



National Taiwan University of Science and Technology

2018 Summer Program

HIS 105 Introduction to American History

Course Outline

Course Code: HIS 105

Instructor: Professor Ross Hamilton

Home Institution: Barnard College, Columbia University, New York

Office Hours: TBA

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Credit: 4

Class Hours: According to the regulations of Minister of Education, R.O.C, 18 class hours could be counted as 1 academic credit in all universities in Taiwan. This course will have 72 class hours, including 40 lecture hours, 10 lecturer office hours, 10-hour TA discussion sessions, 2-hour review sessions, 10-hour extra classes.

Course Description:

This course provides an introduction to the study of American history from the eve of European colonization through the close of Reconstruction. Rather than try to address all the significant historical developments that took place across four centuries, we focus on key topics which hold special interest for scholars and which figure centrally in debates over the meaning of the American experience for various groups. Topics include: initial cultural encounters between natives and settlers; origins of American slavery and racism; causes and consequences of the American Revolution; the growth of capitalism and



democracy in the early republic; divisions in the antebellum North and South; and causes and consequences of the Civil War.

By sacrificing "coverage" for in-depth analysis, we are able to pay particular attention to how historians do history and construct interpretations from various kinds of evidence. We also consider why historians sometimes disagree about how to read and evaluate the existing sources. Historical interpretation is "contested terrain." Yet it is not simply a matter of opinion where all points of view are equally valid. Historical interpretation involves creative investigation, careful documentation, critical thinking, and logical analysis.

Format:

There are two kinds of readings for the class: the readings for a particular day and the "Weekly Readings." I will expect you to complete the "Weekly Readings" for a given week by Monday of that week.

Most weeks there will be a combination of lectures and discussions. The discussions will focus on the assigned readings, which should be done on time. During the days for discussion, please come to class prepared to discuss one question/topic from the reading(s). I may email you a list of questions to consider or I may ask you to generate your own.

Attendance:



Note that your attendance at all sessions is required and that your participation is expected.

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on the basis of two exams (20% each), one 10-12 page analytical project (45%), and class participation (15%). Late papers will be penalized 5 percent per day. You must complete all assignments for the class. The instructor reserves the right to exercise some discretion in assigning final grades.

Honor Code:

All student work is governed by the honor code. If you have a question about how the honor code applies to a particular assignment, you should raise that question with the professor in advance of the due date.

Readings:

There will be a class reader.

- Gary Nash and Julie Roy Jeffrey, eds. *The American People: Creating a Nation and Society, Volume I*, Brief edition (New York: Pearson Education, 2006)
- Lois Green Carr, et al., *Robert Cole's World: Agriculture and Society in Early Maryland* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991)
- James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999)
- Robert A. Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001)



- Carol Sheriff, *The Artificial River: The Erie Canal and the Paradox of Progress, 1817- 1862* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996)
- Michael P. Johnson, James L. Roark, *Black Masters: A Free Family of Color in the Old South* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984)

Schedule of Classes and Assignments:

WEEK 1

1. Introduction to the Course

2. The Indians' Economy:

The Indians' Old World: Native Americans and the Coming of Europeans, Neal Salisbury, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., Vol. 53, No. 3, Indians and Others in Early America (Jul., 1996), pp. 435-458.

3. The Spanish Conquest

READER: Inga Clendinnen, Fierce and Unnatural Cruelty: Cortes and the Conquest of Mexico, *Representations* 33 (Winter, 1991), 65-100.

AP, Chapter 1, "Ancient America and Africa," 3-23.

AP, Chapter 2, "Europeans and Africans Reach the Americas," 24-49.

4. Colonial experiments

Origins of the Slave Labor System in early VA

READER: The Labor Problem at Jamestown, 1607-18, Edmund S. Morgan, *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 76, No. 3 (Jun., 1971), pp. 595-611.

READER: Winthrop Jordan, "Unthinking Decision," 44-98.

5. New England comparisons

AP, Chapter 3, "Colonizing a Continent in the Seventeenth Century," 50-89.



WEEK 2

1. Slave Systems

Explaining the Colonial Economy

READER: John J. McCusker & Russell R. Menard, "The Economy of British America, 1607-1789, pp. 5-34. AP, Chapter 4, "The Maturing of Colonial Society," 90-125.

Book 2: *Into the American Woods*, 1-127.

2. *Into the American Woods*, 128-224.

3. Finish *Into the American Woods*, 225-315

4. Imperial Crisis

5. Rebels and Loyalists

READER: Thomas Paine, Chapter 1 of *Common Sense*

WEEK 3

1. Patriot motivations

Book 3: *The Minutemen and Their World*, 1-108.

2. *The Minutemen and Their World*, 109-191.

3. The Elusive Republic

READER: Intro to *Inheriting the Revolution* by Joyce Applebee

4 Consolidating the Republic

AP, Chapter 7, "Consolidating the Republic," 188-217. (Recommended)

AP, Chapter 8, "Creating a Nation," 218-245. (Recommended)

AP, Chapter 9, "Society and Politics in the Early Republic," 246-279. (Recommended)



5. MIDTERM EXAM

WEEK 4

1. Launching the American Industrial Revolution

The Artificial River, 1-78.

2. The Black Experience

Book 5: *Black Masters*, 1-106

AP, Chapter 11, "Slavery and the Old South" 309-338. (Recommended)

3. Manifest Destiny & Manifest Domesticity

READER: Amy Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity," *American Literature* 70 (Sept. 1988), 581-606.

4. Divisions between North and South

READER: Edward Pessen, "How Different from Each Other Were the Antebellum North and South?" *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 85, No. 5 (Dec., 1980), pp. 1119-1149.

5. Reconstruction & Retreat

AP, Chapter 14, "The Union in Peril," 405-434.

AP, Chapter 15, "The Union Severed," 435-465. (Recommended) AP, Chapter 16, "The Union Reconstructed," 466-494.

WEEK 5

1. The Gilded Age

AP, Chapter 16

2. The First World War

AP, Chapter 18



3. The Interwar Years

AP, Chapter 20

4. The Second World War

AP, Chapter 22

5. The Cold War

AP, Chapter 24

FINAL EXAM

