HIST 101: United States History to 1877

Professor Cameron B. Strang

Course Description:

This course covers American history from the colonial period to the end of Reconstruction in 1877. During this era, Britain and other European empires established colonies in North America, some of Britain’s colonies declared independence and became the United States of America, and the United States consolidated power in North America but nearly fell apart over white Americans’ right to enslave black Americans. We will focus on a set of tensions that were at the heart of early American society. These include 1) the interconnected expansions of freedom and oppression in a nation that was both a republic and an empire; 2) the power of government and the power of the people as envisioned and applied in the U.S. constitution; and 3) the development of different understandings of “American” identity—including regional, racial, gendered, and historical conceptions of what it meant to be American—that were often in conflict with each other.

As an introductory history course, HIST 101 teaches students how people, cultures, and societies can be understood by studying the past. Historical scholarship involves systematic enquiry into the lives of individuals, communities, regions, and nations through finding, interpreting, and analyzing written and cultural sources. These sources help us to theorize and reach reasoned conclusions about why people acted as they did and how their actions affected historical developments. Researching past events and the lives of people who lived through them thus generates important insights that can help us to understand the world we live in today. In addition to learning about the major developments that shaped early US history, students taking this course will develop broadly applicable investigative and interpretive skills including:

- Critical thinking and questioning of primary sources
- Critical thinking and questioning if secondary sources
- Historical writing projects

Core Objectives:

This course satisfies Core Objectives 6 and 8 of the Silver Core Curriculum.

- CO6. Cultures, Societies, and Individuals. Students will learn how to systematically analyze human social conditions (e.g., individuals, groups, communities, and cultures). In particular, students will learn to observe, theorize, model, experiment, and/or interpret as a means of inquiring into human social relations.
- CO8. Constitution. Students will demonstrate familiarity with the origins, history, and essential elements of the Constitutions of the United States and Nevada, as well as the evolution of American institutions and ideals.
In addition, HIST 101 develops the skills described in Core Objectives 1 and 3. These objectives are reinforced throughout the curriculum in other courses students take to fulfill core and major requirement.

- **CO1. Effective Composition and Communication.** Students will be able to effectively compose written, oral, and multimedia texts for a variety of scholarly, professional, and creative purposes.
- **CO3. Critical Analysis and Use of Information.** Students will be critical consumers of information, able to engage in systematic research processes, frame questions, read critically, and apply observational and experimental approaches to obtain information.

**Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Correlation to Core Objectives**

Students successfully completing this course will be able to

1. Analyze and interpret primary sources on early America through class discussions and written assignments. (CO1, CO3, CO6)
2. Analyze and understand the U.S. and Nevada Constitutions, their development, and their impact on U.S. society, including the Civil War (CO3, CO6, CO8)
3. Analyze and clearly explain the argument, main points, and use of evidence in secondary sources, through class discussion and written assignments. (CO3, CO6)
4. Analyze the historical experiences and interactions among diverse groups of Americans through discussion, sources, and assignments. (CO6)

You may notice that the abbreviation SLO followed by a series of numbers appears on some course materials. This simply means that the lecture, discussion, assignment, or other activity offers opportunities for students to practice skills related to the learning outcomes listed above.

**Required Readings:**


Other readings listed on the syllabus are available on blackboard.

**Requirements and Grade Distribution:**

- Class Participation: 10%
- Paper 1, Primary Source Analysis: 10%
- Paper 2, Primary Source Analysis: 10%
• Paper 3, Book Review: 15%
• Paper 4, Change/Continuity essay: 20%
• Midterm Exam: 15%
• Final Exam: 20%

The Plus/Minus system of grading applies in this course.

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Class Participation: Participation and questions in class are greatly encouraged and expected. This is primarily a lecture course but we will devote time to discussing the primary and/or secondary source readings each and every week. If you are not present for the discussions, you get a zero for that week’s participation grades. (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)

Midterm Exam: The midterm exam will be held in class. It will consist of three ID questions and one longer, 3-5 paragraph essay. For the ID questions, you will be given five questions from which you can select any three to answer. Each of these ID questions should be answered with a one-paragraph essay. (SLOs 2, 4)

Final Exam: The final exam will be held outside of normal class hours and you will have three hours to complete it. It will consist of five ID questions and two longer essays, around five paragraphs each. (SLOs 2, 4)

Papers 1 and 2: Primary source analyses. These must be 2-3 pages long. The first will be on Olaudah Equiano’s Interesting Narrative; the second will be on the Constitution. These essays should make an argument: that is, they should make a claim about some aspect of the primary source and support that claim using evidence from the primary source itself and other secondary sources (which can include the lectures and the textbook). We will discuss what makes a strong essay in more detail in class, but the paper should have a clear thesis statement, should analyze the content, purpose, and significance of the source, and situate the source in its historical context. (SLOs 1, 2, 4)

Paper 3: Book Review: This must be 2-3 pages long. You can chose to write the book review on either of the two assigned books (Facing East from Indian Country or The South vs. The South). Although book reviews are short, they are difficult to write: they require you to be clear, concise, and to get to the point right away. Your review should include the following elements: a brief overview of what the book is about, a summary of the book’s main argument, and your evaluation of the book’s overall persuasiveness. (SLOs 3, 4)

Paper 4: Change and Continuity in early America: This assignment asks the question “Is the history of _________ in early America a story of change over time or continuity?” The “blank” can be any of the following: slavery, religion, gender roles, the relationship between Indians and Europeans, and the relationship between local and national governments. By “early America,” I mean the period covered in this course. There is no single “correct” response for any of these topics; the purpose is to think critically about these issues and make an argument for
either change or continuity. You should support your argument with evidence from primary and secondary readings, not just the lectures. This paper should be 5-7 pages long. It is due at the beginning of our last meeting of the semester. (SLOs 1, 3, 4).

** All papers are due in class on paper on the dates stipulated; 10% of the total possible grade will be deducted for each day an assignment is late.

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A Note on Sources: The Internet is a fantastic tool for historians, but it is also a dangerous one. It is a great way to get easy access to some basic information, such as the date a law was passed or who was president in 1855. But Google searches, Wikipedia, and other such sources are not—I REPEAT, NOT—reliable or acceptable sources for historical interpretations. I will not accept most websites as valid sources in your citations. There are some exceptions; if you think that you have identified a valid website on which to base your historical research—most of which will involve primary sources—you must run it by me for approval.

In general, you should use primary sources, scholarly books, or scholarly articles when conducting research. There are many excellent scholarly sources available through UNR’s Knowledge Center and the Knowledge Center’s online options. For example, access JSTOR—a word-searchable archive of scholarly articles—for first-rate scholarship on a huge array of topics. The Knowledge Center also offers access to a wide variety of online primary source databases that can be browsed through its “A-Z Database List.” These sources could contribute to an enormous array of research projects.

Lastly, I strongly encourage you to contact the History Department’s liaisons at the Knowledge Center, Patrick Ragains (ragains@unr.edu) or Donnelly Curtis (dcurtis@unr.edu). They know sources that you can access at UNR for many of the research topics you might choose. Part of the secret of doing good research is avoiding making extra work for yourself—let people who have answers help you!!!

Class Reminders:

Cell-phones and Computers: Please remember to turn off your cell phones during class. You are welcome to use a computer to take notes during lectures; however, it should not be used to check your email, your Facebook account, or play games, etc. while in class. These activities not only distract you, but also distract everyone around you. Please be courteous and wait until our class is over to engage in such activities.

Packing Up: Please refrain from packing books and other items until the instructor formally ends the class.

Email Correspondence: Please make sure that you identify yourself when you send a message to me, as well as use proper salutations (Dear Prof. Strang, ).

Students with Disabilities: The University of Nevada, Reno is committed to equal opportunity in education for all students, including those with documented physical disabilities or documented learning disabilities. If you have a documented disability and will be requiring assistance, please contact me and the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.
**Taping Class:** Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may have been given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

**Academic Assistance:** The Tutoring Center (784-6801 or www.unr.edu/tutoring-center) and University Writing Center (784-6030 or http://www.unr.edu/writing-center) are available to assist you.

**Quality Guidelines for All Written Assignments**

A is an exceptional grade reserved for work of exceptional quality. This grade is for essays that have all the qualities of the B essay, and in addition are well written and display analytical skills and/or originality. The last two criteria are extremely important. A essays do not merely summarize material from the readings or lectures. In addition, ideas must be expressed clearly, no matter how insightful or interesting they are. B denotes work that is above average in quality. It demonstrates that the student knows and understands the material covered in class and being analyzed, and that s/he is capable of synthesizing it into a competent essay. It is accurate, detailed, and well organized, with an introduction, an argument, and a conclusion. Usually, either writing problems or a lack of analysis is what prevents a B essay from being an A.

C is given for work that is average. The student shows familiarity with the material, answers the central questions posed, and is mostly accurate, but lacks the sophistication of either the B or A student. The C essay might make general points but fail to support them with specific evidence or details, or it might have problems with organization or writing style. Sometimes a C essay is merely a collection of facts, with no coherent theme or thesis.

D is given for work that is inadequate. It omits important points, contains more than a few inaccuracies, and is badly organized. It is does not answer the central questions posed in the assignment. It suggests one of three things: 1) the student has barely been paying attention to the course, 2) s/he has problems understanding the material, 3) s/he has problems expressing ideas in writing.

**Style Requirements for All Written Assignments**

1. Utilize 1-inch margins on all sides. Use 12 point type. The print must be dark; print not easily readable will be rejected. Please use normal sized font (like Times New Roman).
2. Assignments should be double spaced (except in the case of a lengthy direct quotation; see #4 below).
3. Direct quotations should be used sparingly to emphasize a particular point. Papers or essays that consist of a string of long quotations from the text without any (or only cursory) analysis will be returned as unsatisfactory.
4. Single space and double indent quotations over 4 lines in length.
5. Remember: do not plagiarize. (See further comments below).
6. Number all pages.
7. Do not add an extra space between paragraphs.
8. Please remember that one or two sentences do not make a paragraph: a paragraph should begin with a topic sentence (a sentence that makes a claim). The rest of the paragraph should be devoted to supporting that claim.
9. Please use spell check and proof for grammatical errors such as sentence fragments and run-on sentences. It is true that this is not an English grammar course; but, sloppy writing distracts from otherwise interesting ideas and intriguing critical analysis.
10. Use Chicago Style footnote citations for primary and secondary sources. For guidelines on proper citation format, see: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is a serious form of academic misconduct and it will not be tolerated in this class. Plagiarism, according to the UNR catalog, is defined as “submitting the language, ideas, thoughts or work of another as one's own.” The “work of another” includes any material used in your essays (e.g. books, articles, internet sites, documents, lecture notes, or handouts from this and other courses, etc.) Acknowledge all such material – even if you paraphrase it or summarize certain sections and don't quote it directly.

Please note that Plagiarism in HIST 101 will result in a grade of F for the course.

How to Avoid Plagiarism

A. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of somebody else’s words or ideas.

B. When does a writer need to document or cite information?

1. When using or referring to somebody else’s words or ideas from a magazine, book, newspaper, song, TV program, movie, Web page, computer program, letter, advertisement, or any other medium;
2. When using information gained through interviewing another person;
3. When copying the exact words or a “unique phrase” from somewhere;
4. When reprinting any diagrams, illustrations, charts and pictures; and,
5. When using ideas that others have given you in conversations, lectures or email.

- Quotations must be identical to the original and must be cited.
- Paraphrasing involves putting a passage or information from source material into your own words. Paraphrasing must be cited.
- Summarizing involves putting the main idea(s) or points of another author into your own words. Summarizing also must be cited.

[Information taken from owl.english.purdue.edu.]

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Schedule:

Part 1: The Colonial Era

- Week 1 (SLO 4)
  - Assignment: None.
  - Tues: Introduction
  - Thurs: Africa, Europe, and the Americas on the Eve of Encounter

- Week 2 (SLO 1, 4)
  - Assignment: Created Equal, Chap. 1; Excerpts from Cabeza de Vaca.
  - Tues: The Columbian Exchange
  - Thurs: The Spanish and Portuguese in America
• Week 3 (SLO 1, 3, 4)
  o Tues: Early English and French Expansion in North America
  o Thurs: European-Indian Encounters in North America

• Week 4 (SLO 1, 4)
  o Assignment: *Created Equal*, Chaps. 2 and 3; Winthrop, “Model of Christian Charity;” and excerpts from “Journal of Reverend Charles Woodmason;” “Pedro Naranjo Relates the Pueblo Revolt.”
  o Tues: The Chesapeake and New England in the 17th Century: a Comparison
  o Thurs: The Spanish Empire in Florida and the Southwest

• Week 5 (SLO 1, 4)
  o Assignment: *Created Equal*, Chap. 4; excerpts from Olaudah Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*—[First primary source analysis due]
  o Tues: Four-Fifths: Africans in the New World
  o Thurs: Slave Societies in British America

Part 2: The Era of the Constitution

• Week 6 (SLO 2, 3, 4)
  o Assignment: *Created Equal*, Chap. 5; Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country*, pp. 110-253. [Richter Book Review Due]
  o Tues: English Constitutionalism and Colonial Society
  o Thurs: Nativism and Empire: The Seven Years War and its Aftermath

• Week 7 (SLO 1, 2)
  o Assignment: *Created Equal*, Chap. 6 & 7; The Declaration of Independence
  o Tues: English Constitutionalism and the Ideological Origins of Revolution
  o Thurs: Violence and Revolution

• Week 8 (SLO 1, 2)
  o Assignment: [for Thursday]: *Created Equal*, Chap. 8; excerpts from the Federalist Papers
  o Tues: MID-TERM EXAM
  o Thurs: Competing Political Visions in the New Republic

• Week 9 (SLO 1, 2)
  o Assignment: *Created Equal*, Chap. 9; The United States Constitution; The Nevada Constitution
  o Tues: Crafting the Constitution [Second primary source analysis due]
  o Thurs: Comparing Constitutions

• Week 10 (SLO 1, 2, 4)
Assignment: *Created Equal*, Chap. 11; Thomas Jefferson to William Henry Harrison, Feb. 27, 1803; Andrew Jackson, State of the Union Address, Dec. 6, 1830; excerpts from the WPA Slave Narratives, available at http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snvoices00.html.

- Tues: Whites and Indians in the Jacksonian Era
- Thurs: Slavery and Race in the United States

**Part 3: The Antebellum and Civil War Eras**

- **Week 11 (SLO 1)**
  - Assignment: *Created Equal*, Chap. 10; excerpts from Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*
  - Tues: Empire for Liberty: US Expansion to 1842
  - Thurs: The Market Revolution

- **Week 12 (SLO 1, 4)**
  - Assignment: *Created Equal*, Chap. 12; extracts from Ramón Alcaraz, “The Other Side”
  - Tues: Making Mexico American
  - Thurs: Religion, Revival, Reform

- **Week 13 (SLO 2, 3, 4)**
  - Assignment: *Created Equal*, Chap. 13; Freehling, *The South vs. The South*, pp. 1-82
  - Tues: Proslavery Ideology and Abolitionism
  - Thurs: Slavery, Expansion, and Challenging the Constitution

- **Week 14 (SLO 2, 3, 4)**
  - Tues: African Americans and the Cause and Result of the Civil War
  - Thurs: Death, Life, and Nature during the Civil War

- **Week 15 (SLO 1, 2, 4)**
  - Assignment: *Created Equal*, Chap. 15; Mississippi Black Code, Nov. 1865; Elias Hill, “Testimony before Congressional Committee Investigating the Ku Klux Klan” (1872).
  - Tues: Reconstruction and Constitutional Change
  - Thurs: Course Wrap-up and Exam Review

- **Final Exam**: Time and location TBA