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HSTA 315.01: Early American Republic

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HSTA 315 HISTORY OF THE EARLY AMERICAN REPUBLIC, 1787-1848



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Course Description and Goals:

Nestled between the American Revolution and the Civil War, the events between 1787 and 1848 have often been overlooked, yet these six decades proved crucial to America's identity and witnessed profound transformations to government, politics, economics, and daily life. Between the inauguration of George Washington and the culmination of the Mexican-American War, the United States' population grew by more than five times, and its land area doubled. During these years, Americans debated the future shape of the country and made crucial decisions about democracy and slavery and their limits. In addition, politicians and ordinary citizens weighed in on whether the United States should remain a nation of yeoman farmers or

blossom into a buzzing hive of commerce and industry. Westward expansion, cultural upheaval, and economic and technological innovation all combined to make the first half of the nineteenth century one of the most turbulent times in US history as well as one that still has striking repercussions for the present.

This course will proceed in a roughly chronological fashion, and we will consider the following key questions:

- To what extent did the American Revolution and the Constitution secure liberty for all? Did the Constitution succeed in creating “a more perfect Union?”
- What were the implications of the rise of democracy for African-Americans, Native Americans, women, and immigrants?
- Why did slavery vanish in the North but thrive in the South?
- How did morality and religion manifest themselves in the social and political lives of Americans?
- How did revolutions in markets, transportation and communication fundamentally alter labor relations and everyday life?
- How did westward expansion influence national politics?
- How did nationalism emerge in the early republic?

Writing Component: Since this course counts as an intermediate writing course, drafting and revising papers will comprise a significant portion of your final grade. For this course, you will be required to produce approximately sixteen pages of historical writing. You will compose two papers, one of five to six pages in length and one of ten to twelve pages in length. The latter paper will be revised substantially. .

At the end of the semester, you will be required to submit electronically (via Moodle) an assignment stripped of your personal information to be used for educational research and assessment of the university’s writing program. Your paper will be stored in a database. A random selection of papers will be assessed by a group of faculty and staff using a rubric developed from the following Writing Learning Outcomes:

- Compose written documents that are appropriate for a given audience or purpose
- Formulate and express opinions and ideas in writing
- Use writing to learn and synthesize new concepts
- Revise written work based on constructive feedback
- Find, evaluate, and use information effectively
- Begin to use discipline-specific writing conventions (largely style conventions like APA or MLA)
- Demonstrate appropriate English language usage

This assessment in no way affects either your course grade or your progression at the university. Here's the [rubric](#) that will be used to score the papers.

Assigned Text, available from The Bookstore at UM:

Lee Dugatkin, *Mr. Jefferson and the Giant Moose*. University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Harriet Jacobs. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (any edition).

Thomas Dublin. *Farm to Factory*. Columbia University Press, 1993.

Paul Johnson. *Sam Patch, the Famous Jumper*. Hill and Wang, 2004

Theda Purdie. *Cherokee Removal, A Brief History With Documents*. Bedford St. Martins, 2016.

Amy Greenberg. *The Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1846 Invasion of Mexico*. Vintage, 2013.

Other readings for the course are available on Moodle (Denoted with *).

Assignments and Assessment:

- A. Attendance and informed participation—15 percent
- B. Weekly Quizzes—15-percent
- C. Five page paper —15-percent.
- D. Twelve page paper (rough draft)—10-percent
- E. Twelve page paper (final draft)—25 percent
- F. Final Exam—20 percent

Grades will be on a plus/minus system with the following breakdown:

A (100-93), A- (92.9-90), B+ (89.9-87), B (86.9-83), B- (82.9-80), C+ (79.9-77), C (76.9-73), C- (72.9-70), D+ (69.9-67), D (66.9-63), D- (62.9-60), and F (59.9-0).

Assignment Details:

Five Page Paper (Due 2-21 or 3-14): You will have the option of writing your paper on one of two assignments based primarily on readings from the course.

Twelve Page Paper (Rough Draft due 4-12; Revised draft due 4-28)

Take Home Final Exam (Due 5-12): Cumulative exam will consist of short essays and analysis of primary sources.

Accessibility and Accommodations: The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction by supporting collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you have a disability that requires an accommodation, please let me know as soon as possible. For further information, contact DSS:

Lommason Center, 154

Phone: 406-243-2243

Email: dss@umontana.edu

A Note on Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is defined in the [UM Student Conduct Code](#) as representing another person's words, ideas, data, or materials as one's own, a situation that **will not be tolerated** in this course.

Throughout this class, you will be given ample instruction how to conduct historical research, how to paraphrase and quote illustrative material, and how to provide proper citations for all material not your own. Therefore, there is a zero tolerance policy in regards to plagiarism, and any documented cases of plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the class.

Course Schedule: The following is tentative—please check Moodle for up-to-date assignments.

Week I:

T (1-24) Introductions

R (1-26) Course Themes

Readings for Discussion:

*Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (excerpts)

Week II:

T (1-31) Rip Van Winkle's America

Readings for Discussion:

*Alfred Young, "George Robert Twelves Hewes: A Boston Shoemaker and the Memory of the American Revolution"

R (2-2) The Constitution and the "People Out of Doors"

Readings for Discussion:

*Primary sources on ratification of Constitution

Week III:

T (2-7) Washington: Myth and Memory

Readings for Discussion:

*Mason Weems, The Life of George Washington (excerpt)

R (2-9) Science in the Early Republic

Readings for Discussion:

Dugatkin, Ch. 1-4

Week IV:

T (2-14) Political Crises of the 1790s

Readings for Discussion:

Dugatkin, Ch. 1-4

R (2-16) The Election of 1800

Readings for Discussion:

*Primary sources on election

Week V:

T (2-21) Jefferson's Empire of Liberty

Readings for Discussion:

Paper option #1 due

R (2-23) The Civil War of 1812

Readings for Discussion:

TBD

Week VI:

T (2-28) Native America in the Early Republic

Readings for Discussion:

R (3-2) The Economics of Slavery

Readings for Discussion:

Jacobs, Ch. 1-20

Week VII:

T (3-7) The World the Slaves Made

Readings for Discussion:

Finish Jacobs

*James Henry Hammond, "Instructions to His Overseer"

R (3-9) Andrew Jackson and the Rise of American Democracy

Readings for Discussion:

Week VIII:

T (3-14) Film: A Midwife's Tale

Paper option #2 due

R (3-16) The Market Revolution

Readings for Discussion:

Read: Dublin, Intro. Ch. 1, 2

*****SPRING BREAK No Class*****

T (3-21)

R (3-23)

Week IX:

T (3-28) American Urban Life before the Civil War

Readings for Discussion:

Finish Dublin

R (3-30) Social Mobility

Readings for Discussion:

Johnson, Sections I and II

Week X:

T (4-5) Conventions in Historical Writing

Readings for Discussion:

Johnson, Sections III and IV

R (4-7) Citation Discussion

Readings for Discussion:

Finish Johnson

Week XI:

T (4-12) Westward Expansion and Sectional Conflict

****12 pg. paper due****

R (4-14) Indian Removal

Readings for Discussion:

Purdue, Introduction, section 1

Week XII:

T (4-19) Religion and Reform

Readings for Discussion:

*Primary documents on the Second Great Awakening

R (4-21) Westward Expansion and Sectional Conflict, part II

Readings for Discussion:

Purdue, Sections 4 & 5

Week XIII:

T (4-26) The Mexican –American War

Readings for Discussion:

Greenberg, first half

R (4-28) Women in the Early Republic

****Revisions due****

Week XIV:

T (5-3) Becoming American

Readings for Discussion:

Read: Greenberg, second half

R (5-5) Review; Evaluations

Week XV:

F 5-12 Take Home Final Exam due by noon