This survey is the first of a two-part introduction to U.S. history. It gives attention to, inter alia, pre-contact Indian civilizations and the effect of contact; patterns of colonization by several European nations; politics, religion, and society in the British mainland colonies; European settlements elsewhere in what became America; the development of slavery in the Western Hemisphere; the struggle among European powers for supremacy in North America; the causes, ideology, and implications of the American Revolution; the rise of political tension in the early republic; the growth of parties, industrialization, and abolitionism; sectional conflict, the crisis of union, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. It ends with the effective end of Reconstruction in 1877.

Generally, classes will be structured as a lecture and discussion. I expect students to attend class and to be prepared to participate in a discussion. Attendance is in your interest. Repeated absences will be taken up by the professor and can affect your grade. Discussions should be civil. I refer you to the very useful guidelines at: [http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/p4_1](http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/p4_1)

Exams will cover materials from lectures as well as the readings. If you must miss a class, I urge you to get notes from one of your colleagues.

Grades will be based upon a mid-term (37%), a final (50%), and questions (discussed below, 13%). I also monitor participation in class, and active participation can improve a close final grade. Any student who receives a “C-“ or lower on the mid-term exam must schedule a meeting with the professor to discuss the exam and class. Grading guidelines are posted to Blackboard. The final exam is scheduled for Wednesday, December 17, 2:00-4:00.

The add/drop deadline for this class is September 11; the withdrawal deadline is November 4.

Use of electronic devices (laptops, netbooks, telephones, etc.) during class is strictly prohibited.

The textbooks for this class are:


Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (any edition).
Other materials will be provided, posted on “Blackboard” under Documents or Library Reading. Only material listed as “Reading” is assigned; “Suggested Reading” and “Additional Reading” are listed for your benefit (and are certainly not a thorough or even balanced list of scholarship in the area). “Questions” on the syllabus may or may not be discussed in class.

Questions Assignment: Beginning with the second week of class (the week of September 8th), once each week that we have class up through and including the week of December 1, by no later than 8:00 a.m. on the day of class, each student must post in the Blackboard Discussion Board for that week a question concerning the readings for that day. (The question can be submitted for Monday, Wednesday, or Friday for the readings for that day. A question must be submitted each week, even if we meet fewer than three times.) The question might simply seek clarification of some point in the material. Preferably, the question should raise a broader matter of analysis or understanding and place the question in the context of the readings. For example, one might ask of the readings for the second day: “Given the relatively complex nature of pre-contact Native society and Natives’ extensive trade networks, not to mention the almost immediate brutal actions taken by Europeans, why were Natives relatively ineffective at organizing joint opposition (across tribal lines) to European incursions?” A question and any background to understand its context should be no longer than a paragraph. Students should also bring a copy of their questions to class. These questions will be graded and account for 13% of your grade. I encourage you to discuss questions on the readings with other students.

This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion.

Students with a disability requiring special consideration: Oberlin College will make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. If you are eligible to receive an accommodation and would like to request it for this course, please discuss it with me during the first two weeks of class. You will need to provide the Office of Disability Services (50 N. Professor St., Peters Hall Rm. G-27/28) with appropriate documentation.

Syllabus

Day 1: Wednesday, September 3: Introduction, Native Americans Pre-contact and Contact

Reading

Taylor, American Colonies, Chpt. 1.


Suggested Reading


**Additional Reading**


**Discussion Questions**

What limitations face the study of U.S. history?

What special difficulties are encountered in studying Native American history?

What did it mean to be “Indian” in the sixteenth century? To whom?

Neil Salisbury, a historian of Native America, alleges that many historians treat “American history as having been set in motion by the arrival of European explorers and colonizers.” Is this inevitable?

**Day 2: Friday, September 5: Colonizers**

**Reading**


**Additional Reading**


**Discussion Questions**

Did European contact mean genocide for American Indians?

Did European national rivalries interfere with or contribute to the colonization of America? Its development?

Must early (post-contact) American history be studied in conjunction with South American, African, and Asian history to provide adequate contextualization?

**Day 3: Monday, September 8: Spanish Conquest and New Spain**

**Reading**


Mexica (Aztec) & Tlaxcala Accounts of the Spanish Conquest, 1500s [http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/amerbegin/contact/text6/mexica_tlaxcala.pdf](http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/amerbegin/contact/text6/mexica_tlaxcala.pdf)

**Suggested Reading**


**Additional Reading**


**Discussion Questions**

Given the sixteenth century dominance of Spain in colonization, why do Britain and France overtake Spanish development?

Do Spanish immigrants to the New World differ significantly from later British and French immigrants? If so, why?
Has American history slighted Spanish colonial rule? To make sense of this period, must one study North American history (or American history generally) rather than U.S. history?

**Day 4: Wednesday, September 10: Spanish Frontiers**

**Reading**


“As They Had Been in Ancient Times:” Pedro Naranjo Relates the Pueblo Revolt, 1680 http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6527/


**Suggested Reading**


**Additional Reading**


**Discussion Questions**

What role does Catholicism play in the development of the southeast and southwest? Why is it more successful in creating lasting relationships and networks in the southwest?

Was the Pueblo Revolt a religious or political uprising?

Compare/contrast Spanish colonization with early colonization by Britain.
As historians, how should we cope with the asymmetry in Native and European source material for so much of history in the era of exploration and colonization?

How did racial relations develop differently in the colonial Southwest from the Southeast? Why?

**Day 5: Friday, September 12: Canada and Iroquois**

**Reading**


William A. Starna and José António Brandão, “From the Mohawk-Mahican War to the Beaver Wars: Questioning the Pattern,” *Ethnohistory*, 51:4 (Fall 1994): 726-50 (Blackboard).

**Additional Reading**

José António Brandão, “Your Fyre Shall Burn No More”: Iroquois Policy Toward New France and Its Native Allies to 1701 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).


**Discussion Questions**

Why are the Iroquois relatively successful in the seventeenth and eighteenth century against their Indian rivals?

Why do the English colonies give so much attention to and project so much power on the Iroquois?

Compare/contrast French colonization with early colonization by Britain.

**Day 6: Monday, September 15: Virginia**

**Reading**


**Additional Reading**


**Discussion Questions**

Was the Jamestown settlement a religious venture? Should it be evaluated as such?

Why does slavery start in Virginia?

What role does capitalism have in the success of the Virginia settlement? Does this differ significantly from European history at this time?

**Day 7: Wednesday, September 17: Chesapeake Colonies**

**Readings**


Jack P. Greene, Review, Edmund Morgan, “American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia,” *Political Science Quarterly*, 91:4 (Winter, 1976-1977): 742-743. (I am not going to post this; locating it electronically should be a relatively simple exercise in using the databases at Mudd Library. If you have problems, please let me know.)


~ 7 ~
Suggested Reading


Additional Reading


Discussion Questions

Does Morgan’s Thesis have explanatory power in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries?

Compare/contrast the reasons for men and women coming to the New World? What are the consequences of disproportionate sex ratios among immigrants?

Was Bacon’s Rebellion the first war for American independence? What should we make of it in the larger American narrative?

How significant is the English Civil War in Chesapeake history? The Glorious Revolution?

What role does Catholicism play in Maryland before 1689? After?

Day 8: Friday, September 19: New England

Reading


Examination of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson at the Court at Newton (1637): [http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/bdorsey1/41docs/30-hut.html](http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/bdorsey1/41docs/30-hut.html)


Suggested Reading

~ 8 ~

John Winthrop “A Modell of Christian Charity” (1630): http://history.hanover.edu/texts/winthmod.html


Additional Reading


Discussion Questions

Some argue that American capitalism starts in New England: Why? Is this reasonable?

Why are mortality rates so much lower in New England in the seventeenth century than in Virginia and Maryland?

Compare/contrast the impact of the British Civil War, Restoration, and Glorious Revolution on New England and the Chesapeake.

How should captive narratives from the 17th century be “read”?

What caused the New England witch trials? How do they fit into the American narrative? Is the Salem Witch Trial a significant matter for historic study and analysis or merely a matter of satisfying our prurient interests or sense of superiority?

~ 9 ~
Given Warren’s own concerns expressed at the end of her article, should we discount the entire narrative?

**Day 9: Monday, September 22: Puritans and Indians**

**Reading**


Jenny Hale Pulsipher, “‘Our Sages are Sageles’: A Letter on Massachusetts Indian Policy after King Philip’s War,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Ser., 58:2 (April 2001): 431-48 (Blackboard).


**Suggested Reading**


**Additional Reading**


**Discussion Questions**

Were Indian-Pilgrim relations initially based upon a racist model or did they involve an initial respect of the other culture? If the latter, when and how does this change?

Why were the Natives ultimately unsuccessful in King Philip’s War? Was this inevitable?

How does the ideology of the English settlers change from 1620 to 1676? Why?
Day 10: Wednesday, September 24: The West Indies

Reading


Additional Reading


Discussion Questions

What is the significance of the West Indies sugar plantations to later developments in American/British relations?

How did developing racial notions in England and the West Indies change the ideas of race and class in America?

Given their great wealth in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, why did the economies of the West Indies decline in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries?

Day 11: Friday, September 26: Carolina

Reading


Additional Reading


~ 11 ~


**Discussion Questions**

Why do Carolina colonists seek to replace the proprietary government with Crown government? Compare the treatment of proprietary governments in the Middle Colonies.

Were the Carolina proprietors successful in controlling the Native peoples of Carolina? Was this due to economic and technological dependence or other factors?

What are the environmental consequences of the Native trading system?

Why is Carolina successful in suppressing Spanish Florida?

**Day 12: Monday, September 29: Middle Colonies**

**Reading**


**Suggested Reading**


**Additional Reading**


**Discussion Questions**

What accounts for the relative success (given the nation’s size) of the Dutch in trade and colonization?

Why are the Iroquois more successful in trading relations with the Dutch (and later the English) than the River Indians?

Why were the Navigation Acts adopted by England? Did they serve as a good colonial policy?

Why is Pennsylvania described as the “best poor man’s country?”

How does religious diversity affect the Middle Colonies?

**Day 13: Wednesday, October 1: Revolutions**

**Reading**


**Suggested Reading**


**Additional Reading**

~ 13 ~

**Discussion Questions**

Was anti-Catholicism or mismanagement at the bottom of James II’s loss of the thrown?

How did the Glorious Revolution affect political theory in America?

How do French-English continental wars affect the colonies in this period?

**Day 14: Friday, October 3: The Atlantic**

**Reading**


**Additional Reading**


**Discussion Questions**

Can American history be properly understood outside of an Atlantic context?

How central is the issue of slavery to understanding American history?

Why does growing racial and ethnic diversity, in Taylor’s words, “increase[] the gap between freedom and slavery?”
How central is class conflict to developments in eighteenth century America? Is this period emblematic of Jefferson’s independent yeoman farmers?

How can we tell if women’s economic influence grows in this period, as Taylor suggests?

Compare/contrast racism involving Indians and African-Americans in this period (in origin, manifestation, and effect).

Day 15: Monday, October 6: Awakenings

Reading


Benjamin Franklin’s comments on George Whitefield (1739):
http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/becomingamer/ideas/text2/franklinwhitefield.pdf (Blackboard)


Suggested Reading


Additional Reading


Discussion Questions

Is the Great Awakening a coherent phenomenon of significance to American history or a construct primarily of historians?

What role does the “awakening” have on political, economic, and racial issues in America? Does the Great Awakening contribute significantly to the democratization of America? If so, how?
If the evangelicals of mid-century are, to some extent, social outcasts, how do they develop into the strongest religions of the early nineteenth century?

Day 16: Wednesday, October 8: French America

Reading

Taylor, American Colonies, Chpt. 16.


Suggested Reading


Additional Reading


Discussion Questions

Why are there so few colonists in New France? Louisiana? Why do so many emigrants return to France?

Why are the French more successful in their relations with Native Americans but less successful in colonization than the British?

Day 17: Friday, October 10: The Great Plains

Reading

Taylor, American Colonies, Chpt. 17.

**Additional Reading**


**Discussion Questions**

Does the horse demonstrate the success of Native cultural adaptation or the failure?

Compare and contrast Native gender roles to Euro-American notions of gender.

Native culture in North America had been relatively classless. How does class develop and how significant is it to Native culture in this period (and as American/Native relations develop)?

**Day 18: Monday, October 13: The Pacific**

**Reading**


**Suggested Reading**


**Discussion Questions**
Why has the history of the Pacific Northwest and early California been slighted in our understanding of American history?

How significant are colonial cultural influences in California? The Pacific Northwest?

Compare and contrast the efficacy of the California missions with missionary work in New France, New England and the other English colonies.

Day 19: Wednesday, October 15: Imperial Crisis and War

Reading


Suggested Reading


Additional Reading


~ 18 ~


**Discussion Questions**

Given its initial success, why does France lose the French and Indian War?

Vis-à-vis America, is the nature of the European conflict in the French and Indian War fundamentally different from earlier French/English conflicts?

Is the pan-Indian movement successful in Pontiac’s Rebellion?

How does the French and Indian War contribute to the coming of the American Revolution?

Was America bearing its reasonable share of the total cost of “empire” in the 1760s? Were differences between America and Britain primarily economic or political?

Americans are very proud to be “British citizens” at the end of the French and Indian War. How does this “Britishness” change before the American Revolution?

What role does religion play in the coming of the American Revolution?

**Day 20: Friday, October 17: Mid-term Exam**

The examination may include multiple choice, a timeline, short answer, and an essay question (grammar and writing count). Topics can include anything from the class discussions or the reading assignments.

**Day 21: Monday, October 27: The American Revolution**

**Reading**


Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (excerpts) (Blackboard)
Great Britain. Commissioners to Treat, Consult, and Agree upon the Means of Quieting the Disorders Now Subsisting in Certain of the Colonies, Plantations, and Provinces in North-America, Manifesto and Proclamation (1778) (Blackboard)

Suggested Reading


Additional Reading


**Discussion Questions**

Are British opposition politicians significant in the coming and ultimate success of the American Revolution?

Is the American Revolution a class conflict? A religious war?

How successful are African Americans in exploiting the opportunities of the American Revolution?

How significant is ideology to the coming and success of the American Revolution?

Could the American Revolution have been successful without the assistance of France?

As a people, what must we remember about the American Revolution?

**Day 22: Wednesday, October 29: The Critical Period and the Constitution**

**Reading**

The Articles of Confederation: [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/artconf.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/artconf.asp)


Letter from Thomas Jefferson to William S. Smith, November 13, 1787. (This is the “tree of liberty” letter: If you cannot find it readily on the web (from a reputable site), let me know.)

U.S. Constitution


Patrick Henry, Speech at Virginia Ratifying Convention Opposing the Constitution, June 5, 1788 (Blackboard).

**Suggested Reading**


**Additional Reading**


**Discussion Questions**

Was the “Critical Period” critical or is this a reactionary rationalization?

Were the Shaysites American patriots abused by a reactionary class?

Evaluate the successes and failures of state governments as inheritors of the Revolution.

Were the differences causing tension in the union in the 1780s primarily sectional, class-based, religious, …?
Why is the mythology of the Constitution’s history so important in America today?

What is the significance of sectional differences in the 1780s and as the Constitution is drafted? Are the larger fault-lines north-south or east-west? How significant is the Northwest Ordinance in the Critical Period? Beyond?

Day 23: Friday, October 31: Early Republic, Formation of Parties, and Revolution of 1800

Reading


Kentucky Resolution (1799): http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/kenres.asp

Letter from George Washington to Patrick Henry, January 15, 1799 (Blackboard)


Additional Reading:

Weisberger, America Afire.


Discussion Questions

How does an aversion to “faction” develop into the political parties of the 1790s?

Are parties healthy or even necessary in a republic? Why has a two-party system tended to dominate in America while most other developed democracies have multiple parties?

Was the Jefferson Revolution revolutionary?
American mythology has diversity as one of our greatest strengths. Have America’s successes been more dependent upon diversity or homogeneity?

Were the Francophiles of the 1790s defeated by political or economic considerations?

Given the results of his terms in office, does Washington deserve the encomiums that he receives?

How should Hamilton be judged by history in light of his performance from 1789-1800?

Day 24: Monday, November 3: Jeffersonians, Pan-Indian Resistance, and War of 1812

Reading

Thomas Jefferson’s First Inaugural: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/jefinau1.asp

Marbury v. Madison, 5 U.S. 137 (1803) (excerpt) (Blackboard)


Suggested Reading


Additional Reading:


~ 24 ~
Discussion Questions

Why is Jefferson, a strict constructionist, willing to make the Louisiana Purchase without a constitutional amendment?

Does America develop as a Jeffersonian Republic or as federalist nation?

Why is the War of 1812 sometimes referred to as the Second American Revolution? Does that make sense? Is Alan Taylor’s description – The Civil War of 1812 – more reasonable?

Does the War of 1812 launch American western imperialism?

Is the Hartford Convention a serious threat?

What happens to Pan-Indianism in this period?

Day 25: Wednesday, November 5: The Era of Good Feelings and Rise of Jackson

Reading


Monroe Doctrine, 22-23, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llac&fileName=041/llac041.db&recNum=8

Monroe Doctrine, Office of the Historian, Department of State: https://history.state.gov/milestones/1801-1829/monroe

Day 26: Friday, November 7: Jacksonian Democracy and the Second Party System

Reading

John Quincy Adams’ Inaugural Address: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/qadams.asp


Suggested Reading

**Additional Reading**

Michael F. Holt, *Political Parties and American Political Development from the Age of Jackson to the Age of Lincoln: From the Age of Jackson to the Age of Lincoln* (Louisiana State University Press, 1992).

**Day 27: Monday, November 10: Market Revolution**

**Reading**


**Additional Reading**


**Discussion Questions**

How does the industrial revolution impact the lives of ordinary people? Politics? Culture?

**Day 28: Wednesday, November 12: Expanding America: Mexican War**

**Reading**

Howe, “The War Against Mexico,” in *What God Hath Wrought*, 744-91. (This book is available electronically through Mudd Library.)
José Enrique de la Peña, excerpts from *With Santa Anna in Texas* (1836) (Blackboard)


**Suggested Reading**


**Additional Reading**


**Day 29: Friday, November 14: Gender**

**Reading**


**Suggested Reading**


**Additional Reading**


**Discussion Questions**

How can we tell if women’s economic influence grows in this period?
Day 30: Monday, November 17: Religion, Reform, and American Culture

Reading


Additional Reading


Discussion Questions

How do revivals relate to gender?

As a historian, how should we evaluate the development of various religions in this period? Can we separate the religious, cultural, political, and economic influences?

What forces encourage the movements toward reform, including abolitionism, temperance, Sunday schools, women’s rights, etc.?

Day 31: Wednesday, November 19: Social Change

Reading

~ 28 ~


**Additional Reading**


**Discussion Questions**

If Neem is correct, what, if anything, has changed?

How should we evaluate the significance of failed social movements? Is all of this just an effort to create agency where little existed?

**Day 32: Friday, November 21: Sectionalism and the Problem of Slavery**

**Reading**


**Suggested Reading**


**Day 33: Monday, November 24: Sectionalism and the Problem of Slavery** (continued)

**Reading**


**Suggested Reading**


**Additional Reading**


**Day 34: Wednesday, November 26: Sectionalism and the Problem of Slavery**

**Reading**

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, 1-128.

**Day 35: Monday, December 1: Civil War**

**Reading**


Lincoln, Cooper Union Address (1860)
http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/cooper.htm

Sumner, Crimes Against Kansas Speech (1856) (excerpts)
http://www.sewanee.edu/faculty/Willis/Civil_War/documents/Crime.html

**Suggested Reading**

Lincoln, Speech on Repeal of Missouri Compromise (1854) (excerpts)
http://mailer.fsu.edu/~njumonvi/Lincoln-Missouri.html


**Day 36: Wednesday, December 3: Civil War (continued)**

**Reading**


Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address

Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation

Lincoln’s Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction

Lincoln’s, Second Inaugural Address

I have not provided links for these four documents. They should be easy for you to locate on the web. Do be cognizant, however, of the source for the document you read. Is it reputable? (You can usually, although not always, be confident in an .edu or .gov website; and many .com websites are perfectly acceptable.)

~ 31 ~
Day 37: Friday, December 5: Reconstruction

Reading


Heather Cox Richardson, “Introduction” and “A New Middle Ground,” in West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007): 1-7, 121-47 (Blackboard)

President Johnson’s Declaration of Amnesty in 1865, at, e.g., https://www.britannica.com/presidents/article-9116918

Suggested Reading


Day 38: Monday, December 8: Reconstruction (continued)

Reading

The 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution


Suggested Reading

Elliott West, “Reconstructing Race,” Western Historical Quarterly 34.1 (Spring 2003): 7-26 (Blackboard).

Day 39: Wednesday, December 10

Scheduled visit to the exhibit “Life and Art in Early America” at the Allen Memorial Art Museum.

Day 40: Friday, December 12: Catch-up and Review

~ 32 ~