

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN HISTORY, BEFORE 1865

TOPICS AND AUDIENCE. This course is an introduction to early American history for college students.

OUR GOALS. Many beginning students tend to think of studying history as memorizing names and dates. Facts are certainly important, and we hope you will know more information about US history at the end of the course than in the beginning. *But new information is only part of historical study.* The first step is to learn to ask questions of the past: What happened? Why did it happen? Does it matter? How does our point of view shape the answers? Seeking new information and evaluating its reliability are probably the next steps, followed by tentative answers, and then perhaps by new questions. Dedicated historians never run out of questions, but eventually we must pause and formulate some answers both orally and in writing. Learning to pursue the question-and-answer part of history will be our fundamental goal in this class.

We will try to make questioning and answering part of every class, even lectures. Students are always welcome to ask questions of their own. The instructor will also ask questions, sometimes seeking voluntary oral replies and sometimes asking for short answers in writing. In other words, we want you to be active learners as often as possible.

THEMES. We will concentrate on questions that involve the following major themes or topics in US history:

- The diversity and complexity of the people who first populated the Americas, British North America, and the early American republic.
- The conflicts that grew out of that diversity.
- How different groups and individuals struggled to resolve these conflicts, or resist the solutions preferred by others.
- How conflict with Great Britain led key groups of eighteenth century Americans to seek an independent nation-state.
- The contradictions between the national government's professed principles of democracy or republicanism and various forms of inequality.
- How various forms of social conflict fed political disputes and prompted searches for political solutions.
- How the slavery dispute became the most important conflict in the nineteenth century, leading to a transformative war to keep the nation-state together.

OUTCOMES. As we pursue these themes, we want you to strengthen your skills in the following areas:

- Having enough factual, narrative knowledge about US history to begin answering key questions about these themes.
- Knowing how to gain new historical knowledge by critically reading and analyzing historical sources.
- Using this knowledge to construct stronger answers to historical questions, and to evaluate the answers of others.
- Effectively communicating your answers orally and in writing.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION. We will give you several opportunities to demonstrate your progress towards these outcomes through class participation, writing assignments, midterm tests, and a final examination.

You should complete the other readings in advance of the weekly recitation sections. There will be two midterm tests, two short papers (about 5 pages) based on the reading, and a comprehensive final examination.

Tests will consist of essay questions and short identification sections. The final exam will be cumulative.

The papers and the midterms will each count fifteen percent of the final grade, class participation will count ten percent, and the final exam will count thirty percent. We assign grades on all tests and assignments as a number of points out a possible 100, to allow Sakai to compute your averages. Students with grading questions must discuss them with their teaching assistants before coming to the professor.

READING. Reading assignments will normally consist of one chapter per week in the textbook, *Building the American Republic*, vol. 1. Several more historical documents, available online, will also be assigned most weeks. Links to these documents appear below in the “Schedule of Classes, Readings, and Assignments.” Finally, students will read two short autobiographies of prominent Americans, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* and *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, and write papers about them. Recitation sections will focus on discussing and analyzing these works, so students should make sure to read the assignment thoroughly before each recitation section.

To summarize, students should obtain the following works:

Harry L. Watson, *Building the American Republic: A Narrative History, Volume 1, to 1877* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018). Free copies of this book are available in Kindle, Epub, or PDF formats at <http://buildingtheamericanrepublic.org/>. Students may also purchase the printed edition.

Louis P. Masur, ed., *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2003). Please purchase *this* edition to access the editorial material and to keep all pagination consistent.

David W. Blight, ed., *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2003). Please purchase *this* edition to access the editorial material and to keep all pagination consistent.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

(*recitation sections on Thursday or Friday, as scheduled)

Day 1	INTRODUCTION
Day 2	The Earliest Americans. Lecture class; no recitations this week.
Day 3	Expanding Europe.
Day 4	* <i>Building the American Republic (BTAR)</i> ch. 1, “First Americans, to 1550;” “The Island of Guanahani” and “The Natives,” in Christopher Columbus, “Journal of the First Voyage of Columbus,” pp. 110-115, http://www.americanjourneys.org/pdf/AJ-062.pdf .
Day 5	Chesapeake Colonies.
Day 6	Founding New England.
Day 7	* <i>BTAR</i> ch. 2, “The First English Colonies, 1584–1676;” “What Can You Get By Warre”: Powhatan Exchanges Views With Captain John Smith, 1608 ” and “The Starving Time”: John Smith Recounts the Early History of Jamestown, 1609 .

Day 8	An Empire of Trade.
Day 9	The Spread of Slavery.
Day 10	* BTAR ch. 3, "Emerging Empire, 1676-1756;" "Our Plantation Is Very Weak": The Experiences of an Indentured Servant in Virginia, 1623 and "They That Are Born There Talk Good English": Hugh Jones Describes Virginia's Slave Society, 1724.
Day 11	Colonial Society.
Day 12	Colonial Culture.
Day 13	* BTAR ch. 4, "Colonial Society and Culture, 1676-1756;" Louis P. Masur, ed., <i>The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin</i> , 2 nd ed. PAPER DUE.
Day 14	Colonial Protests.
Day 15	War for Independence. BTAR ch. 5, "The Era of Independence, 1756-1783;"
Day 16	MIDTERM TEST
Day 17	The Perils of Peacetime.
Day 18	Choosing the Constitution.
Day 19	* BTAR ch. 6, "A Federalist Republic, 1783-1789; William Manning, "A Laborer," Explains Shays Rebellion in Massachusetts: "In as Plain a Manner as I Am Capable" , "The Sentiments of a Labourer": William Manning Inquires in the Key of Liberty, 1798 ; ; "All Men Are Born Free and Equal": Massachusetts Yeomen Oppose the "Aristocratickal" Constitution, January, 1788 ; and James Madison, "Federalist No. 10," at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed10.asp .
Day 20	Federalists, 1789-1801.
Day 21	Republicans, 1801-1815.
Day 22	* BTAR ch. 7, "Federalists and Republicans, 1789-1815;" Thomas Jefferson, <i>Notes on the State of Virginia</i> , Queries XVIII and XIX at https://muse.jhu.edu/book/43979 (login through Shibboleth); Alexander Hamilton, "Report on Manufactures"(excerpts) at http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=265 .
Day 23	Economic Change, 1815-1860.
Day 24	Society Responds: Class, Gender, and Race
Day 25	* BTAR, ch. 8, "Market Revolution in the North, 1815-1860;" "I Wove To-day": Elizabeth Fuller Grows Up in Rural Massachusetts; The Lowell Mill Girls Go on Strike, 1836 ; "I Must Of Course Have Something Of My Own Before Many More Years Have Passed Over My Head": Sally Rice Leaves the Farm, 1838 ; "I Was a Cabinet-maker By Trade": A Working Man's Recollections of America, 1825-35 ; "The Natural Tie Between Master and Apprentice has been Rent Asunder": An Old Apprentice Laments Changes in the Workplace, 1826 ; "We C" all On You to Deliver Us From the Tyrant's Chain": Lowell Women Workers Campaign for a Ten Hour Workday ;
Day 26	The Cotton Kingdom.
Day 27	The Second Slavery.
Day 28	BTAR ch. 10, "The World of the South, 1815-1860;" Frederick Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.</i> ; Sen. John C. Calhoun, "Slavery a Positive Good," at http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/slavery-a-positive-good/ . PAPER DUE.
Day 29	A Second Great Awakening, 1800-1840.
Day 30	Abolition and Women's Rights
	The Culture of Reform, 1815-1860. BTAR ch. 9, "Northern Culture and Reform, 1815-1860;" "One glass More," at https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/search/?utf8=%E2%9C%93&search_field=all_titles&q=one+glass+more ; "Declaration of Sentiments of the American Anti-Slavery

	Convention,” at http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/abolitn/abeswlgct.html ; Sarah Grimké, Letter III, <i>Letters on the Equality of the Sexes</i> , at http://www.worldculture.org/articles/12-Grimke%20Letters,%201-3.pdf .
Day 31	New Politics.
Day 32	The Second Party System. <i>BTAR</i> ch. 11, “The Transformation of Politics, 1815–1836.” Henry Clay, “Defence of the American System,” pp. 10-15, at https://books.google.com/books?id=6HEUAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA10&lpg=PA10&dq=clay+%22I+have+now+to+perform+the%22&source=bl&ots=FIwwXre9X&sig=90BHcH-06ObdAnImOGltuKMzQQM&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi5sOe5hczZAhWjc98KHWduAvQQ6AEIMzAB#v=onepage&q=clay%20%22I%20have%20now%20to%20perform%20the%22&f=false ; Andrew Jackson, Bank Veto Message (last 5 paragraphs), at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/ajveto01.asp .
Day 33	MIDTERM TEST
Day 34	The World of the West.
Day 35	Manifest Destiny and War.
Day 36	* <i>BTAR</i> ch. 12, “Wars for the West, 1836-1850 and John L. O’Sullivan, “The Great Nation of Futurity,” at https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Great_Nation_of_Futurity .
Day 37	Sectional Crisis.
Day 38	And the War Came....
Day 39	* <i>BTAR</i> ch. 13, “The House Dividing, 1850-1861;” <i>BUILDING BLOCKS</i> , ch. 13
Day 40	Home Fronts.
Day 41	Emancipation and Peace. <i>BTAR</i> ch. 14, “‘A New Birth of Freedom,’ 1861-1865.”
Day 42	Reconstructing the Republic.
	Losing the Peace? <i>BTAR</i> ch. 15, “Reconstructing the Republic. 1865-1877”
Day 43	FINAL EXAMINATION