

The American Pandora's Box and the Constitution

Week Eight: 10/9-10/13

Federalists, Republicans, and a New America

Informal Essays Due

Week Nine: 10/16-10/20

Mr. Jefferson's Neighborhood

Mid-Term Exam: material through Week 8

Week Ten: 10/23-10/27

Jackson and the Fulfillment of the Revolution(?)

Informal Essays Due

Week Eleven: 10/30-11/3

The Market Revolution Rumbles

Week Twelve: 11/6-11/10

The North and the Industrial Growth

Informal Essays Due

Week Thirteen: 11/13-11/17

The South and the Slave Economy

Out-of-Class Essay on Otter Due

Week Fourteen: 11/20-11/24

Renaissance Americans

November 22-26th: Thanksgiving Holiday

Informal Essays Due

Week Fifteen: 11/27-12-1

Western Expansion

Week Sixteen: 12/4-12/8

The Approaching Conflict

Informal Essays Due

Week Seventeen: 12/11-12-15

The Civil War

[Final TBA]