



Basic Course Information

Semester:	Spring 2026	Instructor Name:	Bradford Wright
Course Title & #:	HIST 120: U.S. from Prehistory to Reconstruction	Email:	Bradford.wright@imperial.edu
CRN #:	20284	Webpage (optional):	
Classroom:	Asynchronous online	Office #:	301
Class Dates:	Feb. 17-April 17	Office Hours:	On campus: T: 1:00-1:30; R: 1:00-2:00; Online by email: M: 11:00-12:00; W: 11:00-12:30
Class Days:	M,T,W,R,F	Office Phone #:	760-355-6597
Class Times:	Asynchronous online	Emergency Contact:	760-355-6144
Units:	3.0	Class Format/Modality:	Asynchronous online

Course Description

This course is a survey of American history from the pre-Columbian era to the end of Reconstruction. This course will cover the major political, economic, social, gender, racial, cultural and intellectual transformations of the colonial and early American eras. At the completion of this course students will have a broad understanding of the most important ideas, personalities, movements, and events in the colonial and early American periods.(CSU,UC)

Course Prerequisite(s) and/or Corequisite(s)

None.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon course completion, the successful student will have acquired new skills, knowledge, and or attitudes as demonstrated by being able to:

1. Identify and recall key information from a historical text and/or a documentary film. (ILO1)
2. Describe the causes and/or impact of a historical event. (ILO1, ILO2)
3. Explain and analyze the key information contained in a primary source document. (ILO1, ILO2)

Course Objectives

Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to:

Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to: Identify the major events and key intellectual, cultural, social, political and economic trends in United States history from the pre-Columbian period to 1877, and identify and understand the significance of important personalities and ideas in United States history before 1877. Specifically:

1. Describe the peoples and cultures existing in North America before European contact;
2. Describe European exploration of North America and early colonization efforts;
3. Describe the British colonies of North America and explain the role of the colonies within the British empire.
4. Discuss and analyze labor relations, indentured servants and slavery in British North America;
5. Understand colonial-Native American and U.S.-Native American relations;
6. Understand the factors that led to the American Revolution and the key events, personalities and effects of the Revolutionary War;
7. Understand how the American political and legal system was created and how it functioned in the early national period;
8. Identify important political trends and figures and the rise of political parties in ante-bellum America;
9. Understand U.S. foreign policy before 1877;
10. Explain the evolution of the market economy of the nineteenth century;
11. Explain how technology shaped culture, social arrangements, leisure, family life, and work;
12. Understand how immigrants impacted society, politics and culture;
13. Explain the status of women before 1877;
14. Understand the role of sectionalism in early American history;
15. Describe how religion impacted society, intellectual currents, and political thought;
16. Analyze Westward expansion, Manifest Destiny and the Mexican-American War;
17. Discuss the major factors that led to the Civil War and the key events and personalities of that war;
18. Understand the significance of the Civil War on society, race relations, economics, and politics;
19. Describe the process of post-Civil War Reconstruction and the challenges and opportunities faced by the nation and people until 1877.



Textbooks & Other Resources or Links

The following textbook is **required** for the course:

Michael Schaller, *American Horizons: US History in a Global Context, vol. 1, 5th ed.* ISBN: 978-0197767382

Course Requirements and Instructional Methods

Attend class by logging into Canvas daily, Mondays through Fri

days. Read assignments in textbook, read and view lectures and primary source documents, and view required videos through links provided. Participate in weekly discussions, complete written assignments, quizzes, and exams by the dates due.

Out of Class Assignments: The Department of Education policy states that one (1) credit hour is the amount of student work that reasonably approximates not less than one hour of class time and two (2) hours of out-of-class time per week over the span of a semester. WASC has adopted a similar requirement.

Course Grading Based on Course Objectives

Final grades will be determined according to accumulated points for each discussion, essay, assignment, quiz, and exams. These will all be available on Canvas.

Weekly Discussion Questions and Participation (20 points per each set of Discussion questions; usually two sets per week)

Chapter Quizzes (20 points each quiz; usually one or two quizzes per week)

Midterm and Final Essays (100 points each): Two 1000-word essays to be completed in response to assigned essay prompts.

Midterm Exam: 80 points. Multiple-choice and/or short-answer/matching questions.

Final Exam: 80 points. Multiple-choice and/or short-answer/matching questions.



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Academic Honesty (Artificial Intelligence -AI)

IVC values critical thinking and communication skills and considers academic integrity essential to learning. Using AI tools as a replacement for your own thinking, writing, or quantitative reasoning goes against both our mission and academic honesty policy and will be considered academic dishonesty, or plagiarism unless you have been instructed to do so by your instructor. In case of any uncertainty regarding the ethical use of AI tools, students are encouraged to reach out to their instructors for clarification.

All work submitted in this course must be the original work/writing of the student. Writing generated all or in part by AI tools is not acceptable.

Accessibility Statement

Imperial Valley College is committed to providing an accessible learning experience for all students, regardless of course modality. Every effort has been made to ensure that this course complies with all state and federal accessibility regulations, including Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations. However, if you encounter any content that is not accessible, please contact your instructor or the area dean for assistance. If you have specific accommodations through **DSPS**, contact them for additional assistance.

We are here to support you and ensure that you have equal access to all course materials.

Course Policies

ATTENDANCE:

- Students are required to log into Canvas and review course materials, announcements, and complete any required assignments each day of the class week, Monday through Thursday.
- A student who fails to attend the first meeting of a class or does not complete the first mandatory activity of an online class will be dropped by the instructor as of the first official meeting of that class. Should readmission be desired, the student's status will be the same as that of any other student who desires to add a class. It is the student's responsibility to drop or officially withdraw from the class. See [General Catalog](#) for details.
- Regular attendance in all classes is expected of all students. A student whose continuous, unexcused absences exceed the number of hours the class is scheduled to meet per week may be dropped. For online courses, students who fail to complete required activities for two consecutive weeks may be considered to have excessive absences and may be dropped.
- Absences attributed to the representation of the college at officially approved events (conferences, contests, and field trips) will be counted as 'excused' absences.

Other Course Information

1. ACADEMIC HONESTY:

In addition to the above warning about AI, there are many different forms of academic dishonesty. The following kinds of honesty violations and their definitions are not meant to be exhaustive. Rather, they are intended to serve as examples of unacceptable academic conduct.

- Plagiarism is taking and presenting as one's own the writings or ideas of others, without citing the source. You should understand the concept of plagiarism and keep it in mind when taking exams and preparing written materials. If you do not understand how to "cite a source" correctly, you must ask for help.
- Cheating is defined as fraud, deceit, or dishonesty in an academic assignment, or using or attempting to use materials, or assisting others in using materials that are prohibited or inappropriate in the context of the academic assignment in question.

Anyone caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a zero (0) on the exam or assignment, and the instructor may report the incident to the Campus Disciplinary Officer, who may place related documentation in a file. Repeated acts of cheating may result in an F in the course and/or disciplinary action. Please refer to the [General Catalog](#) for more information on academic dishonesty or other misconduct. Acts of cheating include, but are not limited to, the following: (a) plagiarism; (b) copying or attempting to copy from others during an examination or on an assignment; (c) communicating test information with another person during an examination; (d) allowing others to do an assignment or portion of an assignment; (e) using a commercial term paper service.

How do I show academic honesty and integrity in an online "classroom"?

• KEEP YOUR PASSWORDS CONFIDENTIAL.

- You have a unique password to access online software like Canvas. Never allow someone else to log-in to your account.

• COMPLETE YOUR OWN COURSEWORK.

- When you register for an online class and log-in to Canvas, you do so with the understanding that you will produce your own work, take your own exams, and will do so without the assistance of others (unless directed by the instructor).

Examples of Academic Dishonesty that can occur in an online environment:

- Copying from others on a quiz, test, examination, or assignment;
- Allowing someone else to copy your answers on a quiz, test, exam, or assignment;
- Having someone else take an exam or quiz for you;



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- Conferring with others during a test or quiz (if the instructor didn't explicitly say it was a group project, then he/she expects you to do the work without conferring with others);
- Buying or using a term paper or research paper from an internet source or other company or taking any work of another, even with permission, and presenting the work as your own;
- Excessive revising or editing by others that substantially alters your final work;
- Sharing information that allows other students an advantage on an exam (such as telling a peer what to expect on a make-up exam or prepping a student for a test in another section of the same class);
- Taking and using the words, work, or ideas of others and presenting any of these as your own work is plagiarism. This applies to all work generated by another, whether it be oral, written, or artistic work. Plagiarism may either be deliberate or unintentional.

Other Course Information

Financial Aid

Your Grades Matter! In order to continue to receive financial aid, you must meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirement. Making SAP means that you are maintaining a 2.0 GPA, you have successfully completed 67% of your coursework, and you will graduate on time. If you do not maintain SAP, you may lose your financial aid. If you have questions, please contact financial aid at finaid@imperial.edu.

IVC Student Resources

IVC wants you to be successful in all aspects of your education. For help, resources, services, and an explanation of policies, visit <http://www.imperial.edu/studentresources> or click the heart icon in Canvas.

Anticipated Class Schedule/Calendar

Weeks 1-2 (Feb. 17-27): The Founding of Colonial America

Introductions and Orientation to Class Policies

The Europeans Arrive

The New England Way

English Transplantations...sort of



Read Schaller, Chapters 1, 2, and 3

Week 3: (March 2-6) From Colonies to Independence

The Colonies Mature

The Great Conspiracy

The War for Independence

The American Revolution

The Framing of the Constitution

Read Schaller, Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7

Week 4: (March 9-13): The New U.S. Republic

The New Republic and the Birth of American Politics

Read Schaller, Chapter 8

Week 5 (March 16-22): The Era of Jefferson

The Era of Jefferson

The War of 1812

Midterm Essay Due (March 20)

Midterm Exam Due (March 22)

Week 6: (March 23-27): The Market Revolution, Jacksonian Democracy, Religion and Reform

The Market Revolution and American Individualism

The Age of Jackson

The Quest for Perfection: Religion and Reform

Read Schaller, Chapters 9-10



Week 7: (March 30-April 3): Slavery in America; Literature and Popular Culture; Manifest Destiny and Sectional Crises

Slavery and the Old South

Literature and Popular Culture

Manifest Destiny and the Impending Crisis

The Road to Secession

Read Schaller, Chapters 11, 12, and 13

Week 8 (April 13-17): Civil War and Reconstruction

The Civil War

Read Schaller, Chapters 13 and 14

The Civil War

Reconstruction

Read Schaller, Chapter 15

Final Essay Due: April 16

Final Exam Due: April 17

*****Subject to change without prior notice*****