Eastern Oregon University  
Course Syllabus

Number of Course: HIST 201

Name of Course: U.S. History to 1865 (existing course, asking for new title)

Credit Hours: 5

Course Description: Surveys the political, cultural, and social history of the United States through the Civil War

Readings vary, but here is an example:

MAIN TEXT:

SELECTED DOCUMENTS:
*Primary Source: Documents in U.S. History, Volume I* (Prentice Hall, 2009)

SCHOLARLY ESSAYS:
Edmund S. Morgan, “The Devil in Salem Village”
Gary Nash, “Black People in a White People’s Country”
Gregory E. Dowd, “The Indians’ Great Awakening”
Brian McGinty, “Sunrise at Philadelphia”
John Blassingame, “Life in a Totalitarian System”
Maury Klein, “The Lords and the Mill Girls”
Ira Berlin, “I Will Be Heard!’ William Lloyd Garrison and the Struggle Against Slavery”
Stephen B. Oates, “The Ravages of War”

Learning Outcomes:
GEC Outcomes: Content Knowledge (CK); Communication (C); Critical Thinking (CT)
Program Outcomes: Content Knowledge (CK); Communication (C); Critical Thinking (CT); Civic Engagement (CE)
EOU Diversity Requirement: Difference, Power, and Discrimination (DPD)

Upon the completion of this course, students should be able to demonstrate:

1.) Familiarity with the central social, cultural, political, and economic developments in the history of the United States to 1865 (CK; DPD)
2.) Fluency in identifying and explaining key historical issues from the time period (CK; CT)
3.) An ability to locate, summarize, and critically analyze primary and secondary source evidence, formulating independent questions and critiques (CT; DPD)
4.) The capacity to recognize contexts and assumptions in historical evidence (CT; CE; DPD)
5.) An awareness of multiple perspectives both in history and in the interpretation of history (CK; CT; CE; DPD)
6.) The ability to present historical concepts clearly in writing and orally (C; CT)
7.) An ability to work collaboratively with peers (C)
8.) The skill of evaluating evidence to reach conclusions (CT)
9.) An ability to apply major analytical concepts—such as race, class, and gender—to the study of United States history (CE; CT; DPD)

Means of Assessment:
GENERAL PARTICIPATION (LOs 1-9)
Includes attendance and active participation in class discussions and related activities. Lectures and discussions are interactive and will explore evidence and pose questions related to subject matter and course themes.

GROUP WORKSHOPS (LOs 3-8)
Small group workshops in which students identify, “unpack,” and analyze primary and secondary source evidence. Students will frequently answer a series of significant questions, formulate their own interpretations and critiques, and share their findings in the form of group presentations and informal essays.

QUIZZES (LOs 1-2, 4-5, 9)
Creative exercises featuring short answer essay questions that ask students to evaluate scholarly arguments/interpretations based on historical evidence.

EXPLORATORY ESSAYS (LOs 2-6, 8-9)
Short (2 page) analytical essays that require students to craft a significant historical question, examine the available historical sources, and use critical thinking, logical analysis, and clear writing to explore the question, formulating and supporting their answer or conclusion.

EXAMS (LOs 1-2, 4-6, 9)
The exams are, like the quizzes, creative exercises. They feature multiple choice questions, short essay questions, and a long essay question that deal with core course concepts, themes, evidence, and interpretations.

Course Requirements:
Major Assignments Learning Outcome #
General Participation 1-9
Group Workshops 3-8
Quizzes 1, 2, 4, 5, 9
Exploratory essays 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9
Midterm exam 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9
Final exam 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9

Brief Outline of Course:
This course is designed to offer students a better understanding of North America and its peoples from the colonial period through the Civil War. It has three interrelated objectives. The first is to introduce some of the major themes, events, and personalities of this period in order to provide students with a basic framework of the American past. Second, it attempts to develop students’ ability to understand historical evidence and some of the interpretive problems historians encounter and debate when explaining the past. Third, this course seeks to enhance critical reading, thinking, writing, and communication skills that students can utilize in other classes, academic settings, and in their own personal and professional lives.

Central to this course are the major social, political, and cultural themes that have shaped the American experience. To borrow a quote from historian Ramón Gutiérrez, the American past “was not a
monologue, but a dialogue between cultures, each of which had many voices that often spoke in unison, but just as often were diverse and divisive.” Our main challenge is to move beyond mere dates and facts, beyond a glorification of the great-dead-white-guys and exceptionalist narratives that have colored the pageant of American history. Instead, we will explore the meaning of the American experience as interpreted by its diverse inhabitants. Throughout this course, we will think critically about the following questions: What does it mean to be an American? Who is (or is not) an American and how has this definition changed over time? What are American ideals and/or “values” and what factors have complicated or undermined them?

In contemplating these questions, we must remember that the United States has long been characterized by its diversity, but this diversity has frequently produced unequal conditions, such as discriminatory policies and practices based on prejudicial notions of racial, gender, and ethnic difference. During the Revolutionary period the United States enshrined liberty and equality as the ruling principles for national development, and yet the tension between America’s diversity and its commitment to liberty and equality has profoundly influenced American society, politics, and culture. Thus, the “American dilemma” of egalitarianism coexisting with intense prejudices will serve as a framework for this introductory course.

WEEK 1 – PLANTING COLONIES IN NORTH AMERICA  
WEEK 2 – AFRICAN SLAVERY AND THE PARADOX OF AMERICAN FREEDOM  
WEEK 3 – CULTURES OF COLONIAL NORTH AMERICA IN AN AGE OF EMPIRE  
WEEK 4 – THE EMPIRE STRIKES...OUT? FROM LOYAL BRITISH COLONISTS TO RESISTANCE & REVOLUTION  
WEEK 5 – “A REPUBLIC, IF YOU CAN KEEP IT”: THE CREATION OF THE UNITED STATES AND COMPETING NATIONAL VISIONS  
WEEK 6 – THE SLAVE SOUTH AND THE “FREE” NORTH  
WEEK 7 – JACKSONIAN AMERICA AND THE GROWTH OF DEMOCRACY  
WEEK 8 – THE FERMENT OF REFORM & THE POLITICS OF WESTWARD EXPANSION  
WEEK 9 – “A FIREBELL IN THE NIGHT”: SLAVERY, SECTIONALISM, AND THE CRISIS OF THE UNION  
WEEK 10 – THE CIVIL WAR IN HISTORY AND MEMORY  

General Education Category and Outcomes: See above. If you’d like me to cut-and-paste the official language for outcomes, here it is:

LEARNING OUTCOMES:  
Content Knowledge: Achieve the ability to synthesize and discuss selected historical experiences in the Americas and in Europe.

Communication: Attain a wide-ranging understanding of the core concepts, events, and historiographical trends in selected areas of American and European history, demonstrated through written and oral work.

Critical Thinking: Master skills in historical research, critical thinking, reading and writing, and polished oral presentation of scholarly work.

Civic Engagement: Demonstrate an understanding of the role of historical knowledge in shaping the narratives of a nation and a world, demonstrated through a critical understanding of how the use/misuse of history contributes to political, social, and cultural interpretations, and how multiple historical discourse communities make history public (i.e., historical societies, archival repositories, museums).
DPD OUTCOMES:
1.) Students should 1) identify specific examples of unequal distribution of power and resources in a given society and 2) describe those structures, systems, and ideologies related to specific examples, e.g., social, political, economic, environmental, or cultural.
2.) Students should apply discipline-specific knowledge and concepts to distinguish between the causes and effects of the unequal distribution of power that create the conditions for discrimination.
3.) Students should 1) apply discipline-specific knowledge and concepts to identify societal contributions of under-represented groups and 2) explain how those contributions affect and/or are affected by thinking and learning in that discipline.

University Writing Requirement Outcomes: n/a

Statement on Academic Misconduct:
Eastern Oregon University places a high value upon the integrity of its student scholars. Any student found guilty of an act of academic misconduct (including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, or theft of an examination or supplies) may be subject to having his or her grade reduced in the course in question, being placed on probation or suspended from the University, or being expelled from the University—or a combination of these. Please see Student Handbook at: http://www.eou.edu/saffairs/handbook/honest.html

Statement on Americans with Disabilities:
If you have a documented disability or suspect that you have a learning problem and need accommodations, please contact the Disability Services Program in Loso Hall 234. Telephone: 962-3081.

Syllabus Prepared By: Ryan Dearinger

Date: 1/27/13