

HIST 120: AMERICAN HISTORY SURVEY

American History Survey
History 120
Fall 2012
Prof. Kathleen Watford

T/TH 10:15am-11:40am
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Office Hours: By Appointment
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SCHEDULE

Tuesday August 21	Housekeeping Details & Introductions
Thursday August 23	Reading: Syllabus & Website Discussion: Course Orientation & Expectations
Tuesday August 28	Reading: Chapter 1 Howard Zinn, <i>People's History</i> Discussion: Discovering Columbus & Re-Reading the Past
Thursday August 30	Lecture: Evidence " <i>Textual Documents</i> " Records, letters, newspapers, government documents, personal papers, pamphlets, posters
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Tuesday September 4	Reading: Chapter 2 Howard Zinn, <i>People's History</i> Discussion: Creation of the Color Line
Thursday September 6	Lecture: Evidence " <i>Visual Aids</i> " Paintings, photographs, films, pictures, architecture, maps
Tuesday September 11	Group Meeting: Discuss Blog Post #1 Due Thursday 09/13/12 (50 points)

What does Columbus think of the native population in terms of its physical and mental conditions, its worth to the king and queen of Spain, and its relationship with the European explorers? What is Columbus' plan for the island of Hispaniola? How does he explain how his plan will affect the native population? What new information did you learn about Columbus?

What is the "color line"? How does Howard Zinn describe the way this color line was drawn in early America? Do you think the drawing of this line was intentional or unintentional? How does Howard Zinn describe the differences between slavery as it existed in Africa versus its existence in America? Do you believe that these differences are significant? How and why? Describe the process of the Trans-Atlantic journey Africans endured during the slave trade.

Thursday
September 13

Lecture: Re-Examining the Revolution

Tuesday
September 18

Reading: Chapter 3 Howard Zinn *People's History*
Discussion: White Workers/Indentured Servants, Enslaved African Americans, Free African-Americans, White Women, Male Southern Plantation Owners, Northern Bankers & Merchants, Native Americans

Thursday
September 20

Reading: Chapter 4 Howard Zinn *People's History*
Discussion: Constitutional Convention & Burning Issues

Tuesday
September 25

Group Meeting: Discuss Blog Post #2
Due Thursday 09/27/12 (50 points)

How does Howard Zinn support his belief that “class lines hardened through the colonial period”? How does Howard Zinn describe the development of “a white middle class”? Do you agree with his statement that the middle class would provide a “solid buffer” for the elite? Why, or why not? Do you think this was a deliberate action by the elite? Why, or why not? How did the development of a middle class help keep the wealthy in power?

Thursday
September 27

Lecture: Evidence “*Oral Traditions*”
Myths, folklore, interviews, audio-recordings, etc...

Tuesday
October 2

Reading: Chapter 5 Howard Zinn *People's History*
Discussion: American Myths

Thursday
October 4

Reading: Chapter 7 Howard Zinn *People's History*
Discussion: Indian Removal, Cherokee, Andrew Jackson, Plantation Owners, Farmers, Missionaries, Reformers, Black Seminoles

Tuesday
October 9

Group Meeting: Discuss Blog Post #3
Due Thursday 10/11/12 (50 points)

Howard Zinn argues that prior to the Revolutionary War, many colonists did not support the war and thus, the Founding Fathers “would have to woo the armed white population”. Using examples from the chapter, demonstrate how he supports this contention. What were the various methods United States policy makers used to take land from the Indians? How did the policy makers justify these actions? How did American leaders define civilized? Is there anything you read in the chapter that leads you to believe that the Indian people were not civilized? Why did so many Euro-Americans believe the Indians were not civilized? How would your definition of civilized differ from that of nineteenth-century policy makers and the American public?

Thursday
October 11

Lecture: Resistance
Abolitionist Groups, Seneca Falls, Frederick Douglass

Tuesday
October 16

Reading: Chapter 8 Howard Zinn *People's History*
Discussion: War on Mexico

Thursday
October 18

Reading: Chapter 9 Howard Zinn *People's History*
Discussion: Slavery & Defiance

Tuesday
October 23

Group Meeting: Discuss Blog Post #4
Due Thursday 10/25/12 (50 points)

What were the short and long-term consequences of the war with Mexico for the American people? For the Mexican people? Describe the similarities that existed between the War with Mexico and the wars against the Indians. Howard Zinn claims that the war with Mexico was "a war of the American elite against the Mexican elite." Using evidence from *A People's History*, support or refute this contention. What is the message behind the title of Chapter 9 in *A People's History*, "Slavery Without Submission, Emancipation Without Freedom"? Do you agree that the slaves neither submitted to the institution of slavery during its existence nor were they emancipated by its legal termination? Explain. What were some of the ways that enslaved African Americans fought for freedom before, during, and after the Civil War? What were some of the ways that whites and blacks worked together to ensure such freedom?

Thursday
October 25

Lecture: Research Project
Due Tuesday 12/04/12 – Thursday 12/06/12 (100 points)

Tuesday
October 30

Reading: Chapter 10 Howard Zinn *People's History*
Discussion: A War to Free the Slaves?

Thursday
November 1

Reading: Chapter 11 Howard Zinn *People's History*
Discussion: Birth of the Corporate State

Tuesday
November 6

Group Meeting: Discuss Blog Post #5
Due Thursday 11/8/12 (50 points)

What common grievances did workers share throughout the period described in Chapter 10? Do workers continue to have any of these grievances today? On page 226 of *A People's History*, historian David Montgomery is quoted as noting that class conflicts in nineteenth-century America "were as fierce as any known to the industrial world." What evidence can you find in the readings to support this claim? In Chapter 11, Howard Zinn illustrates many ways in which the government benefited the wealthy. If Howard Zinn is correct, what explains this behavior? Does the government continue to benefit the wealthy today? Explain.

Thursday
November 8

Lecture: Writing History Papers
Past tense, plagiarism, platitude, proof-reading, weak support, clarity, fragments, passive voice, repetition, run-on, apostrophe, hyphen, punctuation, quotations, titles, transitions, footnotes, endnotes and bibliography

Tuesday
November 13

Reading: Chapter 12 Howard Zinn *People's History*
Discussion: American Imperialism

Thursday
November 15

Lecture: How to Read a Movie
Film: The Last of the Mohicans

Tuesday
November 20

Lecture: Making Sense of Films
Film: Gangs of New York

Thursday
November 22

NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

Tuesday
November 27

Lecture: Evidence “Moving Images”
Film: Cold Mountain

Thursday
November 29

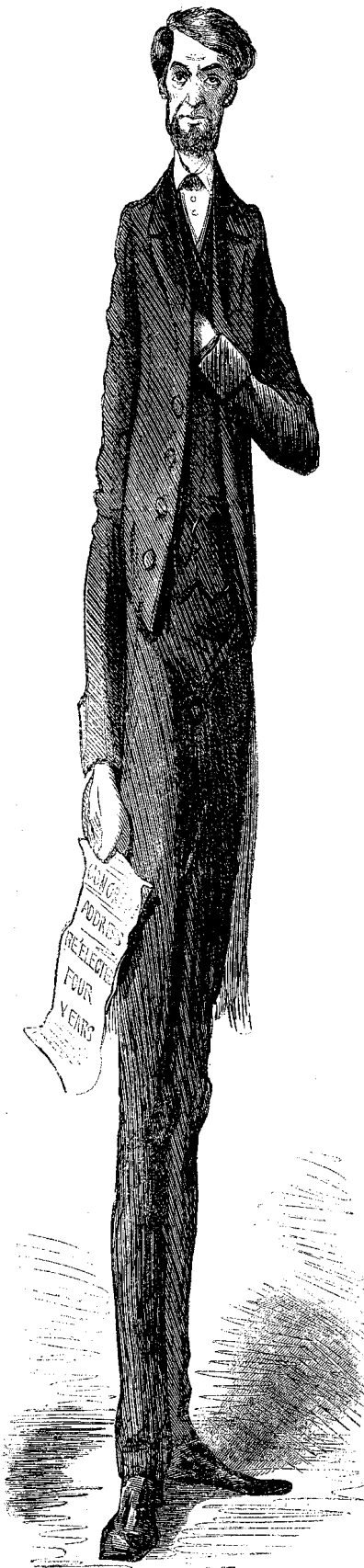
Group Meeting: Discuss Research Project
Make-up Day: Comprehension Exercises
Self-Evaluation Due (25 points)
Group Evaluation Due (25 points)

Tuesday
December 4

Group Presentations
Groups 1, 3, & 5
*Final Exam

Thursday
December 6

Group Presentations
Groups 2, 4, & 6
*Final Exam



COURSE

This course is designed as an introduction to the major themes and arguments in U.S. history from the colonial period to Reconstruction as well as an exploration of the different kinds of evidence that are available to historians. This is not an easy course; it is, rather, a reading and writing course that will provide you with the general knowledge and skills commonly identified as appropriate to a one- semester introductory course. To get the most from the course, therefore, the reading assignments should be completed before the date they are due so that you will have time to digest the material thoroughly in preparation for discussion and subsequent writing assignments. You will have to use your time wisely.

BOOK

The following book is required for the course.

Zinn, Howard; *A People's History of the United States*

REQUIREMENTS

The requirements for the course are as follows:

- 5 Individual Blog Post (50 pts. each= 250pts.)
- 5 Comprehension Exercises (10 pts. each= 50pts.)
- 1 Self-Evaluation (25 pts. 1 page, typed, single-spaced)
- 1 Group-Evaluation (25 pts.)
- 1 Final Research Project (100 pts.)

POLICIES

I am explaining and stating these policies now, in the clearest possible terms, so there can be no dispute over what I expect. If you have questions about my expectations, please raise them. But whenever you ask me to modify my expectations because you failed to plan and use your time efficiently, you put me as well as the rest of the class in the ethically difficult position of applying different standards to different people. I ask that you accept responsibility for your actions rather than put us all in an uncomfortable position.

Attendance

At this point in your intellectual development, you should have some sense of personal responsibility. Class attendance, therefore, will be up to you. It will be very difficult, however, to pass the course without attending class because the assignments and activities are the focus of many class discussions. In fact, failure to attend class on many occasions will have grave consequences.

A Note on Computer Use

Computers are a great advantage to the student writer. But, as with any technology, you must take steps to minimize the problems that computers inevitably cause. Do not expect to get through the semester without having at least one computer crisis. Prepare for this well in advance. Back up your work constantly and have alternative plans for obtaining computer use, if your primary options fail you. We will never accept computer problems as excuses for missed assignments. You must also keep backup copies of submitted assignments—either in electronic form or hard copy.

Similarly, computers and email permit around-the-clock communication. If you have questions about an assignment contact me via email. Should you need to discuss any personal issue with the instructor, contact me via email or by phone. If you email me, please put HIST 120 in the subject line; putting something like “Hi” or “Have a question” is a common “spam” technique, and my email is trained to junk these messages. Do not, however, expect an immediate response. Many of your questions can be answered by consulting the class website.

BLOG POST

Students often ask about writing a good post. Essentially, a blog post should be three to four paragraphs—roughly 400-500 words or the equivalent of 1-2 double-spaced pages. You might want to draft your entry in a word processing program first and copy and paste after you have finished. Although we will discuss the elements of a good post and comment extensively in class, these paragraphs are offered as a reference and a detailed summary of how your posts will be evaluated.

Title

A good post begins with a good title. A good title gets the reader's attention immediately and sets the tone for the rest of the entry. A title, such as “Entry #1,” is not particularly effective or even interesting. Since this is a class, you must number the entries so that the reader knows which assignment you are addressing. Examples might include: “#1: Re-thinking Columbus” or “No. 1 Creating the Color Line” You can be much more creative, but your post must have a number.

Thesis

A thesis is a proposition or statement of an argument. It is not “a direction” (e.g., “In this paper I will tell you about the American attitude toward pre-revolutionary

activism, and then I'll show...). An adequate thesis is a clear, precise, declarative statement: "The political cartoon 'Andrew Jackson and the Children of the Forrest,' suggests that the American attitude toward patriot activism was _____ and _____."

Argument

The body of your post follows the terms of your thesis and outlines your argument, beginning with a transitional sentence. (The easiest way to frame a transitional sentence is to take an important word or phrase from the sentence in the preceding paragraph and build on it.) In the Andrew Jackson example, the next paragraph would discuss the first "blank" and include the supporting evidence. The second paragraph would follow with a discussion of the second "blank" (usually its best to put the most compelling evidence last) and its evidence. The third paragraph would take up the conclusion.

A conclusion not only summarizes your argument—usually in a sentence or two—but also discusses its historical significance. The last is the most critical. A conclusion puts your argument into "the big picture," as Richard Nixon was fond of saying. It is an effort to relate your findings to a broader theme in the course. Does Andrew Jackson's political cartoon say something about how the Americans viewed patriot seriousness of purpose? Does the image offer any insights into American views on race and politics? Et le voilà—your paper is finished, and you have a nicely ordered 2-3 paragraph post.

Evidence

Evidence is a summary description or a short quotation from the source that supports the point that you wish to make in your paragraphs. For example: "The cartoonist suggested that the patriotic women of North Carolina were _____ and _____ by depicting the women's careless parenting (the child under the table) and slovenly housekeeping (spilled food and the dog's urinating under the table)." If you use a quotation from a source other than the documents that are part of the assignment, you must use quotation marks and a citation.

Grammar

Grammar and mechanics are important for a variety of reasons—all of them good. All your posts should be grammatically correct in all their particulars. Correctness includes spelling, punctuation, diction, and mechanics. A list of common grammar errors and suggestions for correcting them appears elsewhere.

Bonus

Bonus points are awarded for an especially creative, original, or stylistically sophisticated post.

Points or partial will be awarded for the following:

1. Promptness (0-10 points)
2. Thesis (0-10 points)
3. Argument (0-10 points)
4. Evidence (0-10 points)
5. Grammar (0-10 points)

SELF-EVALUATION GUIDELINES

Oftentimes, a letter grade does not reflect the effort that students put into a course, the amount a student has learned, or the skills that a student has acquired. A self-evaluation is one way of remedying this deficiency by illustrating and documenting your participation in the course from your perspective. This is the time to argue for yourself and put your best foot forward. In fact, it is in your interest to do the best job that you can on this assignment. The self-evaluation should be a one-page, typed single-spaced paper in which you address the following topics:

I. Evaluation of your participation in the class

A. Attendance

B. Time devoted to the materials

1. Blogs
2. Group meetings
3. Readings

C. Class participation

1. In-class contributions
2. Group contributions

D. The ways in which you think you improved or not

E. The problems you encountered in your effort to complete the class assignments to your satisfaction.

F. What you would have done differently

OTHER GUIDELINES

Disabled Student Programs and Services: Any student with a documented disability who may need educational accommodations should notify the instructor or the Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSP&S) office as soon as possible. Visit or call Mel Wendrick Access Center, Room 2117, (760) 355-6312

Plagiarism: IVC expects honesty and integrity from all students. A student found to have cheated on any assignment or plagiarized will receive a zero for the assignment and sent to Disciplinary Officer Sergio Lopez.