Readings in U.S. History to 1865
HIST 5320 – Spring 2015
W–4:30-7:20 / LART 310

Contact Information:
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Office Hours: TR 10:30-11:50, W: 4-4:30, and by appt.

Course Description:

This graduate readings course provides an intensive survey of content relevant to the teaching of the first half of the U.S. History survey. The course readings proceed both chronologically and thematically. Each week we will focus on argument, evidence, interpretation, method, and style as we situate these readings within current historiographical debates. We will also propose various methods for incorporating what we have learned from these readings into the teaching of American history through the Civil War. Upon completing the course, students will have written a textbook analysis, a syllabus for a course covering the first half of the U.S. History survey, and a reflection paper on the ways in which the course readings can enhance the teaching of American history.

Required Books:

- Bruce Dorsey, Reforming Men and Women: Gender in the Antebellum City (2002).
- Drew Gilpin Faust, This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War (2007).

Course Requirements:

Course Participation (20%): Attendance and participation in class are mandatory. More than two absences may result in your dismissal from the class. If you are having medical problems or foresee habitual lateness, notify me immediately. Communication is key. Moreover, failure to participate in class discussions will also significantly lower this portion of your grade. All students are expected to complete the weekly reading assignments before class and be prepared to participate actively, respectfully, and intelligently. To facilitate good discussions, all students (except for that day's discussion facilitator) need to arrive to class with a typed “ticket to class.” These tickets are part of your course participation grade and should demonstrate student understanding of each text; yet, they need not be written as essays. Instead, students should write out their
answers to the following questions individually. With each answer written single spaced, each ticket should be about one page in length.

1. What is the book’s primary argument?
2. How is the book organized?
3. What types of sources does the author use to support their interpretation(s)?
4. What are the book’s historiographical contributions?
5. Select one statement that you find particularly controversial, unclear, or significant. Explain.
6. What are the book’s strengths and weaknesses?
7. How might this text be used in the teaching of the U.S. history survey? (Do not merely state that the book could be assigned to survey students. Think deeper about how it could inform a lecture on the subject or how a part of it could be used for an in-class activity or paper assignment.

Discussion Facilitation (5%): Each week one student will facilitate the class discussion. The facilitator should start by providing a brief description of the author’s professional career. The facilitator should then answer questions one through five from the ticket to class guidelines. At the conclusion of these opening comments, which typically last about 10 minutes, the facilitator should lead the discussion with a set of questions. These questions must be emailed to the professor by 10:00 pm the night before class. The facilitator should conclude with question six from the ticket to class. The professor will lead the discussion on question seven.

Textbook Analysis (25%): Each student will write a 4-5 page analysis on how one particular individual/era/event in American history has been interpreted in four different textbooks. For example, one could choose to examine how different textbook authors depict Thomas Paine, Preconquest America, or the U.S. War with Mexico. Then, the student should hone in on similarities and differences in terms of each authors’ approach and coverage. Regarding the selection of texts, there are several ways to go about this. One could compare traditional texts with those that are overtly political, such as Howard Zinn’s A People’s History of the United States and Michael Allen’s and Larry Schweikart’s A Patriot’s History of the United States. Another option would be to look at textbooks from different time periods, such as a text from the 1920s, another from the 1950s, another from the 1980s, and one from the 21st century. If possible, student analyses should attempt to reference any possible connections with the course readings as well. This paper must be double-spaced with one-inch margins and 12 pt. font.

U.S. History Survey Syllabus (25%): Each student will design a syllabus for the first half of the U.S. history survey course. This syllabus should be fully detailed in terms of a course description, learning objectives, required primary and secondary texts, lecture titles, weekly reading assignments (with exact page/chapter numbers), grade breakdown, and all assessments. The syllabus calendar should be based on a MWF course for the spring 2015 UTEP academic calendar. Included with the syllabus should be a sample primary source workshop. Thus, one must attach a copy of their primary source, explicit instructions for their workshop, discussion questions, and any handouts. Lastly, each student should also include some sort of assessment. This assignment should be geared toward college freshmen and can be constructed in a variety of creative ways, such as an in-class writing assignment, an exam, a map activity, a group presentation, etc… All instructions and handouts must be included.

Reflection Paper (25%): Each student will write a 6-7 page reflection paper on the ways in which the course readings could be incorporated into the teaching of the survey course. Students must reference how the course readings, their textbook analysis, and class discussions informed the creation of their syllabus/course design. Students must also discuss how the course readings might augment lectures and/or be used to create in-class activities and assessments. Lastly, students should explain the challenges they foresee in teaching the U.S. history survey course. This paper must be double-spaced with one-inch margins and 12 pt. font.
**Academic Dishonesty:** A student must not adopt or reproduce ideas, words, or statements of another person without appropriate acknowledgment. A student must give credit to the originality of others and acknowledge another whenever he or she quotes another person's actual words; paraphrases another person's words; uses another person's ideas, opinion or theory; or borrows facts, statistics, or other material, unless the information is common knowledge. It is official UTEP policy that all suspected cases of plagiarism must be referred to the Dean of Students for investigation.

**Disabilities:** I will make any reasonable accommodations for students with limitations due to disabilities. Please talk to me to discuss any special needs you might have within the first two weeks of class.

**Calendar and Assignments:**

**Jan. 21:**
- Introductions, course overview, and discussion facilitation sign up

**Jan. 28:**
- Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country*
- Facilitator: Clavo

**Feb. 4:**
- Anderson, *Creatures of Empire*
- Facilitator: Robert

**Feb. 11:**
- Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*
- Facilitator: Michael

**Feb. 18:**
- Lepore, *New York Burning*
- Facilitator: Janice

**Feb. 25:**
- Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*
- Facilitator: Mayra

**Mar. 4:**
- Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812*
- Facilitator: Keith

**Mar. 11:**
- **Spring Break!**
Mar. 18:
- Watson, *Liberty and Power*
- Facilitator: Micha
- **Textbook Analysis due!**

Mar. 25:
- Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women*
- Facilitator: Danielle

Apr. 1:
- Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*
- Facilitator: Eddie

Apr. 8:
- Johnson, *Soul by Soul*
- Facilitator: Christine

Apr. 15:
- Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*
- Facilitator: Pat
- **U.S. History Survey Syllabus due!**

Apr. 22:
- Greenburg, *Manifest Manhood*
- Facilitator: Olivia

Apr. 29:
- Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*
- Facilitator: Brad?

May 6:
- **No Class!**

May 13:
- **Reflection Paper due!**

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*Read this syllabus carefully for it contains important information about this course's requirements and assignments. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus over the course of the semester.*