

Misericordia University
Department of History and Government

HIS 105W: Turning Points in US History

Course Credits: 3

Semester: Spring 2017

Prerequisites: None

Dr. Jennifer M. Black

Course Description:

From the University Catalog:

This course will examine episodes in history that have resulted in transformations to life in America. The scope of the course will range from colonial settlement to the computer age, and will cover topics in government, law, science, medicine, culture, communication, and the formation of national identity. Using a wide range of primary source documents, students will study the forces that led to these transformative events, the decisions that set them in motion, and the outcomes and consequences that resulted.

Introduction

This course examines key moments in American History with a particular focus on visual culture and memory. Through America's images, we can understand American history—both the problems and promises of society as it developed from a colony in the British Empire to one of the world's industrial and post-industrial super powers.

Course Objectives

Students enrolled in this course will gain a thorough understanding of American history from the Revolution through the Civil Rights movement, including the political, economic, social, and cultural issues that plagued America's first descendants and had a lasting impact on her development through the mid-twentieth century. Students will encounter various topics each week through lectures, readings, and primary sources—including both images and documents. Engaging with these materials, students will develop critical thinking skills to find their own truths in American history: learning to navigate between contemporary voices, visual representations, and historians' interpretations of the past. By the end of the semester, students will have developed their analytical writing skills to craft their own understanding about the American past.

Course Disciplinary Learning Objectives:

- Identify major events in local, national, and international history
- Identify different historic perspectives between historians in particular historical contexts
- Analyze primary and secondary sources
- Develop an argument that evaluates evidence within a specific historical context

Course Goals

- ❖ HIS 105 contributes to the following University goals for undergraduate education:
 3. Consider ethical issues and values and make reasoned judgments about them.
 4. Think independently and creatively, analyze information critically, and solve problems.
 5. Respect and understand cultural differences.

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7. Communicate and interact effectively.

❖ HIS 105 contributes to the following goals of the Core Curriculum:

1. Develop effective communication skills including oral, written and/or artistic presentations.
2. Develop and enhance critical thinking and problem solving skills.
4. Develop an understanding of the central concepts and ideas of the arts, humanities and the social, behavioral, mathematics and natural sciences.

*These goals will be assessed through written assignments and class participation.

Required Texts

Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (Norton, 1998). ISBN: 9780393319620

*Additional articles on reserve in the library and available on Blackboard.

Recommended Text

Jennifer D. Keene, Saul Cornell, and Edward T. O'Donnell, *Visions of America: A History of the United States*, 2nd ed., vol.1 to 1877 (Pearson, 2013). ISBN: 9780205092673

Course Assignments & Evaluation

Writing-intensive courses typically require students to complete 12-15 pages of written analysis in lieu of taking examinations. Thus, there are three writing assignments due in this course. Each of these will involve image and / or document analysis and will test your understanding of the course material and objectives. The final course grade will be calculated as follows:

Participation	(15%)
Paper 1 / Primary source assignment	(30%)
Paper 2	(20%)
Paper 3	(35%)

Participation: In this course you will be graded on your active participation in class discussions. This includes coming to class on-time and prepared (with readings, notes, etc.), ready to ask questions, analyze images, and digest the authors' arguments. You are encouraged to question and think critically about the material presented and use class as a place for exchanging those thoughts and questions with other students. Each student will be graded on their active, verbal participation in classroom discussions each week, as well as their attendance at and contributions to in-class writing activities, peer review, discussions, and paper conferences. Regular attendance at class meetings is thus essential to your success in this course (see attendance policy below).

Papers & exams: In this course you will be asked to synthesize course readings and classroom discussions in a series of critical essays designed to showcase both your understanding of the course material and your ability to apply its concepts. Detailed instructions for each of the papers (and the take-home final exam) will follow. You are required to attend paper conferences for papers 1a and 2; additional paper conferences are optional.

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Formatting: Please be sure that your essays are typed, on plain white paper, with all the margins set to one-inch. You should double space the body of the paper only (not the headings and title). Please use Times New-Roman 12-point font size. You will be graded on both the style and content of your papers; thus, please be sure to proofread for correct grammar and spelling. Make sure your paper is clearly organized with an introduction, argument (thesis statement), topic sentences, evidence, and conclusion. Papers must meet the minimum word-count requirement to receive full credit; however no penalty will be given for papers exceeding the suggested limit. You are required to submit a hard copy in class AND upload a copy to the Blackboard (assignments listed under “Content”) by the due date and time.

Late Policy: Papers are due at the beginning of class on the date due. Late penalties begin at the end of class, and papers will incur a grade deduction of five points for each day late with a maximum penalty of 25 points (i.e. if the original grade is 85/100 and the paper was submitted one day late, it drops to an 80/100).

Weekly Schedule

Readings with an asterisk (*) are available on Blackboard

Week 1 (Jan 16-20): Introduction / Early Colonial Life

Reading: Foner, introduction (9p)
*James Loewen, *Lies Across America* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1999) p36-43
(Recommended: *Visions*, chapter 2 p34-63)

Week 2 (Jan 23-27): Race & Gender in the Colonies

Reading: **Visions*, chapter 3 “Growth, Slavery, and Conflict” p64-95

Week 3 (Jan 30-Feb 1): Towards Revolution: Taxes and Protests

Reading: Foner, chapters 1-2 (42p)
(Recommended: *Visions*, chapter 4 p96-127)

Week 4 (Feb 6-10): Republicanism & the Revolution Revisited

Reading: Foner, chapter 3 (20p)
*[Covart podcast on Schocket](#)
(Recommended: *Visions*, chapter 5 p128-155)

*PAPER 1A CONFERENCES (required) by appointment only on Tuesday 2/7/17 and Wednesday 2/8/17 (submit draft online 24hrs in advance)

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*PAPER 1A DUE in class and on Bb, Friday, 2/10/17

Week 5 (Feb 13-17): Workers, Farmers, Reformers, and Slaves

Reading: Foner, chapter 4 (25p)
(Recommended: *Visions*, chapters 8-11 p220-339)

Week 6 (Feb 20-24): The Sectional Crisis

Reading: **Visions*, chapter 12 p340-373
*[Lincoln-Douglas Debates, read debates 2, 3, 4](#)

Week 7 (Feb 27-Mar 3): Emancipation, Towards Reconstruction

Reading: Foner, chapter 5 (20p)
*[Emancipation Proclamation](#)
(Recommended: *Visions*, chapters 13-14 p374-437)

Week 8 (Mar 6-10): NO CLASS- SPRING BREAK

Week 9 (Mar 13-17): The Memory of the Civil War

Reading: *W. E. B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935), chapter 17
*Kirk Savage, on *The Freedman*, in *The Nineteenth Century Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Schwartz & Przyblyski (NY: Routledge, 2004), p262-276
*W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2005), introduction (11p)

Week 10 (Mar 20-24): Reform at the End of the Century

Reading: Foner, chapter 7 (22p)

*PAPER 2 CONFERENCES (required), by appointment only on Tuesday 3/21/17 and Wednesday 3/22/17 (submit draft online 24hrs in advance)

*PAPER 2 DUE Friday 3/24/17, in class and on Bb

Week 11 (Mar 27-29): The New Deal

Reading: Foner, chapter 9 (23p)
*["Stuff you Missed in History Class" podcasts on Redlining \(2 parts\)](#)

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Week 12 (Apr 3-7): Rights in the Postwar Years

Reading: Foner, chapters 10-11 (52p)
*[Truman Doctrine \(1947\)](#)

Week 13 (Apr 10-12): The Civil Rights Movement

Reading: Foner, chapter 12 (28p)

*NO CLASS April 14-17: Easter Break

Week 14 (Apr 19-21): Civil Rights, cont'd.

Reading: Foner, p307-319
*Jon Wiener, on Civil War Centennial, in *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture*, ed. Fahs & Waugh (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004), p237-257.

Week 15 (Apr 24-28): Vietnam & Its Memory

Reading: (Recommended: *Visions*, chapter 27, on blackboard)

Week 16 (May 1-3): Can We Separate "History" from Memory (and Politics)?

Reading: *Sources on the Confederate Flag:
John Coski on NPR, [June 2005](#) and [June 2015](#)
[Coski, "Embattled Banner," *Historynet*, July 2015](#)
[Coates, "Take Down the Flag," *The Atlantic*, June 2015](#)
[French, "Don't Take Down the Flag," *The National Review*, June 2015](#)
[Kytte, "Leave the Monuments," *The Atlantic*, June 2015](#)
[Handley-Cousins, "Heritage is Not History," *NursingClio*, July 2015](#)
*Brundage, *The Southern Past*, conclusion (25p)

* Optional Paper 3 conferences, by appointment only Tuesday 5/2/17 and Wednesday 5/3/17
(submit your draft online 24hrs in advance)

*PAPER 3 DUE Monday 5/8/17 by 3pm in my office and on Bb