

HS 211: United States history until 1877
Summer 2014 -- Online

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HS 211 is a survey of the first half of the history of the United States. It covers a lot of material, and because summer courses run for only five weeks, it will be an especially intense experience. We will be focusing on the most important developments in United States history, with an eye to understanding processes much more than the memorization of facts, as important as those are. What that means is that you will be assessed primarily on how well you can explain “how” and “why” questions rather than “who” or “what” questions. Thus, a question like “why did the thirteen colonies rebel against Great Britain” and “why did the Union win the Civil War” will be given greater weight than “who wrote the Declaration of Independence” and questions like that. You will be expected to learn the important events and figures in early American history, but I am interested in distinguishing the truly important ones from those of secondary significance. Don’t try to memorize every event, ever date provided in the text and in the lectures.

The content of the course is offered entirely online, although the midterm and final exams must be taken in-person. Because they are compressed in time, summer courses are a lot more work-intensive than fall and spring courses – we are covering roughly 200 years of US history in five weeks. So you should be prepared to do a couple of hours of work every day, or to manage your time carefully.

Course objectives:

- If you complete this course successfully, you should have a strong understanding of the most significant events, figures, and movements in early U.S. history, along with an understanding of the causes and effects of the important developments of that history;
- You should be able to synthesize different kinds of information: to integrate factual data (names, dates, events) with arguments about causes, effects, consequences, and significance; and to bring together secondary sources (the textbook narrative and the slide shows) along with primary sources (maps, images, and documents) to appreciate how historians interpret the past;
- You should understand the task of learning about history less as one of rote memorization than as one of creative interpretation; likewise, you should appreciate that history is not just the story of battles or presidential election, but one of social, cultural, and economic development.
- If we do the three previous bullet points successfully, you should emerge from this course with sharper critical thinking skills, an appreciation for the global dimensions of early American history, and improved writing skills.

Required Text:

John Murrin and other authors, *Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People*, Vol. 1: To 1877. Concise 6th edition (Boston: Wadsworth, 2014) ISBN 978-1-133-94773-8.

Course Requirements:

1. Two exams, a midterm and final, not cumulative. Administered online May 23 and June 12. 15% each [30%]

2. Five reaction papers (one per week, 10% each) [50%]
3. Participation [20%]

Assignments:

1. Exams. The two exams will consist of two sections – one of 25 multiple-choice and short-answer questions, and another in an essay format. The exams cover all the materials we use in the class: the text, including visuals (maps, paintings, etc.) and the slide shows.
2. Reaction papers. At the end of every chapter in *Liberty, Equality, Power*, you will find a one-page section labeled “Discovery.” These sections pose a question discussed in the chapter, the answer to which draws on the text and an image or two embedded in the chapter. You must answer one of these questions each week, from whatever chapter you choose (it must be one assigned for that week), in a 2-3 page, double-spaced essay. These essays will be assessed by the quality and accuracy of the answer. Grammar, spelling, style and overall appearance (don’t be sloppy) will also be taken into consideration. These must be uploaded to the dropbox on Blackboard by 3 pm on the Friday of each week, with the exception of weeks two and five, when the weeks close with exams. In those cases, the essays must be posted by **Wednesday at 3 pm**.
3. Participation. Participation is a very significant part of the grade for this course. To participate in this class, you will log onto Blackboard to join the weekly discussions in the class forum. Participation may take a number of forms, but one is absolutely mandatory: every day, I will ask a question from the reading assigned for that week (on a typical week, with four chapters assigned, I’ll ask a question on the first chapter on Monday, the second on Tuesday – you get the picture). You should answer that question and comment on at the response of at least one of your classmates. Engage in participation thoughtfully – don’t wait until Friday night and try to cram in your participation at the last minute. To receive participation credit, you must participate at least three different days during the week. The more, and more thoughtfully, you participate, the higher your participation grade will be. You may also ask comprehension questions about the slide shows, the text (words and images), and about the reaction paper assignments. **Be cool to everybody online.** This means be civil – don’t engage in the rudeness or other kinds of unsocial behavior that online communication seems to invite. Be respectful and courteous to me and to your classmates at all times. Also, strive in the online forums to write in complete sentences and proper American English instead of text-speak. For serious violations of this rule, see the anti-bias statement, below.

Structure of the class:

Because this course is online, I have tried to make it as flexible as possible. Besides the rules I have laid out above, observe the following. All slide shows are available on the Blackboard under “course documents.” These slide shows are accompanied by audio, so make sure you have functioning speakers on your PC. Additionally, I have included a video where I go over the syllabus in detail, so make sure you watch that, as well.

Statement for students with disabilities: In accordance with federal law, if you have a documented disability (Learning, Psychological, Sensory, Physical, or Medical) you may be eligible to request accommodations from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). Please contact the Director, Allison West at (216) 397-4967 or come to the office located in room 7A, in the Garden Level of the Administration Building. Please keep in mind that accommodations are not retroactive so it is best to register at the beginning of each semester. Only accommodations approved by SSD will be recognized in the classroom. Please contact SSD if you have further questions.

Anti-bias statement: At John Carroll University, we are committed to fostering a respectful and inclusive campus community. Incidents of bias which are intentional or unintentional actions against someone on the basis of an actual or perceived aspect of their identity, including actions that occur in classrooms and on online forums, including email and texts, can and should be reported on the Bias Incident Reporting Form, accessible at <http://sites.jcu.edu/bias/>. Questions about bias can be directed to members of the Bias Response Team: Lauren Bowen, Associate Academic Vice President (bowen@jcu.edu), Bud Stuppy, Director of Human Resources (cstuppy@jcu.edu) or Danielle Carter, Director of the Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion (dcarter@jcu.edu).

Academic Honesty: According to the Undergraduate Handbook, 2011-13, Academic honesty, expected of every student, is essential to the process of education and to upholding high ethical standards. Cheating, including plagiarism, inappropriate use of technology, or any other kind of unethical behavior, will subject the student to severe academic penalties, including dismissal. All work submitted for evaluation in a course, including tests, term papers, and computer programs, must represent only the work of the student unless indicated otherwise. Material taken from the work of others must be acknowledged. Materials submitted to fulfill requirements in one course may not be submitted in another course without prior approval of the instructor(s). Concerns about the propriety of obtaining outside assistance and acknowledging sources should be addressed to the instructor of the course before the work commences and as necessary as the work proceeds.

Any violation of this policy will result in the assignment of a "0" (zero) grade for the assignment in question. The research and the writing must be your own. Don't cut and paste from materials you find anywhere, including the internet. Your work in this class must be original (not having appeared before, anywhere, in any form) and authentic (your own work and nobody else's).

Course Calendar:

May 12-16

- Syllabus introduction video
- Chapters 1-4 in *Liberty, Equality, Power*
- Slide shows: "Atlantic World in the Age of Discovery" (chapter one); "Early British Colonies" (chapter two); "The British Colonies to 1700" (chapter three); "The British Colonies, 1670-1754" (chapter four).

May 19-23

- Chapters 5-7 in *Liberty, Equality, Power*.
- Slide Shows: "The British Colonies, 1670-1754," chapters five **and** six (note: this is the same slide show for chapter four – it's a long slide show); "Early American Republic Social" and "Early American Republic Political" (chapter seven).
- **Online midterm exam: May 23. Three-hour window from 12-3 pm.**

May 26-30

- Chapters 8-10 in *Liberty, Equality, Power*.
- Slide Show: "Early American Culture and Society," chapters eight, nine, ten **and** eleven and twelve, next week

June 2-6

- Chapters 11-14 in *Liberty, Equality, Power*.
- Slide shows: "Early American Culture and Society," chapters eleven and twelve; "Beginnings of Sectional Conflict" and "Sectional Conflict, Part 2."

June 9-12

- Chapters 15-17 in *Liberty, Equality, Power*.
- Slide show: "Civil War and Reconstruction."
- **Online final exam, June 12. Three-hour window from 12-3 pm.**