



Basic Course Information

Semester:	Spring 2026	Instructor Name:	Shawn Barcroft
Course Title & #:	History 120 — United States History: Prehistory to Reconstruction	Email:	shawn.barcroft@imperial.edu
CRNs #:	20505	Office Hours:	Zoom: Mondays, 12:30 – 2:30 Room 409: Wednesdays 5:15-5:45 Email: TTH, 12:30 – 1:30 And by appointment. See Canvas for the Zoom link
Classroom:	Online	Office Phone #:	Please do not call.
Class Dates:	2/17/2026 to 6/12/2026	Emergency Contact:	Please email.
Units:	Three	Class Format:	Asynchronous/Traditional 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 social, political, economic, racial, gender, 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.

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: identify and recall key information from a historical text and/or a documentary film; (2) describe the causes and/or impact of a historical event; and (3) explain and analyze the key information contained in a primary source document.

Course Objectives

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.

Required Textbooks & Other Resources or Links

- Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty! An American History, Vol. 1, Seagull* (Fourth Edition) ISBN: 9780393920307
Note: You may use a hardcopy or digital version. You may also use a newer edition.
- There will also be required additional readings and resources posted in Canvas:
<https://imperial.instructure.com/login/canvas>

Course Grading Based on Course Objectives

The quantity of assignments and the listed point values are subject to change. Changes will appear on Canvas. Extra credit assignments will not be given on an individual basis. **Please do not email me at the end of the semester asking to have your final grade rounded up.** Here is a look at the course assignments and grading scale:

Course Assignments	Grading Scale		
Discussion Boards	5 x 25*	100 points	A: 100 – 90.0%
Exams	2 x 50-100	200 points	B: 89.9 – 80.0%
Short Papers	3 x 50^	100 points	C: 79.9 – 70.0%
Quizzes	7 x 15#	90 points	D: 69.9 – 60.0%
Student Bio	1 x 10@	10 points	F: 59.9 – 0%

* Your lowest score will be automatically dropped by Canvas.

^ If a student submits all three then the first will be considered extra credit.

Students may take each quiz twice. Also, your lowest score will be automatically dropped by Canvas.

@Failure to submit this assignment by the end of the third day of the semester may result in being dropped from the course.

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.

Students should be aware that all written assignments in this class may be scanned for plagiarism or the use of AI in Canvas. The use of AI in this course is strictly prohibited. Students found using any AI tool to potentially enhance their writing without my permission may be given a zero grade on the assignment in question. The use of tools like Microsoft Word or Google Docs to write papers and

run spell-check are encouraged and will not result in an automatic zero grade.

Course Requirements and Instructional Methods

Instructional Methods: This is an asynchronous online course. This means we will not be meeting as a class at a specific time or place. Instead, course materials and assignments will be posted in Canvas modules to be completed at a time of your own choosing within the given time parameters. Lectures will typically be in video form and will often include information not covered in your assigned readings. Students will be given access to modules with tasks to complete approximately every one to two weeks. During the semester students should carefully read each module details page (they can be found at the top of each module) for information on assignments, regularly check Canvas for announcements, and attend Zoom office hours if in need of additional assistance. **Note:** During the first week of the semester students should review all the published information found on the course homepage and in Module 1. Here are some more important details about the course:

- All writing assignments must be submitted on Canvas. Do not email me your work unless I have given you prior approval.
- All assignments must be submitted in a PDF or Word.doc format. **Note:** If you use Google Docs to write your papers you should save your work as a PDF or a Word file before uploading to Canvas. Submitting your assignments in another format may result in a zero. If you do not have access to Word or Google Docs at home then I recommend using the IVC library computers on campus to complete course assignments.
- All submissions must cite using Chicago Style to receive full credit. (See the Chicago Citation Guide on Canvas for more details.) You may use another citation format for partial credit. A failure to cite your information may result in a zero grade.
- Students may only use assigned materials in this course. The use of unassigned materials will result in an automatic zero grade.
- **Plagiarism, the copying of information from the internet, a similarity score more than 40%, or the use of outside or online sources is not allowed and will result in a zero. Also, as stated above, the use of AI is strictly prohibited and may result in submissions receiving a zero grade.**
- All assigned readings and lectures are expected to be completed during that of the assigned module week(s).
- Grading rubrics have been attached to written assignments. I highly recommend students review these rubrics before and after submitting an assignment. If a student does not understand a component on the rubric, it's their responsibility to attend office hours for clarification.
- Assignment due dates are subject to change. Students should carefully check all **due dates** and **close dates** as they might not be the same. Assignments will not be accepted after a close date has passed.
- **Note:** All History 120 and 121 courses at Imperial Valley College have a writing requirement. Students can expect to write a minimum ten total pages over the course in the semester. To meet this requirement students will be assigned the following assignments:

Discussion Boards (DBs): Modules will typically consist of a discussion board assignment. Each of these assignments will be worth 25 points. Students are expected to thoroughly answer each given question(s) using cited evidence from as many module sources as possible. Below is a basic scoring breakdown of the DB assignments.

- **How do I score 25 points each week?**
DB post 21 points: You must answer the presented question(s). Answers to the DB should be thorough and well thought out. Submissions must meet the given minimum word count and include cited direct quotes and indirect quotes/details that demonstrate your understanding of the module materials. These quotes must be cited using Chicago Style footnotes at the bottom of your original post for full credit. You can find information for properly citing information in Module 1 on Canvas.
- **DB peer responses (2 pts each)**
The aim of peer responses is to facilitate a good discussion and to help your classmates better understand the presented material. You must respond to at least two of your fellow students' posts to receive full credit. Your peer responses must be posted before the assignment closes on Canvas. Peer responses must be thorough and well thought out. "Nice," and "I

completely agree,” are not proper responses and will result in a point deduction. There is not a word count requirement for peer responses, however, good responses should be a meaty paragraph and when needed include citations from the course materials. Feel free to respond to as many of your peers as you would like as this will help to facilitate a good discussion. However, if more than five students have already responded to post, please respond to another. **Note:** The Netiquette guidelines (listed below) are in effect, so be courteous and professional because I will not tolerate disrespectful behavior in this course.

Also...here are some other things to know about the DB assignments:

- I will not open a DB early for a single student.
- Students must submit their responses before viewing or responding to their classmates. **Do not attempt to double-post, post an incomplete response, or edit your submissions because doing so will result in a zero.**
- You may not submit your initial response and your peer responses on the same day for full credit. **Note:** You can submit your original post and peer responses on the same day for partial credit, which I recommend if you’re having a busy week as partial credit is better than no credit.
- Unless noted differently on Canvas students can expect DBs to be due on the last Friday and close on the last Sunday of their module.
- Your lowest DB score will be automatically dropped by Canvas. This means students do not need to submit all the DB assignments to receive full credit. Dropped scores are typically marked with an “X” in a student’s gradebook.
- Never include the given questions in your post or double-space your DB responses as this is more difficult to read.

Exams: There will be two exams. Each will be worth between 50 and 100 points. Exams will primarily cover lecture material but may also feature questions from your textbook and the Canvas modules. Exams may consist of an essay, short identification, multiple choice, and/or matching questions. I recommend students take notes on every key term posted on each module details page as these terms will appear on both quizzes and exams. The final exam will not be cumulative. I will not allow a make-up examination except in instances in which a student has a documented medical emergency.

Quizzes: There will be at least six quizzes based on your module materials and one syllabus quiz. Each quiz is worth up to 15 points. Quizzes are intended to give me a sense of whether you are critically thinking about the assigned material. You may take each quiz twice. If you take the quiz more than once your second attempt score will be kept. You can find further details on these quizzes on Canvas. Your lowest quiz score of the semester will be automatically dropped by Canvas.

Student Introduction: You are required to write or film a short biography. Your submission must be posted to the “Student Bio” discussion board by the third day of the semester, or you may be dropped from the course. You are required to respond to at least one of your peers to receive full credit. This post is worth up to 10 points.

Short Papers: There will be three short paper assignments. These papers will analyze historical films, podcasts, news stories, and/or primary source documents. Students need to submit at least two over the course of the semester. Each submission will be worth up to 50 points. If a student submits all three short paper opportunities, **then Paper 1 will be considered extra credit.** This means students will have the potential of earning up to 50 points of extra credit. Assignment details for each paper will be posted in your modules. Students should expect each short paper to be about two or three pages in total length. **Note:** Information covered in these assignments will appear on either Exam 1 or Exam 2.

Please follow the following guidelines for all Short Paper assignments:

- Include your name, the date, the name of the course, and your document’s total word count single-spaced in the top left corner.
- The title/headline of your paper should be 12-point Times-New Roman centered type and include the topic of the documents, artifact, and/or film being analyzed. (**Note:** Don’t just say “Short Paper”.)
- Body text must be 12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced, and the document must have one-inch margins.

- Unless directed differently on Canvas, answer the given questions individually in their own numbered paragraph. For example: 1 or 2.
- To receive full credit students should include cited evidence from all the given materials for each Short Paper in their response.

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. Per IVC, students can expect to produce from ten to fifteen pages of written work in this course.

Course Policies

- **Unassigned Materials:** The use of unassigned materials is not allowed and will result in a zero grade.
- **Use of AI:** See the section above on Academic Honesty, and the section below on Academic dishonesty.
- **Disruptive Students:** Students who disrupt or interfere with a class may be sent out of the room and told to meet with the Campus Disciplinary Officer before returning to continue with coursework. Disciplinary procedures will be followed as outlined in the [General Catalog](#).
- **What is Netiquette?:** Netiquette is internet manners, online etiquette, and digital etiquette all rolled into one word. Basically, netiquette is a set of rules for behaving properly online. Students are to comply with the following rules of netiquette: (1) identify yourself, (2) include a subject line, (3) avoid sarcasm, (4) respect others' opinions and privacy, (5) acknowledge and return messages promptly, (6) copy with caution, (7) do not spam or junk mail, (8) be concise, (9) use appropriate language, (10) use appropriate emoticons (emotional icons) to help convey meaning, and (11) use appropriate intensifiers to help convey meaning [do not use ALL CAPS or multiple exclamation marks (!!!!)].
- **Academic Dishonesty:** Academic honesty in the advancement of knowledge requires that all students and instructors respect the integrity of one another's work and recognize the important of acknowledging and safeguarding intellectual property. 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.
- **First 48 hours:** Students must log into Canvas with the first 48 hours of the semester. Failure to do so may result in being dropped from the course. Students that have been dropped for not logging into the course within the first 48 hours may email the instructor to rejoin the course
- **On Attendance:** 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.

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

The following course schedule is subject to change without prior notice. Changes will appear on Canvas.

Modules	Topics	Textbook Reading	Course Notes
1	Module 1: Opens on 2/17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course Introduction 	Note: Be sure to acquire the course textbook. I recommend renting a digital copy if you have not acquired the book before the start of the semester.	Student Bio: Assignment due date 2/19, assignment closes 2/28. Note: Failure to submit by the second day may result in being dropped from the course. Intro Quiz: Due 2/28, closes 2/28
2	Module 2: Opens on 2/23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before 1492 After 1492 Beginning of English North America 	Chapters 1 and 2	DB 1: Due 3/6, Closes 3/9 Paper 1: Due 3/13, Closes 3/20 Quiz 1: Due 4/7, Closes 4/7
3	Module 3: Opens on 3/9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English in New England North America in Crisis 	Chapter 3	DB 2: Due 3/20, Closes 3/23 Quiz 2: Due 4/7, Closes 4/7
4	Module 4: Opens on 3/23 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New English Colonies Early American Slavery The Revolutionary Era 	Chapters 4, 5, 6	Paper 2: Due 4/17, Closes 5/1 Quiz 3: Due 4/7, Closes 4/7 Exam 1: Opens 4/9, Due 4/14, Closes 4/14
5	Module 5: Opens on 4/13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age of Passion War of 1812 	Chapters 7 and 8	DB 3: Due 4/24, Closes 4/27 Quiz 4: Due 6/9, Closes 6/9 Paper 3: Due 5/10, Closes 5/30



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6	Module 6: Opens on 4/27 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Market Revolution• Consequences of Westward Expansion and Modernization	Chapters 9 and 10	DB 4: Due 5/8, Closes 5/11 Quiz 5: Due 6/9, Closes 6/9
7	Module 7: Opens on 5/11 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peculiar Institution• Social Movements	Chapters 11 and 12	DB 5: Due 5/22, Closes 5/26 Quiz 6: Due 6/9, Closes 6/9
8	Module 8: Opens on 6/1 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• American Civil War• Exam 2	Chapter 14	Exam 2: Opens 6/11, Due 6/14, Closes 6/14