Syllabus Brad Hendricks

**United States to 1877.** hendric4@gmail.com

**Description**

The purpose of this course is to help students learn about the foundation and early history of the United States of America. It covers a chronologically broad range, from the founding of the Jamestown country to the end of Reconstruction. This course will give the student insight into how this nation developed ideologically, economically, politically, and territorially from 1776 to 1877. The interactions of the United States with its neighbors Mexico, Canada, and various native groups, as well as her interactions with nations overseas will also be explored. Students will also be asked to ponder questions such as what it means to be a citizen, what constitutes a just war, and what is the value of civil disobedience.

**Course objectives**

The student will

* remember important facts about American history.
* analyze important trends and issues in American history.
* improve his or her critical thinking skills through class discussion.
* learn to use primary and secondary sources in writing.
* enhance his or her writing skills.
* The student will engage in active learning by participating in class discussions.
* The student will gain a greater appreciation of the complexity of American History.

**Class Schedule**

*Readings in Italics*

Week 1

Topic: Introduction to the Course

Syllabus Review

Colonization Part I

Week 2

Topic: Colonization Part II

Colonial Societal Structure

English Government

Prefatory Matter and Three Assigned Chapters from *Colonial America: A History in Documents.* (Students will discuss chapters they read in class).

Week 3

Topic: Prelude to War

Seven Years War

First Rebellions

*Excerpts from the Stamp Act*

*Angry Mobs and Founding Fathers Preface to Chapter 2 (pp. 1-49)*

*Thomas Jefferson Chapter 1 (1-14)*

Week 4 Short Paper 1 Due

Topic: Beginning of Independence

Articles of Confederation

Declaration of Independence

The Revolutionary War

*The Declaration of Independence*

*Angry Mobs and Founding Fathers Chapters 3-4 (50-89)*

*Thomas Jefferson Chapter 2 (15-35)*

Week 5

Topic: To form a more perfect union

The Constitutional Convention

The Constitution

The Bill of Rights

*The Preamble to the Constitution*

*Angry Mobs and Founding Fathers Chapters 5-6 and Epilogue (90-163)*

*Thomas Jefferson (36-54)*

Week 6 Short Paper 2 Due

Topic: Inauguration of Washington to the War of 1812

Early Congress

The first presidents

The Louisiana Purchase

Foreign Policy

The War of 1812

*The Alien and Sedition Acts*

*Thomas Jefferson Chapter Chapter 4-Epilogue (55-198)*

Week 7

Topic: James Madison to John Quincy Adams

The Monroe Doctrine

The Democratic-Republican Party

The Contested Election of 1824

*Monroe Doctrine from Monroe’s 7th Annual Address*

*Andrew Jackson, Revolution-Chapter 2 (1-54)*

Week 8

Midterm Exam

Week 9 Short Paper 3 Due

Topic: Jackson to Tyler

Jackson and Popular Politics

Tippecanoe and Tyler Too: Campaigning in the 19th century

*Andrew Jackson, Chapter 3-9 (55-166)*

Week 10

Topic: Expanding the Frontier

Texas

Mexican War

California Gold Rush

*Civil Disobedience*

*Abraham Lincoln Chapters 1-3 (1-91)*

Week 11 Short Paper 4 Due

Topic: The Abolition Movement

The Underground Railroad

Bleeding Kansas

The Compromise of 1850

Abolition Writers

*Horace Greeley’s “Prayer of the Twenty Millions” and Lincoln’s Reply*

*Abraham Lincoln Chapter 4 (92-132)*

Week 12

Topic: Antebellum Economy in the United States

Industrialization of the North

Railroads

Foreign Trade

Southern and Western Economies

*Lincoln Douglas Debates; Excerpts*

*Abraham Lincoln Chapters 5-6 (133-205)*

Week 13 Short Paper 5 Due

Topic: The Civil War

The Beginnings of the Secessionist Movement

The Union versus the Confederacy

*Louisa May Alcott, Hospital Sketches: An Army Nurse's True Account of her Experience during the Civil War.*

*Abraham Lincoln Chapters 7-8 (206-289)*

Week 14

Topic: Reuniting the Nation

Lincoln’s Assassination

Johnson’s Impeachment Hearing

President Grant

*Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address*

*Abraham Lincoln Chapter 9 and Epilogue (290-336)*

Week 15 Research Paper Due

Topic: Reconstruction and its End

Carpetbaggers

Sharecropping

*No reading Assignment, turn in Research Papers.*

Week 16

Final

**Required Texts**

Bernstein, R. B. *Thomas Jefferson.* Oxford University Press: New York, 2003.

Foner, Eric. The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery. Norton: New York, 2010.

Gray, Edward E. *Colonial America: A History in Documents.*  Oxford University Press: New York, 2003.

Newton, Michael E. Angry Mobs and Founding Fathers: The Fight for Control of the American Revolution. Eleftheria Publishing: Phoenix, 2011.

Wilentz, Sean. *Andrew Jackson*. Times Books - Henry Holt and Company; BCE edition: New York, 2005

\*All other texts on the calendar are available online.

**Grade Breakdown**

Class Participation 15%

Students should be present at every meeting. To get the highest possible participation grade, students must participate in an informed manner in class discussions.

Short Papers 10% each= 30%

Students must write on three of the five writing topics given during the semester. The papers should be 3-5 pages in length. Each will be worth 10% of the student’s grade. If a student does more than 3 papers, which is encouraged, only the top three grades will count. As I will be more than happy to help students improve their writing throughout the semester, grades should go up as the class continues.

Paper 1 Due in Week 4

As historians, we must be prepared to look at a situation from all possible angles. Write about some of the reasons why the Declaration of Independence was a good or just idea, and also write about some reasons why it may not have been. You should try to use at least one primary or secondary source when writing this paper.

Paper 2 Due in Week 6

Write a critical analysis of the term of office of one of the first six presidents not including Thomas Jefferson. Write about at least five major events that took place during his term of office and additionally name his greatest success and greatest failure. Then, rate the president on a scale from A-F, and explain why he earned this rating. Use at least two sources for this paper.

Paper 3 Due in Week 9

Remembering George Washington’s warning against political parties, consider how they functioned or failed to function in American politics through Andrew Jackson’s term. Determine whether the party system was a good or a bad idea as it functioned in early America and write an essay defending your positive or negative view. Remember to include at least one of the strongest views from the opposing camp, so that you may contradict it. Use at least two sources.

Paper 4 Due in Week 11

Pick an abolitionist who was active in the abolitionist movement prior to 1861. Give a short biography of that person including their background, why they became an abolitionist, and what their tactics were. Use at least two sources.

Paper 5 Due in Week 13

Pick a novel, film, or other secondary source about early America to 1877. After having consulted with me about the source, which I may be able to lend you, write a review of the source. Does it have any obvious bias? Was it useful to you as a historian? Would you recommend it to any particular audience? What are its major strengths and flaws? Use at least one source other than the one you are critiquing.

Research Paper

Topic Week 7

Meet with me or send me an e-mail telling me what part of American History you are thinking of doing a paper on. This will allow me to start thinking of possible sources to refer you to, or to help you narrow or broaden your scope. Possible topics include such things as: Mexican-Americans in early America, The Early Days of the Supreme Court, or the Annexation of Florida.

Thesis Week 10

Send me a thesis statement, consisting of an opinion which you will argue in your paper. If you need help finding a thesis, we can talk about it. One example is, “Abraham Lincoln’s greatest mistake was not freeing the slaves earlier.” Keep in mind that I am available to look at early drafts of your paper.

Research Paper Week 15

Write a 10-12 page paper using at least five sources arguing your thesis. Your paper should include the input of scholarly or primary sources you have consulted but should also include your own analysis and ideas. You are allowed to contradict the scholarly sources, none of them are always right. Further, you are required to have your own ideas about your thesis, and you should include these ideas, with proper scholarly or logical backing.

Midterm 15%

This test will consist of multiple choice questions and a few short answer essays.

Final 20%

This test will consist of multiple choice questions and two essays.

**Note on academic honesty**

Academic dishonesty will not be accepted in this class. All students will turn in assignments through turnitin.com.