

United States History I

HIST 2111 to 1865
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

Dr. Ben Wright

Introduction & Objectives

This course will cover the main themes of U.S. History through 1865. The first objective of this course is to provide you with an overview of American history through the Civil War. We will study the main political, economic, social, and cultural developments during this period so that you will have a basic understanding of the chronology of U.S. history. Another objective is to enhance your ability to evaluate historical information. An adequate overview of any historical period requires a balance of factual knowledge and critical analysis. Memorization of facts is useless without an understanding how they fit into a bigger picture. In critically evaluating historical information, we will together assess the relative benefits of the three primary means of historical presentation: These are works of academic, public, and popular history. The course will require a good bit of reading, discussion and writing. In addition to the examination of U.S. History, this course is also designed to improve your skills as a college student and modern professional, making you more educated, employable, and interesting.

Learning Outcomes

Students who pass this course will show competency in the following outcomes:

1. Demonstrate the ability to analyze historical documents.
2. Identify Primary as opposed to Secondary documents/sources.
3. Demonstrate the ability to extract relevant information from maps and graphs.
4. Employ those facts and interpretations to extract primary arguments from primary and/or secondary sources.

Readings

- *The American Yamp*. See americanyamp.com
- [Benjamin Franklin, The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, Jesse Lemisch ed. \(Signet Classics, 2001\)](#)
- [Solomon Northrup, Twelve Years a Slave \(Dover, 1970\)](#)
- [Eric Foner, ed. Voices of Freedom. Volume 1 \(4th Edition\).](#)

Contact/ Communication

All questions and communications during non-class hours should be emailed to: bwright@abac.edu. I will be communicating to you as well through your ABAC email account. Please get in the habit of checking this regularly. Do not contact me through D2L (this does not work).

Technology

This course is supported by D2L. You will need to use D2L to access course resources. If you have any problems using D2L, contact the technical support available to you immediately to get help.

Classroom Etiquette

Teaching history and learning history require enormous amounts of concentration on the part of the instructor and the students. Try not to interfere with this process. Silence all cell phones, laptops, and other electronic devices. Be on time for class. If you are late, quietly test the door. If it is locked, you must quietly wait for the instructor to open the door. Laptops or tablets are allowed, but students are expected to use them solely for note-taking or accessing course material. If you are distracting others, you will be removed from class.

A Note on Disabilities

Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact me. If you have a diagnosed condition requiring adjustments to the course, please set up an appointment with me during office hours so that we can work out a plan for the semester. Please meet with me as soon as possible. Evidence of legitimate need for this consideration must be provided. To obtain the proper documentation, please schedule an appointment with Disability Services (<http://www.abac.edu/sd/disability/>) by contacting Dr. Maggie Martin (mmartin@abac.edu) or her office at 229-391-5135.

Academic Honesty

Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated. In addition to being reported to the university, any student found guilty of plagiarism or cheating will receive an automatic F for the course. For more on Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College's policies on academic dishonesty students should consult the school's "Code of Conduct" at:
<http://www.abac.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/ABAC-Code-of-Conduct.pdf>

Outside Help

I have listed my office hours at the beginning of the syllabus, but I am available by appointment on other days as well. I am happy to meet with students to discuss any problem or question they may have about course materials or assignments.

Attendance

Students are required to attend class. Official, university-sanctioned absences are excused only if students provide documentation before their absence. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor about rescheduling exams or quizzes. Only those students with official, university-sanctioned absences on exam or quiz days will be allowed to reschedule. Students are also responsible for all content covered in the class they missed (excused or not). It is the student's responsibility to arrange to have a classmate take notes for them. Students may miss a total of five classes (excused or not) without incurring penalties other than those stipulated in the section above on "Late Papers and Quizzes/Exams." Students missing six classes (excused or not) will earn a zero for their participation grade. Students missing nine or more classes (excused or not) will earn a failing grade for the course. There will be no exceptions.

Course Requirements & Evaluations

Assignments

Attendance and Participation	10%		
Quizzes	20%	<u>Grading Scale</u>	
Paper 1	10%	100-90	A
Paper 2	10%	89-80	B
Midterm	15%	79-70	C
Final Exam	35%	69-60	D

Attendance and Participation = 10%

Attendance: Attendance is required. In case of extreme circumstances, email an explanation as soon as possible.

Discussion and Participation: Throughout the course, we will have several open discussions as a class. You are expected to participate by listening carefully, offering respectful comments, asking relevant questions, and working cooperatively in small groups. Reading your assigned selections and attending class consistently will be essential to thoughtful participation.

Quizzes = 20% (total)

You will be required to complete brief online quizzes each week. The purpose of these quizzes is to ensure that you have a basic understanding of the events covered in class.

You should take the quiz at least once prior to our first class session each week, and you may take each quiz up to 10 times until Saturday at noon each week.

Reflection Papers = 20% (2 total)

You will write 2 essays (1,000 – 1,500 words each) that will be worth at total of 20% of your grade. You may **only** use assigned materials to write these papers. The use of any other resources is cheating and will result in an automatic failing grade for the class.

There will be no exceptions.

Each of these papers will explore a different genre of history: public history and popular history.

1. The first essay evaluates a work of public history. After reading *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, you will assess a digital museum exhibit on Franklin's life. You will be asked to reflect on the benefits and limitations of public history as well as the particular strengths of this exhibit based on your understanding of *The Autobiography*.
2. The second essay treats a work of popular history. You will read *Twelve Years a Slave* by Solomon Northrup, and as a class, we will watch the major motion picture of the same name. You will write an assessment of the film in terms of its historical accuracy, faithfulness to Northrup's original work, and the ways in which the film uses issues from the past to speak to contemporary issues.

Midterm = 15%

Your midterm exam consists of short essay questions. These questions are drawn directly from the discussion questions that frame our class discussions. Attending class, taking good notes, and participating in discussions is the only way to prepare for this exam.

At the time of the midterm, you will also be asked to produce 10 source annotations in preparation for your final exam. More information on this will be provided in class.

Final Exam = 35%

Your final exam includes two components. Like the midterm, you will answer several short essay questions drawn from the weekly discussion questions. You will also be required to answer one of the two questions below with a well-structured, coherent essay that draws upon several primary sources. Be sure to have an identifiable thesis, clear arguments and relevant supporting evidence. You will be able to bring one piece of paper with notes to prepare this essay. For this essay, you may only consult your course notes and the documents we have read in class.

Final exam questions:

1. Historians struggle to synthesize the countless events, ideas, and movements of the past. Three recent works on early America each focused on three different themes. One selected the expansion of democracy, another on technological innovation, and a third on the development of capitalism. Would you select one of these, or perhaps another, as the central theme in the history of early American history?
2. In explaining the behavior of people in the past, some historians emphasize economic motives, while others emphasize cultural values. In reality, these two factors are often intertwined. Explain the role of economics and religion in the development of colonial and early national America. How did each of these motivations influence the period, and how did each of these motivations influence one another?

Course Schedule

WEEK 1: Course Overview Jan 8-9

WEEK 2: The New World Jan 12-16 American Yawp chapters. 1-2
Colliding Cultures

Documents: Native American creation stories
Bartolomé de las Casas describes the exploitation of indigenous people
Richard Hakluyt makes the case for English colonization

WEEK 3: British North America Jan 19-23 American Yawp chapter 3

Documents: Olaudah Equiano describes the Middle Passage
Francis Daniel Pastorius describes his ocean voyage
Song about life in Virginia

* Read *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*

WEEK 4: Colonial Society Jan 26-30 American Yawp chapter 4

Documents: Jonathan Edwards revives Northampton, Massachusetts
Eliza Lucas letters from South Carolina
Pontiac calls for war

* Explore *Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary Exhibit*

WEEK 5: American Revolution Feb 2-6 American Yawp chapter 5

Documents: Thomas Paine calls for American independence
Declaration of Independence
Abigail and John Adams converse on women's rights

FIRST PAPER DUE – evaluating public history through Benjamin Franklin

WEEK 6: A New Nation Feb 9-13 American Yawp chapter 6

Documents: Hector St. Jean de Crevecoeur describes the American people
George Washington's Farewell Address
James Madison protests public funding for Christianity

WEEK 7: Review Feb 16-20

MIDTERM EXAM

WEEK 8: The Early Republic Feb 23-27 American Yawp chapter 7

Documents: Cato's Pennsylvania antislavery petition
Tecumseh calls for pan-Indian unity
Debate over the War of 1812

WEEK 9: The Market Revolution Mar 2-6 American Yawp chapter 8

Documents: James Madison asks congress to support internal improvements
Harriet Robinson describes a strike in Lowell, MA
Alexis de Tocqueville on gender equality

WEEK 10: Democracy in America Mar 9-13 American Yawp chapter 9

Documents: Rhode Islanders Protest Property Restrictions on Voting
Black Philadelphians defend their voting rights

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Andrew Jackson Vetoes the National Bank Charter
* Read *Twelve Years a Slave* (book)

SPRING BREAK

MARCH 16-20

WEEK 11: Religion and Reform Mar 23-27 American Yawp chapter 10

Documents: Revivalist Charles G. Finney emphasizes human choice in salvation
 David Walker's Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World
 Sarah Grimké calls for women's rights

WEEK 12: The Old South Mar 30-Apr 3 American Yawp chapter 11

Documents: Harriet Jacobs on rape and slavery
 Solomon Northrup describes a slave market
 George Fitzhugh argues that slavery is superior to liberty and equality
* View *Twelve Years a Slave* (film)

WEEK 13: Manifest Destiny Apr 6-10 American Yawp chapter 12

Documents: Cherokee petition protesting removal
 John O'Sullivan declares America's manifest destiny
 President Monroe outlines the Monroe Doctrine

WEEK 14: The Sectional Crisis Apr 13-17 American Yawp chapter 13

Documents: Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin
 Margaretta Mason and Lydia Maria Child discuss John Brown
 South Carolina Declaration of Secession

Week 15: The Civil War Apr 20-24 American Yawp chapter 14

Documents: Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens on the Confederate constitution
 General Benjamin Butler reacts to self-emancipating slaves
 Ambrose Bierce describes his experience at the battle of Shiloh
 Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address

SECOND PAPER DUE – Assessing popular history through Solomon Northrup

WEEK 16: Reconstruction Apr 27-30 American Yawp chapter 15

Your final exam requires you to write a well-structured, coherent essay that draws upon primary sources. Be sure to have an identifiable thesis, clear arguments and relevant supporting evidence. For this essay, you may only consult your course notes and the documents we have read in class.

1. Historians struggle to synthesize the countless events, ideas, and movements of the past. Three recent works on early America each focused on three different themes. One selected the expansion of democracy, another on technological innovation, and a third on the development of capitalism. Would you select one of these, or perhaps another, as the central theme in the history of early American history?
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