COURSE TOPICS

This course will investigate the major issues and events that affected the development of “America” and the United States from early European settlement to the end of the Civil War. Rather than try to race through and cover everything—an impossible task—we will instead focus on four eras, slowing down and digging deep, in an attempt to better uncover significant historical meaning. Our four eras and chief topics of inquiry will be:

1. The Era of Colonial Development—here we will explore the varied interactions, and the consequences of those interactions, between Europeans, Africans, and the native populations in the “New World.”

2. The Revolutionary Era—we will examine the intellectual ferment surrounding the American Revolution and the creation of the United States Constitution, and ask the question, “just how ‘revolutionary’ was the American Revolution?”
3. The Expanding Republic—we will assess the effects of technological development and territorial expansion in the first half of the nineteenth century. We will also interrogate the personality and politics of the era’s dominant public figure, Andrew Jackson.

4. The Civil War Era—we will conclude the semester with a discussion of the relationship between slavery, sectionalism, secession, and the American Civil War.

As the subtitle of this course indicates, throughout the semester we also will be considering the notion of “Becoming American.” What is an American? Is American identity based on place of birth and geographic residency? Does “American-ness” have to do with one’s race or gender or ideological beliefs? Something else entirely? And, importantly, who gets to decide who is American? As we will see, the definition of what an American is—and the question of who gets to call themselves American—has both shifted over time and been a source of conflict and debate throughout American history. These disagreements still reverberate today.

CLASS STRUCTURE AND ATTENDANCE

The rhythm of this course is as follows: there are two 75-minute lectures every week (on Tuesday and Thursday) and ten document workshops (the Registrar’s Office calls them “recitations”), led by one of the co-teachers, which run for 50 minutes. Depending on which one you registered for, your document workshop takes place on either Thursday afternoons or on Fridays.

Though I will not take usually attendance in lecture (I may on occasion), I expect you to attend every lecture meeting. You are also expected to attend every scheduled document workshop. Your co-teacher will take attendance in these workshops and your attendance will help determine your grade.

Please note that the instructor reserves to right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates (excluding the officially scheduled final examination), when unforeseen circumstances occur. These changes will be announced as early as possible so that students can adjust their schedules.

COURSE READINGS

Paul Johnson, *Sam Patch: The Famous Jumper*
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
*Documents on Course Sakai Page*

The readings are listed under each lecture/document workshop topic and should be read before coming to class. This is especially essential for all non-textbook readings assigned for lecture and all readings assigned for document workshops. Carefully read the assigned piece(s) before class meetings and always bring the material for reference.

You can access the documents on the *Course Sakai Page* by clicking the “Resources” tab on the left side of the page. I have listed the documents in the order that we will be reading and discussing them.

Please note that lectures and textbook readings will not repeat each other. Instead, I will try to challenge and add nuance to what you have already read, not merely echo it.

**A note about textbook reading:** textbooks are dense. They are filled with a tremendous amount of information packed into a small number of pages. This is their value, but it also means you cannot possibly digest all of the material in one reading. I suggest that you read each assigned textbook segment twice. The first time, read with focus, but read with a goal of understanding the big themes and ideas in preparation for lecture. Later, go back and reread the assigned segments with an eye toward sifting out specific information that you can use to answer the specific questions that I have posed.
I can tell you one thing for sure—if you do not attend and take notes in lecture, and if you do not read the textbook and use the information to help you answer the essay and exam questions, you will not do well in this course.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

Your course grade will be determined by the quality of your two argument essays (each about 6 pp.), your final exam, and your document workshop input (attendance, think pieces, and quality of participation).

Please note: There will be three assigned argument essays, but you only have to answer two of them. Indeed, you may only answer two—but which two you answer is your choice. The argument essay prompts will be posted on Sakai and discussed in lecture at least two weeks before each essay is due. We will give you a “final exam study guide” at least two weeks before the final exam.

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Argument Essay (due either 14 February or 7 March)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Argument Essay (due either 7 March or 9 April)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam (7 May)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document Workshop Engagement</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Policies regarding late work: Argument Essays are due at the beginning of class on the day noted in this syllabus. If you must miss class on the due date, your essay should be emailed to your co-teacher before our class begins, and then you MUST give your co-teacher a paper copy at the next class meeting. Any essay not handed in during class or emailed before class begins will be considered late.

Written work will be marked down one full letter grade (ten points) for every class meeting it is late. Think pieces (see below) are not accepted late.

THINK PIECES

You are required to write a think piece for seven of the ten document workshops (in two of the document workshops there is nothing to turn in, thus you get to “skip” writing a think piece for one of the remaining eight document workshops. That said, it CANNOT be the first document workshop. You MUST write a think piece for the first document workshop).

Think pieces are your short essay answers to specific questions that I have posed about the readings. The questions are in this syllabus, listed under the relevant date.

At the conclusion of your prose you must skip a line and then pose one question prompted by that day’s readings. Your co-teacher may call on you to ask your question to further the classroom conversation.

Specifics: Think pieces should be between 350-500 words (your question can count as part of your word count). Think pieces must be typed, double-spaced, and use 12-point font and one-inch margins. They should have titles and the pages MUST be stapled together. You do not need to use footnotes in your think pieces.

Think pieces will be turned in as paper copies at the end of each document workshop. Once the co-teacher has collected the think pieces, you may no longer turn one in. If you did not write one before class, sorry. If you forgot to print it, sorry. If you were not in class, sorry. In other words, plan ahead! There will be no exceptions to this rule.
Think Pieces will be graded on a scale of 0-5 (with 5 the highest mark). Together with your attendance and an evaluation of your discussion section participation, they will account for 20% of your overall grade. Here is a general grading guide for think pieces:

5 Points: Think Piece is a well-written, strongly supported, sophisticated, and interesting response that shows you read the entire assigned reading(s), grasped its main points, and took the time to organize your thoughts before answering the assigned question(s). As the semester progresses, the think piece makes keen links between course topics and documents. The Think Piece is marked by superb prose and flawless punctuation and spelling. If you receive a 5, you are doing A work.

4 points: Think Piece makes some very good points but perhaps lacks logical construction, doesn’t answer the assigned question in a full or compelling manner, neglected to pose a compelling question of your own, or has some minor problems with its prose, punctuation, and/or spelling. If you receive a 4, you are doing around B+ work.

3 points: Think Piece offers a surface-level answer to the assigned question, perhaps lacks structure, clarity, or compelling evidence, or is marked by too many grammatical and/or punctuation errors. If you receive a 3, you are doing around B/B- work.

2 points: Think piece is vague, doesn’t explicitly answer the assigned question, or suggests to the reader that you did not leave yourself enough time to do a good job. An otherwise solid think piece that possesses multiple grammatical and punctuation errors will receive a 2, as well. If you receive a 2, you are doing around C+ work.

1 point: Think piece reads like a hastily written response that suggests you did not carefully consider the assigned readings. A think piece that earns a 1 suggests C-/D+ work.

0 points: Think Piece shows little or no evidence that you have read or considered the assigned document. If you receive a 0, this is F work.

Because of time and workload constraints, the co-teachers will not be able to offer the type of lengthy and substantive written comments that they will offer on your argument essays. If at any time you would like to get a sense of your overall Document Workshop grade, you need to make an appointment to see your co-teacher in their office. It is important that you make an appointment so your co-teacher has time to consult their gradebook. I also insist that you have this discussion in person. In the past, I have found email communication to be ineffective for this purpose.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

The College of Arts and Sciences has developed several support programs to assist students. Accessibility Services provides individual support to students with diagnosed learning disabilities (962-7227). The Learning Skills Center offers free instruction in a variety of academic learning strategies (http://learningcenter.unc.edu/, 962-3782, 962-6389). The Writing Center, which fills up quickly, provides free tutorial services (http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/about.html, 962-7710, 962-4060).

HONORABLE AND COURTEOUS BEHAVIOR

THE HONOR CODE: It shall be the responsibility of every student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and to support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University, student, or academic personnel acting in an official capacity.

THE CAMPUS CODE: It shall be the further responsibility of every student to abide by the Campus Code; namely, to conduct oneself so as not to impair the welfare or the educational opportunities of others in the University community.

COURTESY DURING CLASSES. It is disruptive to others to arrive late to class or to leave early. If you must do it (which I strongly discourage), please be unobtrusive. Also, please turn off all cell phones. Checking your phone and/or texting during class—be it in lecture or in the document workshops—is the height of DISCOURTESY.
**Laptop computers may only be used in class for taking notes.** If you are checking your email, looking up sports scores, or shopping for shoes, your classmates who can see your screen will not be able to concentrate on our course. If I learn that you are using your laptop for any reason other than note-taking while in class, I will bar your laptop from our classroom for the rest of the semester. I am serious.

**OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACTING ME**

I am glad you are in this class and I want you to do well. One of the best ways of doing so is to come and ask questions or just chat with me (or the co-teachers) during office hours. I genuinely enjoy meeting students and learning from and about them. If you cannot make my office hours (they are listed on the front page of this syllabus) please contact me and we will arrange a meeting time convenient to us both.

Likewise, as college students of the 21st Century, I expect that you will check your email regularly between classes. Always check your UNC email account the evening before a class meeting to confirm that I have not announced any changes to the next day’s schedule (I will try not to do this).

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**COURSE MAP**

10 January (Thu.) Course Introduction

15 January (Tue.) When Does American History Begin?

Read: *Give Me Liberty*, 2-16.

**COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT**

17 January (Thu.) Contact Between Continents

Read: *Give Me Liberty*, 16-36.
17 or 18 January (Thu. or Fri.)  
**Document Workshop – Historians and Contact**

Read:    Excerpts from Three U.S. Textbooks (1927-1993).

To Do:    Hand in Think Piece (see question below).

**Think Piece Question:** Though you must read all of the assigned documents and be prepared to discuss their differences, turn in a think piece that *either*: (1) compares and contrasts the different perspectives on the early interaction between American Indians and European colonists found in the “Excerpts from Three U.S. Textbooks”; or (2) compares and contrasts the different perspectives offered by Howard Zinn (*A People’s History of the United States*) and Paul Johnson (*A History of the American People*). Here are a few possible questions to guide your inquiry (you do not need to answer every one of these questions in your think piece): Who is mentioned first, Indians or Europeans, and does this matter? Does the text discuss the Indian population before the time of contact? Are Indians portrayed as more aggressive than colonists or the opposite? What do you suppose accounts for these differences in interpretation?

22 January (Tue.)  
**Smoke on the Water: The Chesapeake Experience**

Read:    *Give Me Liberty*, 39-52.

24 January (Thu.)  
**American Slavery**


24 or 25 January (Thu. or Fri.)  
**Document Workshop – “Race” in Early Virginia**

Read:    Early Virginia Race Laws (1600s).

To Do:    There are two things to do for today—but nothing to turn in. (1) Come to the document workshop having taken notes on the Early Virginia Race Laws. Specifically, be prepared to answer the two questions at the top of the document. You will not turn these notes in, but you need to have notes, in some form, to aid your discussion. Your co-teacher may ask to see your notes. (2) Come ready to identify the thesis of the Barbara Fields essay. Again, you do not have to have anything in writing, but be prepared to point to the sentence(s) in the essay that you believe make up the author’s thesis—that is, her chief argument.
29 January (Tue.) A City Upon a Hill: The New England Experience

Read: Give Me Liberty, 53-67.

31 January (Thu.) Puritans and Indians

31 Jan. and 1 Feb. (Thu. and Fri.) Document Workshop – Captivity Narratives

Read: “Tales of Captivity and Redemption: North American Captivity Narratives.”

Read: James Seaver, A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison (1750s) [excerpt].

To Do: Hand in Think Piece (see question below).

Think Piece Question: Captivity narratives are one of the more interesting and provocative of the early American historical sources. Come to the document workshop having read and considered both the “Tales of Captivity and Redemption” and the excerpt from the Narrative of the Life of Mary Jemison (Note: the first of these documents consists of an introductory essay, excerpts from three early American captivity narratives, and a grid on which to take notes—you will not turn in this grid, but I suggest you use it to help organize your thoughts). For your think piece, please answer the following question—do these captivity narratives reveal more about Native American culture and practices or European American culture and practices?

5 February (Tue.) Early American Pastimes

7 February (Thu.) American Diversity/American Unity

Read: Give Me Liberty, 73-80; 86-102; 116-137.

7 or 8 February (Thu. or Fri.) Document Workshop – Writing a Compelling History Essay

Read: “How to Write a Compelling History Essay.”

Read: “Footnote Guide.”

To Do: There is nothing to turn in today. Whether you have opted to answer the first essay question or not, come to the workshop with ideas about how you might answer the assigned question. In this workshop we will discuss strategies for crafting a compelling college-level thesis and essay. We will discuss how to employ evidence and counter-evidence. We will go over some of the common mistakes that students make in their essays. Finally, we will discuss the reasons for, and the mechanics of, footnoting.
THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA

12 February (Tue.)  Myths of the American Revolution

14 February (Thu.)  Origins of the American Revolution
Read: Give Me Liberty, 140-157.
To Do: Hand in Essay #1 (if applicable).

19 February (Tue.)  The American Revolution
Read: Give Me Liberty, 158-178.

21 February (Thu.)  A Tale of Two Washingtons
Read: Give Me Liberty, 178-191.

21 or 22 February (Thu. or Fri.)  Document Workshop – A Revolution?
Read: Thomas Paine, Common Sense (1776) [excerpt].*
Read: The Declaration of Independence (1776) (found in Give Me Liberty, A-4).
Read: “Letters Between Abigail and John Adams” (1776).*
Read: Pennsylvania Act for the Abolition of Slavery (1780).
Read: Benjamin Rush, “Thoughts Upon Female Education” (1787).
To Do: Hand in Think Piece (see question below).

Think Piece Question: Today is what I call a “document dump.” That is, I “dump” a bunch of (carefully selected) primary source documents on you and ask you to make sense of them, collectively. The question I would like you to answer is this—judging from the last four documents listed above (“Letters Between Abigail and John Adams,” Pennsylvania Act for the Abolition of Slavery, the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, and “Thoughts Upon Female Education”), to what extent did the American Revolution fulfill the promises and aspirations announced by Thomas Paine in Common Sense and the Continental Congress in The Declaration of Independence?

* Please note that the following two documents—Thomas Paine’s Common Sense and “Letters Between Abigail and John Adams—are compiled in the same .pdf file.
26 February (Tue.)

A “More Perfect Union”

Read: Give Me Liberty, 194-207.

28 February (Thu.)

Constitutional Queries

Read: Give Me Liberty, 208-219.
Read: The Bill of Rights (1791) (Amendments I–X, found in Give Me Liberty, A–14).

28 Feb. or 1 Mar. (Thu. or Fri.)

Document Workshop – Debating the Constitution

Read: James Madison, Federalist Number 10 (1787) [excerpt].
Read: David Ramsay, The History of the American Revolution (1789).

To Do: Hand in Think Piece (see question below).

Think Piece Question: Another “document dump!” To quote Thomas Paine, “Rejoice Ye Mankind.” Indeed, let’s go back to the era of Thomas Paine. After reading the different interpretations of the United States Constitution as offered by John P. Roche and Howard Zinn, as well as the four primary source documents, put on your tri-cornered hat and write a letter to the editors of the North Carolina Gazette (NC’s first newspaper, printed in New Bern beginning in 1751) that either supports or attacks ratification (approval) of the proposed Constitution. If your last name begins with the letter A–M, please support ratification. If you last name begins with N–Z, attack ratification. Be clear. Be succinct. Be unmerciful! Your freedom depends upon it.

THE EXPANDING REPUBLIC

5 March (Tue.)

A Waking Giant

Read: Give Me Liberty, 236-247; 250-160.

7 March (Thu.)

Becoming Urban

Read: Give Me Liberty, 261-277.

To Do: Hand in Essay #2 (if applicable).
12 March (Tue.)                     SPRING BREAK

14 March (Thu.)                     SPRING BREAK

19 March (Tue.)  What was Andrew Jackson?

21 March (Thu.)  Jacksonian Democracy

Read:  Andrew Jackson on Indian Removal (1829).
Read:  Ralph Waldo Emerson on Indian Removal (1836).
Read:  Give Me Liberty, ch. 10.

21 or 22 March (Thu. or Fri)  Document Workshop – Who was Sam Patch?

To Do: Hand in Think Piece (see question below).

Think Piece Question:  For this think piece I would like you to write an obituary for Sam Patch (an obituary is a news article that reports the recent death of an individual).  Obituaries cover the basics, such as where the deceased was from, what they did in their life, and how they died.  Stuff like that.  You should briefly include this information in your obituary, but make sure that the bulk of your obituary illuminates the historical significance of Sam Patch.  Yes, he was a guy who jumped off waterfalls.  But why did he do it?  And what did it mean when he did it?  Note:  If you are at a loss for how to start, enter “sample obituary” into your favorite internet search engine and read a few to give you an idea of their structure.

26 March (Tue.)  Immigration and Nativism

28 March (Thu.)  Antebellum Reform

Read:  Give Me Liberty, ch. 12.

2 April (Tue.)  Going West
SLAVERY AND THE CIVIL WAR

4 April (Thu.)  The Serpent in the Garden

Read: Give Me Liberty, ch. 11.

4 or 5 March (Thu. or Fri.)  Document Workshop – American Reformers

Read: Lyman Beecher, Six Sermons on Intemperance (1826) [excerpt].
Read: “The Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions” (1848).
To Do: Hand in Think Piece (see question below).

Think Piece Question: Our topic today is reform. Between the 1820s and the 1850s, the United States witnessed the greatest number of reform efforts in our national history. Today I have provided (“dumped”) six documents that are expressions of the reformers’ zeal from this era. Your question is this—based on the above documents, do you see evidence of a cohesive antebellum reformist culture? In other words, do the documents above suggest a commonality of interests and goals among American reformers? Or are their experiences and desires too varied and complex to speak of a “reform culture?”

9 April (Tue.)  The Great Southern Reaction

To Do: Hand in Essay # 3 (if applicable).

11 April (Thu.)  A House Divided

Read: Give Me Liberty, ch. 13.

11 or 12 April (Thu. or Fri.)  Document Workshop – The Slave Experience

Read: Frederick Douglass, The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (1845).
To Do: Hand in Think Piece (see question below).
Think Piece Question: You are Frederick Douglass. In your best Frederick Douglass narrative voice—as learned from reading *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*—respond to the chapter, “The Freedom of Slavery,” from a recent (and controversial) book by Thaddeus Russell. Consider how Douglass would react to this chapter. Would he agree with its ideas? Can you use specific examples from Douglass’s narrative to bolster your claims? Once you have organized your ideas and marshaled your evidence, write your think piece. But again, this is not you writing as you and explaining what you believe Douglass would say. Instead, I want you to write as Frederick Douglass. This is a serious topic, but you can have some fun (i.e. be creative) with the writing. Here is a picture of Frederick Douglass to put you in the mood:

[Image of Frederick Douglass]

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16 April (Tue.)

**Secession**

Read: South Carolina Declaration of Secession (1860).

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18 April (Thu.)

**The Meaning of the Civil War**


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18 or 19 April (Thu. or Fri.)

**Document Workshop – History on Campus**


Read: Julian Carr, “Unveiling of Confederate Monument” Speech (1913).


To Do: Go look at the Silent Sam statue in McCorkle place (near Franklin Street). Spend at least five minutes studying the statue, the inscription, and the surroundings.

To Do: Hand in Think Piece (see question below).

Think Piece Question: For our last Document Workshop I have assigned a mix of primary and secondary sources that help illuminate the controversy over UNC’s “Silent Sam” monument. The *Raleigh News and Observer* article outlines
the basic controversy over the Silent Sam monument; the speeches by Bettie Jackson London (a member of the Daughters of the Confederacy) and Julian Carr (a Civil War veteran and local businessman and philanthropist—both UNC’s Carr Building and the town of Carrboro are named after him) come from the June 2, 1913 unveiling and dedication of the Silent Sam monument; the excerpts from the Thomas Brown book provide information on the wider history of Civil War memorials; while the Tony Horwitz chapter highlights the sometimes dangerous consequences of the debates over Civil War iconography. Please read and carefully consider all of these sources, then for your think piece write a letter to the editor of the Daily Tar Heel and state your position on Silent Sam. Should he stay? Should he go? Should he be amended in some way? Why?

23 April (Tue.) The Meanings of Freedom

Read: Give Me Liberty, 440-452.

25 April (Thu.) Last Class Meeting

7 May (Tue.) FINAL EXAM (8:00 a.m.)

Unveiling of “Silent Sam” Confederate Monument, June 2, 1913