



# American History to 1865

## COURSE GUIDE

History 211

Fall 2004

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Hours: Mon. & Wed. 1:00-2:00

and by appointment

### Scope of this Course

This course is designed to take you from the initial discovery and settlement of North America through the Civil War. We will explore major events and changes during the first four hundred years of American history, as a scattered collection of diverse colonies transformed themselves into a precarious union of states. Along the way, we'll study the impact of ordinary citizens as well as of famous individuals on the development of American society. Though we know the results of the major events of this period, it is important to keep in mind that the people who participated in the events we will study did not know what the consequences of their choices would be. One of the great challenges of studying history is trying to understand the past from the perspective of the people who lived it, rather than imposing our own present judgment on their choices.

Doing history requires much more than simply memorizing names and dates. In fact, there are many different kinds of history, and diverse, often conflicting, perspectives about what the past means. These different ways of understanding the past make the study of history more compelling than simply filling in blanks or listing endless facts. Therefore, beyond our investigation of what happened in the past, a primary goal of this course is to introduce you to skills used in the "historian's craft." These include recognizing the difference between primary and secondary sources, using library resources effectively, analyzing a variety of types of evidence, and constructing meaningful arguments.

## Goals of this Course

By the end of the semester, you should not only be able to speak knowledgeably about major events and people in American history; you will also have mastered the basic analytical skills historians use in the practice of history. Specific course goals include the following:

I. To evaluate the processes of change in the development of American society and culture before 1865. For each of the distinct periods we will study you should be able to:

- A. Compare and contrast the experiences of different groups of North Americans based on factors such as race, class, gender, religious belief, ethnic origin, regional variation.
- B. Assess the impact of ordinary citizens as well as of famous individuals on the development of American society.
- C. Identify the major forces for historical change and critically evaluate the significant consequences of those changes for the development of American society.

II. To acquire basic skills used by historians. By the end of the semester you should be able to:

- A. Recognize the difference between facts and interpretations.
- B. Critically analyze primary documents, keeping in mind the context in which they were produced.
- C. Be able to identify thesis statements, recognize the ways that historians employ historical evidence to defend a thesis, and evaluate arguments presented by historians in scholarly secondary sources.
- D. Assess differing interpretations of the same event or issue and form your own judgment based on evidence.
- E. Present your judgment logically and clearly using specific evidence to support your position.

## Required Text

Brown, Victoria Bissell and Timothy J. Shannon. *Going to the Source: The Bedford Reader in American History. Volume 1: To 1877*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004.

### Attendance Policy

Faithful attendance is essential for your learning in this course. Therefore, beyond the part attendance plays in the overall participation grade, **one point will be subtracted from the student's final grade for each absence after the first 3**. Beyond even this penalty, a student who seriously neglects attendance and preparation risks failing the course.

## Evaluation

Participation:	10%
Research Exercise	15%
Unit Tests	75%

### **Participation: 10%**

This assessment will be based on three criteria:

1. Consistent attendance. This is not a traditional lecture course. We will be critically evaluating the content of the course resources and practicing the application of analytical skills during each class period. You will not be able to make up for your absences by copying someone else's notes. For this reason, consistent attendance is essential to your learning in this course.
2. Thorough preparation for class. The most important thing you can do for your learning in this class is read assignments **before** class discussion. We will generally spend a week on each chapter and you will find that you may need to read parts of chapters more than once to fully master the content. I will evaluate your preparedness from time to time through a variety of in-class writing assignments.
3. Regular contributions to class discussions. The success of this course for your learning depends on the quality of the debate you engage in with your peers. Discussions will take place during every class meeting in both small group exercises and as a whole class. In order to create a good climate for everyone to participate, please follow these discussion guidelines:
  - Be ready to share and explain your opinions. Feel free to disagree with others, but be specific in your own assertions and back them up with evidence.
  - Listen carefully and respond to other members of the group. Be willing to change your mind when someone demonstrates an error in your logic and use of facts.
  - Do not hesitate to ask for clarification of any point or term you do not understand.
  - Make your point succinctly, avoid repetition, and stick to the subject.

### **Research Exercise: 15%**

You will complete one research exercises that will require you to identify and evaluate a scholarly book and journal article. Specific instructions will be provided well in advance of the due date (due 15 November). Late assignments will be penalized. Assignments that are more than one week late will not be accepted without an extremely compelling explanation.

### **Unit Tests: 75% (25% each)**

There will be three tests during the semester given at the end of each unit. These tests will require you to demonstrate your understanding of the major learning objectives for the unit. Tests will be a combination of short-answer and objective questions, take-home, and open-book. No make-up tests will be offered.

The tests are scheduled as follows:

Unit 1 – distributed in class on 15 September; test due **at the beginning** of class on 17 September

Unit 2 – distributed in class on 13 October; test due **at the beginning** of class on 15 October.

Unit 3 – distributed on 3 December; test due **by noon** on 6 December.

## Class Schedule

16 August      Introductions

### Unit 1: Colonial America

18 August              Chapter 1: The Susquehannocks Discover Europeans  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 1-27

20 August              Chapter 1: The Susquehannocks Discover Europeans  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 1-27

23 August              Chapter 1: The Susquehannocks Discover Europeans  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 1-27

25 August              Chapter 2: Coming to America  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 28-44

27 August              Chapter 2: Coming to America  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 28-44

30 August              Chapter 2: Coming to America  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 28-44

1 September            Chapter 3: Colonial America's Most Wanted  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 45-64

3 September            Chapter 3: Colonial America's Most Wanted  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 45-64

6 September            **Labor Day holiday**

8 September            Chapter 3: Colonial America's Most Wanted  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 45-64

10 September Chapter 4: Germ Warfare on the Colonial Frontier  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 65-88

13 September Chapter 4: Germ Warfare on the Colonial Frontier  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 65-88

15 September Unit Review  
**Unit 1 test distributed**

17 September **Unit 1 Test due**

## **Unit 2: Revolution and Early Republic**

20 September Chapter 5: Toasting Rebellion  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 89-110

22 September Chapter 5: Toasting Rebellion  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 89-110

24 September Chapter 5: Toasting Rebellion  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 89-110

27 September Chapter 6: The Question of Female Citizenship  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 111-130

29 September Chapter 6: The Question of Female Citizenship  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 111-130

1 October Chapter 6: The Question of Female Citizenship  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 111-130

4 October Chapter 7: Debating the Constitution  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 131-151

6 October Chapter 7: Debating the Constitution  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 131-151

8 October Chapter 7: Debating the Constitution  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 131-151

**11 October FALL BREAK**

13 October Unit 2 Review  
**Unit 2 Test distributed**

15 October **Unit 2 Test due**

### **Unit 3: Antebellum United States**

18 October Chapter 8: Family Values  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 152-173

20 October Chapter 8: Family Values  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 152-173

22 October Chapter 8: Family Values  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 152-173

25 October Chapter 9: King Cotton  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 174-196

27 October Chapter 9: King Cotton  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 174-196

29 October Chapter 9: King Cotton  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 174-196

1 November Chapter 10: The West in Jacksonian Arts  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 197-220

3 November Chapter 10: The West in Jacksonian Arts  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 197-220

5 November Chapter 10: The West in Jacksonian Arts  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 197-220

8 November Chapter 11: Conversions and Camp Meetings in the Second Great Awakening  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 221-243

10 November Chapter 11: Conversions and Camp Meetings in the Second Great Awakening  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 221-243

12 November Chapter 11: Conversions and Camp Meetings in the Second Great Awakening  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 221-243

15 November Chapter 12: On and Off the Record  
**Research Exercise due**  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 244-270

17 November Chapter 12: On and Off the Record  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 244-270

19 November Chapter 12: On and Off the Record  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 244-270

22 November Chapter 13: The Illustrated Civil War  
**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 271-297

24-26 November **THANKSGIVING holiday**

29 November Chapter 13: The Illustrated Civil War

**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 271-297

1 December                      Chapter 13: The Illustrated Civil War

**Read:** *Going to the Source*, pp. 271-297

3 December                      Unit 3 Review

**Unit 3 Test distributed**

6 December                      **Unit 3 Test due**