

History 315K (39135)

Fall 2011

Introduction to US History, 1492-1865

Prof. Neil Kamil

GAR 2.146

Office Hours: TTH 3:45-4:45 (and by appointment)

TAs: Chris Dietrich (SI), Reem Elghonimi, Zach Carmichael, and Dolph Briscoe will post their office hours and locations on *Blackboard*

Lectures: TTH, 9:30-11 in SAC 1.402

This course is a survey of 400 years of American history, from the Age of Exploration to the Civil War. It meets two times each week for lectures and has an SI (Chris Dietrich), who will arrange for optional discussion sections. **Required readings** will be discussed at the beginning of class every Thursday for about 20-30 minutes and are available at the UT Coop, via online sources, and on PCL Reserve. Primary documents will be assigned most weeks on *Blackboard* (check *BB* Tuesday afternoons for the following Thursday) from Michael P. Johnson, ed., *Reading the American Past, Vol. I: to 1877*. Other required readings will include the environmental history of early New England by William Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, and William Freehling's civil war history, *The South Versus the South*. Exact dates these books will be discussed in class will be posted on *Blackboard*; however, provisional dates by week are listed below. **Optional (that is, unassigned) reading** is available from the textbook *Experiencing History: Interpreting America's Past: Volume 1 to 1877*. You needn't buy this expensive book but it may prove useful as a general resource with a good index for those with limited backgrounds.

Requirements include midterm and final exams (both essay format), a 2-page book review on *Changes in the Land*, and a quiz on one document chosen from the M. Johnson collection of primary documents. (For rules on plagiarism, please **see the dept's policy online at <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/history/about/academic-integrity.php>**) Attendance will not be taken at lectures but students who do not attend regularly will naturally find those absences reflected in their grades, which are usually much lower than students who do attend regularly. Study questions will be provided in advance of both exams. Exams will test knowledge of both lectures and readings. There will be a question devoted to *South v. South* on the final. Grades will be calculated according to the following percentages: Final exam 40%, Midterm 30%, Book Review 20%, and Quiz 10%. Plus / minus grades will be assigned for the final grade. To learn more about the mechanics of this system, go to this link: <http://www.utexas.edu/provost/planning/plus-minus/>. Be aware that the assignment of grades has always been, and remains, up to the discretion of the instructor. Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259.

Please note that makeup exams will not be given except in extraordinary instances and a physician's letter is usually required. **The final exam date for this course is Friday, December 9, 2011 (2-5 pm)** so ill considered end-of-semester travel plans will not be

considered valid for requesting a makeup for the final. Occasional quizzes that are not listed on the syllabus are optional at the discretion of the instructor or the TAs. **Please note that weeks assigned to specific lectures on the syllabus are flexible as are the lectures themselves and may vary at the instructor's discretion. Failure to complete any single assignment will constitute automatic failure for the course.**

Approximate order of lectures / readings:

Week one-three (Thursday readings in M. Johnson, all of Cronon's *Changes in the Land*, check *Blackboard*)

Spain and Columbus; Humanism and the New World; Nature of the Colonial Enterprise; Regional histories of British America; The transatlantic Reformation; Puritanism and Personality in New England; Witchcraft.

Book Review Due: *Changes in the Land* on Tuesday, 20 September

Week four-six (Thursday readings in M. Johnson; check *Blackboard*)

Slavery and Staple Crops: British Caribbean and Chesapeake; American Revolution; Forging a New Government: Articles of Confederation and the Constitution; Federalists and anti-Federalists; Washington and Hamilton; Hamilton's Report on Public Credit.

Midterm (date tba at least 2 weeks prior): 75-minute essay question.

Week seven-nine (Thursday readings in M. Johnson, check *Blackboard*.)

Thomas Jefferson's legacy; Ambiguity of Jeffersonian Republicanism; War of 1812; Westward expansion; Industrial Revolution; Andrew Jackson and what is meant by Jacksonian Democracy; Compromise of 1820; early talk of disunion.

Week ten-eleven (Thursday readings in M. Johnson, check *Blackboard*.)

(Quiz on Johnson document date tba.)

Slavery and Abolition; Election of 1848 (Pro-slavery arguments); Compromise of 1850; the continuing vexing question of Slavery and its Expansion west; sectional politics (the census and redistricting); secessionism and the south.

Week twelve to end of course (Thursday readings in M. Johnson, and all of *South v. South*, check *Blackboard*)

Sectional Politics: John Brown; Lincoln, Free Soil, and the Election of 1860; was the south "monolithic", the North? Slavery and Disunion, Civil War, postwar America.

Final: 3 hrs (Friday, December 9, 2011: 2-5 pm)

