

CH 203 American Experiences and Constitutional Change

Wintermester 2019

Number of Credits

3

Instructor

Dr. Lara Hansen

Catalog Description

CH 203: American Experiences and Constitutional Change provides an overview of ideas, institutions, and identities in America from the colonial period to the present. The course incorporates material from a variety of disciplines to explore concepts such as liberty, democracy, individualism, federalism, civil rights, environmentalism, industrialization, urbanization and cultural diversity. This course satisfies the U.S. and Nevada constitution requirements. (CO5, CO8)

Required Textbooks/Materials

The following texts are required material in this course:

Five Hundred Years. Scott Casper, et al. Pearson 2016

Other online materials I make available

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successfully completing CH 203, students will be able to

- express ideas clearly and persuasively, using relevant evidence to support their arguments (CO1);
- analyze primary source texts with attention to content, historical and cultural context, and rhetorical techniques (CO3, CO5);
- trace the sources and development of American intellectual traditions and cultural institutions, with attention to the diversity of experiences and voices that shaped the nation (CO5, CO8);
- identify how significant artistic and cultural movements, as well as scientific and technological developments influenced Americans' changing sense of themselves and their society (CO5, CO8);

- connect the beliefs, values, and actions of past generations of Americans to contemporary conditions in the United States (CO5, CO8); and
- identify the historical origins, philosophical foundations, core principles, and evolution of the United States and Nevada Constitutions (CO5, CO8).

First Week of Materials/Assignments

The following schedule is subject to change:

- January 2:* Introduction: review syllabus, sign up for presentation
 Lecture/Discussion: What is American culture, how do you characterize American identity?
 Break
 Lecture/Discussion: Native and Colonial History
 Sources: de Las Casas (500Y 20)
 Winthrop (500Y 24)
 Massachusetts General Court (500Y 234)
 John Smith (500Y 342)
- January 3:* Lecture/Discussion: US Constitution
 Break
 Lecture/Discussion: Bill of Rights
 Sources: Constitutional Documents (online)
 "What is an American" (500Y 107)
- January 4:* Lecture/Discussion: Early United States, Expansion and Identity
 Break
 Lecture/Discussion: Thoreau
 Sources: John L. O'Sullivan (500Y 31)
 Bilboa (500Y 35)
 Lili'uokalani (500Y 39)
 Thomas Jefferson (500Y 346-355, two selections)
 Selections from Walden (online)
 "Civil Disobedience" (500Y 249)
- January 7:* Lecture/Discussion: Slavery in America
 Break
 Lecture/Discussion: Abolitionists
 Sources: "Acts Defining Slavery" (500Y 104)
 De Tocqueville (500Y 120)

Course Details

This course explores the formation and development of American cultures from the pre-colonial period to the present. Students are invited to build upon previous knowledge and challenge accepted perceptions concerning abstract concepts such as: American identity,

entitlement, ownership, progress, individualism, and social justice. Required course material will include assigned readings as well as film and documentary screening. Course activities will include lecture and discussion, a midterm and final exam, one essay, and a presentation on a subject of the student's choosing.

Grade Breakdown

The point distribution for the course is:

Assignment	Points
Participation	100
Midterm Exam	100
Final Exam	100
Final Essay	100
Nevada Constitution Quiz	50
US Constitution Quiz	50
Presentation	50
<i>Total</i>	<i>550</i>

The percentage distribution for the course is:

Letter	Percentage
A	94–100
A-	90–93
B+	87–89
B	84–86
B-	80–83
C+	77–79
C	74–76
C-	70–73
D+	67–69
D	65–66
D-	62–64
F	below 62