

History 1700

American Civilization

Instructor:
e-mail:
office: Office Hours: M,W

REQUIRED TEXT:

1. Digital Textbook- American Civ.- The textbook is already loaded on Canvas in the Modules tab.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

This class covers United States History from pre-Columbus up to the Present. This course will not center on the memorization of names and dates, but will require a higher level of learning comprehension. The focus of class lectures, discussions, exams, and other assignments will be on learning how to become better critical thinkers. As a general education course, this class will attempt to integrate knowledge from other disciplines but provide some historical context. The goal is to help you see how knowledge from a variety of fields can help you gain a more complete picture of the past as well as the present. You are accountable for knowing about events from the past, so the learning objectives will focus on enhancing your ability to demonstrate basic historical knowledge as well as critical thinking and writing skills.

Learning Objectives:

Demonstrate a basic knowledge and understanding of the political, social, and economic history of the United States.

Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of the discipline of History and the methods historians employ.

Engage a diversity of social, political and economic viewpoints about the history of the United States in a civil and construction fashion.

Apply historical knowledge and analysis of the historical development of American institutions to the present in order to contribute to contemporary social dialogue.

Assessments:

- 10 points: 2 Thesis statement practice exercises
- 30 points: 2 Thesis statement outline papers
- 40 points: 4 Connecting with History assignments
- 40 points: 2 "Document Papers"
- 120 points: 14 quizzes (drop the lowest 2)
- 200 points: 2 take-home essay exams

440 points total

GRADE RANGE:

A	94-100	B-	80-82	D+	66-69
A-	90-93	C+	76-79	D	63-65
B+	86-89	C	73-75	D-	60-63
B	83-85	C-	70-72	E	0-59

Quizzes:

There are quizzes associated with your weekly chapter readings that you will take in class each Wednesday. Each quiz is worth 10pts. There are 12 quizzes. The two lowest scores will be dropped from your grade.

Written Papers:

All of your written papers need to be posted in Canvas under the “Assignments” tab by the due date and time.

Connecting With History:

One of the values of studying history is to make connections between the past and present. While history cannot repeat itself there are parallels that can be drawn between the past and present, and lessons that can be learned from the decisions of those in the past. These assignments include contemporary issues and ask you to compare some past events to see how they are similar and different through a series of questions. These are the “informal writing” exercises in the course meaning that there will not be any written feedback on my part. We will discuss these events during class however, and attempt to weave them into the historical topics being discussed that week. Each of these papers should be at least **2 pages long. If the paper includes specific facts from each of the provided sources and information from the relevant topic from the textbook in order to make historical comparisons, meets the minimum page requirement, and is properly cited, you will receive the full points for the paper.**

Eportfolio: Your final connecting with history paper will be your eportfolio assignment. In addition to writing the assignment you will need to include answers to the included reflective prompts.

Thesis Statement Practice Papers:

There are two of these assignments. All you need to do is create a thesis statement that answers the question prompt (1-2 sentences). You will receive 0 to 5 points based on the quality of the answer.

Thesis Statement Outline Papers:

These two exercises are designed to help you improve your writing and critical thinking skills. You will be given the essay question based on the ideas we have been discussing in class up to that juncture, and you must simply create a thesis statement along with a brief outline of the points/evidence you will use to support the argument. For each piece of evidence that you choose, you also need to give a one or two sentence explanation of how that event, etc. will help support what you want to argue and a citation indicating from where **each piece of evidence** is taken. **(Only an outline, not an essay)**- these papers should be no longer than one page to a page-and-a-half. You will be given feedback on these so that you can use that information to revise your argument and or evidence if necessary in order to produce a stronger essay exam.

Document Papers:

-The **two** document papers are based on the primary documents found on Canvas, in the modules tab, at the end of the designated chapters.

-You need to write a 3 page paper that summarizes and compares them.

-First, identify the common themes that connect the documents.

-Next, choose one of the themes and create a thesis statement: For example “The three documents all discuss the meanings of freedom and how it applies to everyone except indentured servants, thus revealing the ideological contradictions of the colonists.”

-In the body of the paper include a brief summary of the important information **from each document** that supports your thesis.

-For each document you will need to consider the following: how does the author support this idea (in other words a brief summary of the evidence used to support it), and how do the documents relate to the weekly readings and topics?

-The documents for these papers will have several common themes that may reveal certain ironies or inconsistencies compared to how the past has been traditionally interpreted. To better understand this will require that you also have some knowledge of the events that are taking place, so you need to read your textbook and use that information as the context for these documents. Your ability to demonstrate how well you understand the context surrounding the documents will affect your grade on these papers in addition to your ability to demonstrate how well you understand the documents themselves.

Each of these papers is worth 20 points. The documents can be found on-line at the end of the chapter for the week that the document paper is due.

Take Home Exams:

There will also be **two take home** exams based on the weekly readings from the textbook and lectures. The exam will ask you to assess the meaning behind an event in addition to testing basic knowledge of the key events, legislation etc. Because these are open note and open book exams they will be graded more rigorously. These papers will be 4-5 pages long, typed, double-spaced, and sources properly cited with a thesis and accurate, specific historical evidence to

support the argument. **If you don't like your grade for the first essay exam, you will have the option to edit and re-submit it within a week of the graded paper being returned to you.** The take-home essays will test your ability to put all the writing strategies, skills, historical knowledge, etc. together as a culmination of what you practice in the shorter exercises.

-For each of your papers you are permitted to submit your thesis statement and an outline of evidence for feedback. You may do this as often as you like up until the assignment is due.

ABSOLUTELY NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Turn off your cell phone. It's time to end the addiction and become more respectful of those around you. I don't want to see them during class and if I do, you will be asked to leave.
2. Become familiar with this syllabus. A syllabus is a contract between the professor and the students. If you fulfill your end of the contract—the assignments outlined in the syllabus—you will earn a grade that corresponds with your diligence and your skill.
3. Understand that professors do not give grades, they are earned. Make sure you understand what you need to do to **earn** the grade you want. In this and other courses, it is not sufficient to merely complete assignments. Your grade corresponds with the quality of your work as well. Become familiar with the grade scale: average work, work that adequately fulfills the assignment, is C work. Only work that is above average merits a B or an A. Work that does not adequately fulfill the assignment will earn a D or an E. It is possible to complete an assignment and still fail if you do not produce quality work. It will not do any good to try to negotiate your grade with me (i.e., to try to talk me into bumping up your score, which, if done, gives me the right to lower your grade). However, if you want to know how to improve your grade next time, or if you want help in understanding the score you received, please feel free to arrange a meeting. I will be happy to meet with you to help you do better.
4. Attend class. If you must miss a class, it is your responsibility to make arrangements for someone to take notes for you and to turn in your assignments. Take a moment the first week of class to learn the names and phone numbers of three classmates:
_____, _____,
_____. Remember that if you choose to miss class, you run the risk of losing points for an assignment given on that day. You also run the risk of failing exam questions on lecture materials covered that day and of missing important announcements.
5. Take notes in class. **As you take notes you need to focus on three things: 1. What is the event, piece of legislation, person (basic info. of when did it take place, what happened, who was involved etc.) 2. What was going on to cause the event to take place (context- what were others doing to force this action, etc.)? 3. Why is this event so significant (how does it connect to the bigger picture- the bigger event or idea-**

what does it mean)? Many of the items covered on the exams come from class lectures, so your notes will be essential to you. It is often helpful to look over your notes within twenty-four hours of class to make sure you have explained things adequately. Also, make sure you schedule time to review your notes adequately before the exams. For tips on listening, note taking, and general study skills, please visit SLCC's Career and Counseling Center.

6. Plan adequate time to study. For each of your classes, plan to spend two to four hours studying for each hour spent in the classroom. Thus, if you register for 15 credits, you should plan on spending 30-60 hours per week studying outside of class.
7. Do the reading assignments before class begins, take brief notes on each reading's main point (thesis) and the reasoning used to support it, and ask questions in class if you don't understand the readings. If you want extra help in getting the most from your readings, you might want to meet with one of the Reading Center tutors. Learn how to identify and create thesis statements. You will need to identify the main point of all of your reading assignments in order to understand them properly and in order to do well on the exams. Keep in mind that you are looking for the **author's** main point, the idea that organizes the reading, not the idea that you thought was most interesting. For essay exams and other writing assignments, you also need to know how to create a thesis statement to guide and organize the arguments in your own writing. If you are not comfortable with thesis statements or with argumentative writing, please work with a tutor in the Writing Center. Practice thinking critically. This does not mean you should spend your life trying to find fault with things. It means you should ask yourself difficult, sometimes uncomfortable, questions about things you would normally take for granted. For example, as you do your reading assignments, question whether the authors have adequately proved their arguments. Question the logic that underlines their arguments and that guides the type of evidence they choose to present. Good writing and good thinking come from good questions. **The exams will test your ability to think about and analyze course discussions, not just memorize facts.**
8. Participate in class discussions. The best way to make sure you understand the class material is to participate in the class discussions by providing examples of the issues we are exploring, by asking questions, by making connections between issues, etc.
9. Turn in your assignments on time. Assignments are announced well in advance of the due date, so there is no excuse for late work. Make sure you do your work early enough that you will survive unexpected problems. If you are sick, make arrangements for someone to deliver your work for you. As a rule of thumb, it is good to get in the habit of submitting your assignments the night before they are due. **Late work will not be accepted without prior approval.**
10. Keep up-to-date on current events. Get in the habit of listening to or reading a reliable news source daily. This will help you see the relevance of many of the issues that we discuss and will help to make you a well-rounded individual and a better citizen. Your news should come from a reliable source that provides in-depth coverage of issues.
11. **Group Work:** Because there are many ways to learn, the class will be dividing into groups on occasion to discuss your readings and the issues, make connections to current events, and "think out loud" to work through your ideas and understanding of the past.

Reading Assignments and Class Schedule

-Week 1:

-Class Intro., How to write a thesis, avoid plagiarism

-Week 2:

-Read Chapter 1

-Quiz

-First thesis statement practice due

-Week 3:

-Read Chapter 2

-Second thesis statement practice due

-Quiz

-First Connecting with history assignment due

-Week 4;

-Read Chapter 3

-Quiz

-Second Connecting with History Assignment due

-Week 5;

-Read Chapter 4

-Quiz

-Second thesis statement practice due

-Week 6;

-Read Chapter 5

-Quiz

-First document paper Due

-Week 7;

-Read Chapter 6

-Quiz

-First thesis statement outline due

-Week 8;

-Read Chapter 7

-Quiz

-First essay exam due

-Week 9;

-Read Chapter 8

-Quiz

-Week 10:

-Read Chapter 9

-Quiz

-Third connecting with history paper due

-Week 11:

-Read Chapter 10

-Quiz

-Second document paper due

-Week 12;

-Read Chapter 11

-Quiz Wednesday

-Week 13;

-Read Chapter 12

-Quiz

-Fourth connecting with history paper due (eportfolio)

-Week 14;

-Read Chapter 13

-Quiz

-Week 15;

-Read Chapter 14

-Quiz

-Second thesis statement outline due

-Week 16;

-Final Exam due