

HIST 103 – United States History To 1877
Fall 2014

Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisite Courses: None

Course Description: This course offers students an introduction to the History of the United States from before Native American contact with Europeans through the end of Reconstruction in 1877. This class will follow the development of America as a nation, advances in technology, and the varied means by which Americans met social and economic challenges. Students will be introduced to key events, people, and trends fundamental to any course in American History. Within and beyond these key events, this course allows students significant freedom to explore those areas of American History of greatest interest to them.

Course Objectives:

This course has three objectives.

1. Students will be able to identify key historical events and people and the forces surrounding those events. In other words, students will have a grasp of the basic elements of early American History.
2. Students will take from this course the many skills that the study of History provides:
 - a. Students will learn how to evaluate sources and how to cite them.
 - b. Students will learn how to craft a thesis and support it.
3. Students will take from this course the unique preparation that a digital course offers for a digital age. More and more work is done online, and this requires a new kind of professionalism. The ability to assert one's position in a credible and collegial manner is crucial to communication through electronic media. Proper grammar is of the utmost importance in establishing one's credibility in a world where the written word is the primary means of communication as is the case in digital communication. Particularly in the online world, the written word represents people. This course is designed to prepare students for working in a digital community.

Discussion:

- 16 Weekly Discussions
- Chicago Citation Exercise
- Primary Source Exercise
- Structuring an Argument Exercise
- Crafting a Thesis Exercise

The heart of this course is participation. The weekly discussion fora have four purposes:

- To explore and analyze the readings.
- To build the skills required to craft and support an argument.
- To build writing skills.
- To teach students how to thrive in a professional digital community.

Papers: Because you will write 500 - 1,000 words each week in discussion posts, there are only 2 papers of 1,000 words each. In this class you will learn how to argue logically and with proper grammar and source citation to ensure credibility. There is also an optional Extra Credit Paper. Details are available in the classroom.

Essays are thesis-based, 1,000 words at minimum and written in the citation style of the student's choosing (Chicago, APA, MLA). Students will produce papers that are polished and free of typos and grammatical errors. There will be abundant opportunity in the Weekly Discussion Boards to fix grammatical problems. Students will explore a topic of their own choosing; students will argue a point, and will use primary source evidence and the text book to support their arguments.

Exam Procedures and Policies:

- How: Quizzes and the final exam may be taken online.
- When: They may be taken anytime during the semester.
- Where: They may be taken at any computer with internet access.
- Conditions: Quizzes have 1 hour time limits; the final exam has a 2 hour limit.
- Expectations: There are 4 quizzes (non-cumulative) with 25 questions each. The final comprehensive exam has 100 questions. All questions are multiple choice.

Delivery Method: All work is submitted online through Dakota College's Moodle system.

Technology Required: Students must have access to a computer with Internet Explorer 5.0 or higher or with Netscape 4.0 or higher. In addition, students will need some sort of word processing software that can save files in .rtf format.

Textbook/Course Materials:

- Title: *American Passages: A History of the United States*, Volume 1: To 1877
- Edition: 4th
- Author: Ayers, Gould, Oshinsky, and Soderlund
- Publisher: Wadsworth Publishing
- ISBN: 978-0-547-16631-5
- Approximate Cost: \$88 used - \$125 new
- Other Materials: Free supplemental and primary source materials via the course site.
- Book for Optional Extra Credit Paper: Skjelver, *Massacre: Daughter of War* (Goodwyfe Press, 2004). ISBN: 978-0974862804

Instructor Information:

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