

## HISTORY 127-006, American History to 1865

Spring 2018, MWF, 10:10-11:00 am, Bingham Hall 103

Professor Harry Watson  
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**TOPICS AND AUDIENCE.** This course is an introduction to early American history for college students with no more than a high school background in the subject.

**SCHEDULE.** Students who register for History 127-006 will sign up for three lecture classes per week and one recitation section. **Please note, however, that the class never meets more than three times per week.** Most weeks will feature lectures on Mondays and Wednesdays in Davie 112, followed by recitation sections in scheduled classrooms on Thursdays or Fridays. **We will meet in Davie 112 for a lecture on January 12 and for midterm tests on February 16 and April 6.** There will be no recitation sections during these weeks.

**OUR GOALS.** Many beginning students tend to think of studying history as memorizing names and dates. Facts are certainly important, and we hope you will know more information about US history at the end of the course than in the beginning. *But new information is only part of historical study.* The first step is to learn to ask questions of the past: What happened? Why did it happen? Does it matter? How does our point of view shape the answers? Seeking new information and evaluating its reliability are probably the next steps, followed by tentative answers, and then perhaps by new questions. Dedicated historians never run out of questions, but eventually we must pause and formulate some answers both orally and in writing. Learning to pursue the question-and-answer part of history will be our fundamental goal in this class.

We will try to make questioning and answering part of every class, even lectures. Students are always welcome to ask questions of their own. The instructor will also ask questions, sometimes seeking voluntary oral replies and sometimes asking for short answers in writing. In other words, we want you to be active learners as often as possible.

**THEMES.** We will concentrate on questions that involve the following major themes or topics in US history:

- The diversity and complexity of the people who first populated the Americas, British North America, and the early American republic.
- The conflicts which grew out of that diversity.
- How different groups and individuals struggled to resolve these conflicts, or resist the solutions preferred by others.
- How conflict with Great Britain led key groups of eighteenth century Americans to seek an independent nation-state.
- The contradictions between the national government's professed principles of democracy or republicanism and various forms of inequality.
- How various forms of social conflict fed political disputes and prompted searches for political solutions.

- How the slavery dispute became the most important conflict in the nineteenth century, leading to a transformative war to keep the nation-state together.

**OUTCOMES.** As we pursue these themes, we want you to strengthen your skills in the following areas:

- Having enough factual, narrative knowledge about US history to begin answering key questions about these themes.
- Knowing how to gain new historical knowledge by critically reading and analyzing historical sources.
- Using this knowledge to construct stronger answers to historical questions, and to evaluate the answers of others.
- Effectively communicating your answers orally and in writing.

**ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION.** We will give you several opportunities to demonstrate your progress towards these outcomes through class participation, writing assignments, midterm tests, and a final examination.

More specifically, on each Monday, the lecturer will assume that you have already read the textbook chapter assigned for that week, and we may give simple pop quizzes to verify that. You should complete the other readings in advance of the weekly recitation sections. Recitations require regular attendance, mastery of the appropriate reading and writing assignments, and active participation in class discussions. There will be two midterm tests, two short papers (about 5 pages) based on the reading, and a comprehensive final examination. At his own discretion, the instructor may grant brief extensions to students who request one in advance, supported by a good reason.

We will distribute an assignment sheet with prompts for papers on *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (due February 8/9) and *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (due March 22/23). Papers will be due in your recitation section for the relevant week, whether that occurs on Thursday or Friday. Tests will consist of essay questions and short identification sections. The final exam will be cumulative.

The teaching assistants will assign test and paper grades based on factual accuracy, quality of thought, use of evidence, and quality of writing. The latter is especially important for paper assignments, and includes thesis, clarity, organization, and correct spelling and grammar. Students with difficulty in any of these areas should seek help from the teaching assistants well ahead of time, and should also consult the Writing Center (see <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/>). Its handouts are very helpful, especially the one on writing history papers. See <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/> and <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/history/>. Class participation grades will reflect attendance and the quality of a student's oral contributions, especially in recitation sections, and performance on pop quizzes, and must involve a certain amount of subjective assessment by the teaching assistant. Minor assignments like pop quizzes will be graded by check plus, check, check minus, or zero for non-completion and will contribute to your class participation grade.

The papers and the midterms will each count fifteen percent of the final grade, class participation will count ten percent, and the final exam will count thirty percent. We assign grades on all tests and assignments as a number of points out a possible 100, to allow Sakai to compute your averages. In converting your numerical average to a final letter grade, 92-100 will equal "A," 90-91 will equal "A-," 88-89 will equal "B+," 82-87 will equal "B," 80-81 will equal "B-," and so on. Five points will be subtracted for every day a paper is late. Students with grading questions must discuss them with their teaching assistants before coming to the professor.

**MEDIA.** Students may not use electronic media in class, except for taking notes and completing assignments.

**HONOR CODE.** It should go without saying that all students must strictly comply with all provisions of the Honor Code. Please review its features at <http://studentconduct.unc.edu/>. In particular, students should use quotation marks and author, title, and page number citations for all direct quotations in written assignments, and similar citations for paraphrased material, whether from assigned readings or other sources. Students should be especially careful not to misappropriate ideas or language taken from published sources or other students.

**SAKAI.** The syllabus, paper assignments, PowerPoints, web links, and any handouts will be available on the Sakai page for this course, under “Syllabus,” “Course Documents,” “Resources,” or “Assignments.”

**READING.** Reading assignments will normally consist of one chapter per week in the textbook, *Building the American Republic*, vol. 1, and one section of “Building Blocks,” a collection of short historical documents available on Sakai. Several more historical documents, available online, will also be assigned most weeks. Links to these documents are listed below in the “Schedule of Classes, Readings, and Assignments.” Finally, students will read two short autobiographies of prominent Americans, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* and *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, and write papers about them. Recitation sections will focus on discussing and analyzing these works, so students should make sure to read the assignment thoroughly before each recitation section.

To summarize, students should obtain the following works:

Harry L. Watson, *Building the American Republic: A Narrative History, Volume 1, to 1877* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018). Free copies of this book are available in Kindle, Epub, or PDF formats at <http://press.uchicago.edu/sites/buildingtheamericanrepublic/index.html>. Students may also purchase the printed edition at Student Stores or online.

Harry L. Watson, ed., *Building Blocks: Documents for Class Discussion*. Available as BUILDING BLOCKS.pdf under the “Resources” section of the Sakai site for this class.

Louis P. Masur, ed., *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2003). Please purchase *this* edition to access the editorial material and to keep all pagination consistent.

David W. Blight, ed., *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2003). Please purchase *this* edition to access the editorial material and to keep all pagination consistent.

### SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

(\*recitation sections on Thursday or Friday, as scheduled)

January 10	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>
January 12	The Earliest Americans. Lecture class; no recitations this week.
January 15	<b>MLK Holiday.</b>
January 17	Expanding Europe.

January 19	* <i>Building the American Republic (BTAR)</i> ch. 1, "First Americans, to 1550;" <i>BUILDING BLOCKS</i> , ch. 1; "The Island of Guanahani" and "The Natives," in Christopher Columbus, "Journal of the First Voyage of Columbus," pp. 110-115, <a href="http://www.americanjourneys.org/pdf/AJ-062.pdf">http://www.americanjourneys.org/pdf/AJ-062.pdf</a> .
January 22	Chesapeake Colonies.
January 24	Founding New England.
January 26	* <i>BTAR</i> ch. 2, "The First English Colonies, 1584–1676;" <i>BUILDING BLOCKS</i> , ch. 2. <a href="#">"What Can You Get By Warre": Powhatan Exchanges Views With Captain John Smith, 1608"</a> and <a href="#">"The Starving Time": John Smith Recounts the Early History of Jamestown, 1609</a> .
January 29	An Empire of Trade.
January 31	The Spread of Slavery.
February 2	* <i>BTAR</i> ch. 3, "Emerging Empire, 1676-1756;" <i>BUILDING BLOCKS</i> , ch. 3; <a href="#">"Our Plantation Is Very Weak": The Experiences of an Indentured Servant in Virginia, 1623</a> and <a href="#">"They That Are Born There Talk Good English": Hugh Jones Describes Virginia's Slave Society, 1724</a> .
February 5	Colonial Society.
February 7	Colonial Culture.
February 9	* <i>BTAR</i> ch. 4, "Colonial Society and Culture, 1676-1756;" <i>BUILDING BLOCKS</i> , ch. 4 and Louis P. Masur, ed., <i>The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin</i> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed. <b>PAPER DUE.</b>
February 12	Colonial Protests.
February 14	War for Independence. <i>BTAR</i> ch. 5, "The Era of Independence, 1756-1783;" <i>BUILDING BLOCKS</i> , ch. 5.
February 16	<b>MIDTERM TEST.</b> No recitations this week.
February 19	The Perils of Peacetime.
February 21	Choosing the Constitution.
February 23	* <i>BTAR</i> ch. 6, "A Federalist Republic, 1783-1789;" <i>BUILDING BLOCKS</i> , ch. 6; <a href="#">William Manning, "A Laborer," Explains Shays Rebellion in Massachusetts: "In as Plain a Manner as I Am Capable"</a> , <a href="#">"The Sentiments of a Labourer": William Manning Inquires in the Key of Liberty, 1798</a> ; <a href="#">"All Men Are Born Free and Equal": Massachusetts Yeomen Oppose the "Aristocratical" Constitution, January, 1788</a> ; and James Madison, "Federalist No. 10," at <a href="http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed10.asp">http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/fed10.asp</a> .
February 26	Federalists, 1789-1801.
February 28	Republicans, 1801-1815.
March 2	* <i>BTAR</i> ch. 7, "Federalists and Republicans, 1789-1815;" <i>BUILDING BLOCKS</i> , ch. 7; Thomas Jefferson, <i>Notes on the State of Virginia</i> , Queries XVIII and XIX at <a href="https://muse.jhu.edu/book/43979">https://muse.jhu.edu/book/43979</a> (login through Shibboleth); Alexander Hamilton, "Report on Manufactures" (excerpts) at <a href="http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&amp;psid=265">http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&amp;psid=265</a> .
March 5	Economic Change, 1815-1860.
March 7	Society Responds: Class, Gender, and Race

March 9	* <i>BTAR</i> , ch. 8, “Market Revolution in the North, 1815-1860;” <i>BUILDING BLOCKS</i> , ch. 8; <a href="#">“I Wove To-day”: Elizabeth Fuller Grows Up in Rural Massachusetts</a> ; <a href="#">The Lowell Mill Girls Go on Strike, 1836</a> ; <a href="#">“I Must Of Course Have Something Of My Own Before Many More Years Have Passed Over My Head”</a> : Sally Rice Leaves the Farm, 1838; <a href="#">“I Was a Cabinet-maker By Trade”</a> : A Working Man’s Recollections of America, 1825–35; <a href="#">“The Natural Tie Between Master and Apprentice has been Rent Asunder”</a> : An Old Apprentice Laments Changes in the Workplace, 1826; <a href="#">“We C”all On You to Deliver Us From the Tyrant’s Chain”</a> : Lowell Women Workers Campaign for a Ten Hour Workday;
March 12-16	<b>SPRING BREAK.</b>
March 19	The Cotton Kingdom.
March 21	The Second Slavery.
March 23	<i>BTAR</i> ch. 10, “The World of the South, 1815-1860;” <i>BUILDING BLOCKS</i> , ch. 10; Frederick Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> . <b>PAPER DUE.</b>
March 26	A Second Great Awakening, 1800-1840.
March 28	The Culture of Reform, 1815-1860. <i>BTAR</i> ch. 9, “Northern Culture and Reform, 1815-1860;” <i>BUILDING BLOCKS</i> , ch. 9;
March 30	<b>HOLIDAY.</b> No recitations this week.
April 2	Debating Slavery.
April 4	New Politics. <i>BTAR</i> ch. 11, “The Transformation of Politics, 1815–1836;” <i>BUILDING BLOCKS</i> , ch. 11.
April 6	<b>MIDTERM TEST.</b> No recitations this week.
April 9	The World of the West.
April 11	Manifest Destiny and War.
April 13	* <i>BTAR</i> ch. 12, “Wars for the West, 1836-1850;” <i>BUILDING BLOCKS</i> , ch. 12; “Declaration of Sentiments of the American Anti-Slavery Convention” at <a href="http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/abolitn/abeswlgct.html">http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/abolitn/abeswlgct.html</a> ; Sen. John C. Calhoun, “Slavery a Positive Good,” at <a href="http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/slavery-a-positive-good/">http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/document/slavery-a-positive-good/</a> ; John L. O’Sullivan, “The Great Nation of Futurity,” at <a href="https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Great_Nation_of_Futurity">https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Great_Nation_of_Futurity</a> and “Manifest Destiny,” at <a href="http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/manifest-destiny/john-osullivan-declares-americas-manifest-destiny-1845/">http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/manifest-destiny/john-osullivan-declares-americas-manifest-destiny-1845/</a> .
April 16	Sectional Crisis.
April 18	And the War Came...
April 20	* <i>BTAR</i> ch. 13, “The House Dividing, 1850-1861;” <i>BUILDING BLOCKS</i> , ch. 13; The American Yawp Sectional Crisis Reader, at <a href="http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/the-sectional-crisis/">http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/the-sectional-crisis/</a>
April 23	Home Fronts.
April 25	Emancipation and Peace.
<b>APRIL 30</b>	<b>FINAL EXAMINATION, 8:00 am, Bingham Hall 103.</b>