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### HSTA 101H.50B: American History I

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# HSTA 101.50: American History I (Online)

University of Montana, Department of History—Summer 2020  
[Course Moodle](#)



## Instructor and TA Information

**Instructor:** Professor [Kyle G. Volk](#)

**Email:** [kyle.volk@umontana.edu](mailto:kyle.volk@umontana.edu)

- Per UM policy, email communications between students and faculty (including Teaching Assistants and Discussion Leaders) must be conducted via UM email accounts. Please check your official UM email account regularly and use it for all academic correspondence.

**Office Hours:** I am available to meet one-on-one via Zoom. Please email me to make an appointment. I'm eager to get to know you, so please don't hesitate.

**TA/Discussion Leader:** **Jolie Scribner** ([jolie.scribner@umconnect.umt.edu](mailto:jolie.scribner@umconnect.umt.edu))

## Course Description and Goals:

This online course surveys the history of the United States from the opening of the Atlantic World to the post-Civil War era. It provides students with a firm grounding in early American history with which to base future study. Topics include contact and colonization; Atlantic slavery, commerce, and the rise of the British empire; imperial crisis and revolution; the U.S. constitutional founding and the birth of American empire; market revolution and reform; sectionalism, Civil War, and emancipation. Introducing students to what it means to “think historically” and fostering the development of critical thinking skills through the interpretation of primary and secondary sources are key course goals.

## Learning Outcomes:

- An overview of the general narrative, major themes, and key interpretive questions in early American history
- Exposure to key skills of the historical profession, including critical engagement with primary and secondary sources; identifying continuity and change over time; and the development of original, interpretive arguments supported by evidence and analysis
- Enhancement of such cognitive abilities as critical reading, historical thinking, and analytical writing
- Enrichment of communicative abilities, including asking creative, thoughtful questions about sources; exchanging ideas with colleagues; and writing clearly and persuasively about complex issues

## General Education Requirement:

This course satisfies both the Group VI: Historical and Cultural Studies (H) requirement and the Group IX: Democracy & Citizenship (Y) requirement of the University of Montana's General Education Program. To satisfy these two general education requirements, students must earn a C- or better in the course.

### Required Texts (available for purchase at the UM Bookstore or elsewhere):

- Kyle G. Volk and Patrick Mulford O'Connor, eds., *Empire, Capitalism, & Democracy: The Early American Experience* (Cognella, 2018) [ISBN: 978-1516524198]

This book contains the readings and discussion questions you will need for the discussion segments of the course. In addition to the UM Bookstore, you can purchase this book directly from the publisher through the [Cognella website](#). Print and electronic versions are available.

- Randy J. Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar* (Harvard, 2004) [ISBN: 9780674032057]

This book will serve as the basis of our discussions during Week 2, Parts 1 & 2. The material contained within this book will be a major part of the first mid-term exam. In addition to the UM Bookstore, you can also purchase this directly from the publisher or through such online outlets as Amazon.com. Print and electronic versions are available.

- *Twelve Years a Slave* (2013), film directed by Steve McQueen

This modern film will serve as the basis of our discussion during Week 5, Part 2. You will be required to watch this film in advance of our discussion. A DVD version of this film is available at UM's Mansfield Library. Alternatively, you can access, purchase, or rent this film through such online outlets as Amazon.com or Netflix. Be aware that some of these alternate options will come with a slight cost that should be factored in to the overall cost of materials for this course.

### Keys to Success:

- Faithfully view all video lectures. Treat these lectures as though you were in an in-person classroom setting, so diligently take notes on those lecture segments and review your notes after the lecture has concluded.
- Participate actively, intelligently, and respectfully in online discussions. This means posting your own comments as well as reading and engaging with the posts of your classmates and the discussion leader. Neither dominate nor disappear from our online discussions.
- Carefully prepare for the discussion segments of the course. Thoroughly complete assigned readings prior to engaging in discussion. Take time to think about each reading in its specifics, in its entirety, and as it relates to lectures and other course readings. Fully consider the discussion questions ("Fundamentals" and "Analysis and Interpretation") that are included in the Volk/O'Connor (*Empire, Capitalism, and Democracy*) book. Prepare tentative answers in advance of participating in discussions. Identify passages in the sources that support your conclusions.
- Take useful notes while reading and review them prior to online discussions, quizzes, and exams.
- Carefully construct the three essay exams. Seek additional help if needed, but in advance of the due date.

### Course Requirements:

#### 1. Active, Engaged Learning

- A.) View (and take notes on) all of the course's video lecture segments. These segments provide the main content for the course. They will help you succeed in the course's mid-term and final exams as well as in the discussion segments of the course. Failing to view the course's lecture segments will be at your own peril but be advised that the segments you skip may cover a significant portion of the exam. Again, diligent note taking is imperative to your success.

B.) It should go without saying that respectful and courteous behavior (to your classmates, teaching assistants/discussion leaders, and the instructor) is required at all times. In an online course, this is particularly necessary when contributing to our discussion forums. Please engage in fundamentally civil discourse and approach our discussions with an open mind. Incivility will be reflected in your grade.

2. Graded Assignments:

A.) Moodle Tutorial 101 – due Monday, May 11th (part of your quiz/response grade)

B.) Reading Quizzes & Short Reading Responses (20%) – Each week, you will be required to complete short quizzes and/or short reading responses before engaging in the online discussion forums. The goal is to ensure that students are keeping up with the reading and properly preparing for discussion. Students will have unlimited time to complete quizzes, but they should take no more than five minutes to complete.

C.) Discussion Forum Participation (15%) – Participation in our online discussion forums is a critical component of this course. In each section of the course you will be required to contribute a *minimum* number of posts to our discussions. The instructor and discussion leader will assess your work based on quality (and to a lesser extent, the quantity) of your participation. Measures of quality include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Responding directly to the question at hand and/or to your classmates' comments
- Making your own, original responses but also—and importantly—mustering direct and targeted textual evidence (typically, quotations) from the readings to support your claims
- Unpacking, in your own words, the direct textual evidence you muster. In other words, don't simply copy from the documents. Instead, work to show how your textual selection supports the point(s) you are attempting to make.
- Embracing complexity and nuance. When studying and interpreting the past, answers are rarely simple. Work to make clear contributions, but don't shy away from complexity.
- Taking intellectual risks and, when appropriate, suggesting multiple avenues of interpretation (again, grounded in historical evidence). History is rarely cut and dry so don't be afraid to explore more than one possible answer and interpretation.
- Exhibiting a willingness to be persuaded by strong evidence and keen analysis. If you like what your colleague is saying, say so and explain why and/or add support to her/his claims. Take note that it is okay—and often quite good—to change your mind in whole or in part.
- Respectfully disagreeing (or adding wrinkles and complexity), especially by offering alternate interpretations grounded in evidence and analysis. If you aren't persuaded by your colleagues' contributions or think they need more specificity or complexity, say so. But be sure to back up your intervention with evidence and analysis drawn from common readings.

D.) 3 Exams, each corresponding to one of the three sections of the course (20% first mid-term exam; 20% second mid-term exam; 25% final exam—65% total) – Exams are essay based and will require you not only to master the material but to present it in an organized, compelling, and analytical way. As with any college-level history course, we will be assessing your historical knowledge as well as your abilities to think and write. Please note that exams are not cumulative but instead will focus on each individual section of the course (e.g. the “final exam” will focus only on the content presented in the third and final section of the course).

### Academic Honesty:

All students must practice academic honesty. It should go without saying that all the work you do in this course should be your own. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other instances of academic misconduct will result in a failing grade in this course. The academic dean will also be notified and offenses could result in expulsion. All students need to be familiar with UM's [Student Conduct Code](#). If you have questions, please ask the instructor or your teaching assistant before turning in an assignment.

### Students with Disabilities:

Students with documented disabilities will receive reasonable modifications in this course. Your responsibilities are to request them from me with sufficient advance notice and to be prepared to provide verification of disability from Disability Services for Students (DSS). Please contact me by email to discuss the details. For more information, visit the [DSS website](#).

## \*\*\* Schedule of Lectures, Discussions Forums, and Readings \*\*\*

### *Section I: The Opening of the Atlantic World*

#### **WEEK 1, Part 1 (5/11-5/13): Welcome! ~and~ Continental Collisions**

*Before Jumping in to the Course Content, Complete the Following:*

- Thoroughly review the syllabus
- Explore the Course Introduction on the course's [Moodle Page](#)
- Take the Moodle 101 Tutorial and submit certificate of completion
- Upload (if you haven't already) a photo of yourself to your Moodle profile (headshot preferred!)

*Tasks:*

1. View Lecture: The Old "New World" & the Exploratory Impulse, Part 1
2. View Lecture: The Old "New World" & the Exploratory Impulse, Part 2
3. **Read: Volk/O'Connor, *Empire, Capitalism, and Democracy*, ix-2**
4. Participate in Week 1, Part 1 Discussion Forum (after completing the reading). Make your first post by 9am on Tuesday (5/12). The forum will close at 12noon on Wednesday (5/13).
5. View Lecture: Columbian Moment, Columbian Exchange

#### **WEEK 1, Part 2 (5/13-5/15) ~ Colonial Foundations**

*Tasks:*

1. View Lecture: English Colonization & the Starving Time
2. **Read: Volk/O'Connor, *Empire, Capitalism, and Democracy*, 3-12**
3. Take Week 1, Part 2 Quiz (available 6am on Wednesday to 6pm on Thursday)
4. Participate in Week 1, Part 2 Discussion Forum (after completing the reading and quiz). Make your first post by 12noon on Thursday. The forum will close at 6pm on Friday (5/15).
5. View Lecture: Puritans in the Atlantic World

**\*\*Begin reading for next week: Volk/O'Connor, 13-14 and Randy J. Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar***

#### **WEEK 2, Part 1 (5/18-5/20) ~ Rebellion, Slavery, & Atlantic Trade**

*Tasks:*

1. View Lecture: Tobacco, Rebellion, & the American Paradox
2. View Lecture: The Slave Trade & the Middle Passage

3. **Read Volk/O'Connor, 13-14 and Randy J. Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar*, 1-69**
  4. Take Week 2, Part 1 Quiz
  5. **Upload Short Reading Response**
  6. Participate in Week 2, Part 1 Discussion Forum (after completing the reading and quiz)
  7. View Lecture: The Fur Trade & the Transformation of Native America
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### **WEEK 2, Part 2 (5/20-5/22) ~ Enlightened 18th C. Empires**

#### *Tasks:*

1. View Lecture: Uniting the British Empire
2. View Documentary: Benjamin Franklin ~ Use Viewing Guide (available on Moodle)
3. **Read Volk/O'Connor, 15-16 and Sparks, *Two Princes of Calabar*, 70-147**
4. Take Week 2, Part 2 Quiz
5. Participate in Week 2, Part 2 Discussion Forum
6. View Lecture: Empires in Conflict

#### *Mid-Term Exam 1 (due 5/23)*

1. Upload Completed Mid-Term Exam I by 6pm, Saturday, 5/23
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### *Section II: Revolutionary America*

### **WEEK 3, Part 1 (5/25-5/27) ~ The Contested American Revolution**

#### *Tasks:*

1. View Lecture: Imperial Crisis & the Origins of Revolution
2. View Lecture: Social Roots of Revolution
3. **Read Volk/O'Connor, 18-27**
4. Take Week 3, Part 1 Quiz
5. Participate in Week 3, Part 1 Discussion Forum
6. View Lecture: Opponents of Revolution

### **WEEK 3, Part 2 (5/27-5/29) ~ The Contagion of Liberty**

#### *Tasks:*

1. View Lecture: Creating the American Republics
2. View Lecture: The Contagion of Liberty
3. **Read Volk/O'Connor, 29-44**
4. Take Week 3, Part 2 Quiz
5. **Upload Short Reading Response**
6. Participate in Week 3, Part 2 Discussion Forum

### **WEEK 4, Part 1 (6/1-6/3) ~ Revising the Revolution**

#### *Tasks:*

1. View Lecture: "The Critical Period" & the Origins of the U.S. Constitution
2. View Lecture: Making Sense of the U.S. Constitution
3. **Read Volk/O'Connor, 45-58**
4. Take Week 4, Part 1 Quiz
5. **Upload Short Reading Response**
6. Participate in Week 4, Part 1 Discussion Forum
7. View Lecture: American State, American Empire

**WEEK 4, Part 2 (6/3-6/5) ~ Building a Nation & an Empire***Tasks:*

1. View Lecture: An Empire of Liberty?
2. View Lecture: Crisis and Rebirth of the Republic
3. **Read Volk/O'Connor, 59-71**
4. Take Week 4, Part 2 Quiz
5. Participate in Week 4, Part 2 Discussion Forum

**Mid-Term Exam 2 (due 6/6)**

1. Upload Completed Mid-Term (II) Exam by 6pm, Saturday, 6/6
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**Section III: A House Dividing****WEEK 5, Part 1 (6/8-6/10) ~ Market Revolution & the Antebellum North***Tasks:*

1. View Lecture: Making Sense of the "Market Revolution"
2. View Lecture: Home, Religion, & Reform
3. **Read Volk/O'Connor, 72-88**
4. Take Week 5, Part 1 Quiz
5. Participate in Week 5, Part 1 Discussion Forum
6. View Lecture: Radical Abolitionists

**WEEK 5, Part 2 (6/10-6/12) ~ Antebellum Slave Society***Tasks:*

1. **Read Volk/O'Connor, 89-91**
2. View *Twelve Years a Slave* (Film from 2013)
3. View Lecture: The Slave Market
4. Take Week 5, Part 2 Quiz
5. **Upload Short Reading/Viewing Response**
6. Participate in Week 5, Part 2 Discussion Forum
7. View Lecture: The Proslavery Argument

**WEEK 6, Part 1 (6/15-6/17) ~ The Impending Crisis***Tasks:*

1. View Lecture: The Rise of American Democracy
  2. View Lecture: Manifest Destiny & the Impending Crisis
  3. **Read Volk/O'Connor, 93-104**
  4. Take Week 6, Part 1 Quiz
  5. Participate in Week 6, Part 1 Discussion Forum
  6. View Lecture: Crisis of the 1850s
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**WEEK 6, Part 2 (6/17-6/18) ~ Secession & Civil War***Tasks:*

1. View Lecture: Secession Crisis & the Coming of the Civil War
2. View Lecture: The Transformation of the Civil War

**Final Exam (6/19)**

1. Upload Completed Final Exam by Friday, 6/19 at 6pm