

Barstow Community College
History 2A
Survey of United States History
(foundations to the Reconstruction era)
Paul Rittman, Instructor
paul@paulrittman.com
paulrittman.com/history

Course Description:

Political, economic, and social development of the United States from the English settlement of the Americas, to the Civil War.

Textbook: Tindall, George Brown, and David E. Shi. *America: A Narrative History, Vol. I.* 7th ed. Norton, 2004.

Availability:

I will be available to talk to students before and after the class meets. If you have a question that you would like feedback on during the week, feel free to email me at the above email address.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will have an understanding of the

1. the economic and religious roots of English exploration and settlement of the Americas
2. political and philosophical background of the English colonists
3. immediate political issues confronting the colonists in their struggles with England
4. Declaration of Independence and the Revolutionary War
5. Articles of Confederation, the reasons for the adoption of the Constitution, the issues around its ratification, and the changes the Constitution made in the government of the states
6. strict vs. loose interpretations of federal powers; constitutional questions about judiciary
7. impact of the Monroe Doctrine on the Americas
8. Bank War and the positions taken by both sides; disagreements about tariffs and the Nullification Crisis of 1832
9. Mexican-American War
10. causes and result of the Civil War
11. Reconstruction (both Presidential and Radical) and the southern response

Grading:

Final grades will be allotted according to the following percentage scale:

A	90%
B	80%
C	70%
D	60%
F	below 60%

The different types of assignments are given below, with the total number of points assigned to each category:

Participation	5%
Exams	45% (15% for each of three exams)
Essays	30% (15% for each of two essays)
Essay writing assignment	5%
Primary source assignments	15%

Exams

The tests will be short-answer and essay questions. We will have three such exams during the semester, each worth 15 percent of the total grade. Each will cover only the material since the previous exam, i.e., none will be cumulative. The exams will have both short-answer and essay questions, covering material from lectures, the text, and the primary sources readings.

No electronic media are allowed at all during exams—no cell phones, no mp3 players, no cds or headsets at all. If a student is caught looking at printed materials, or on another student's exam, their exam will be given an automatic 0, regardless of whether they choose to continue taking that exam or not. When taking any exam, you will need to put any papers, books, or other materials inside a closed binder, folder, or backpack. I will not give an exam to any student who has loose papers lying on their desk, or anywhere else nearby them. Students who fail to comply with this will not be given extra time to complete that particular exam, nor will they be allowed to make up the exam at a later point in time.

You will need a few blank sheets of paper (Blue Books acceptable but not necessary) and **pens** to write with. **Exams written in pencil will be photocopied, and then returned to the student to be transcribed in pen.**

Essays

There will be two essays assigned during the semester. Both essays need to be 4 pages long (at the rate of 250 words per page). See the Ten Commandments of Essay Writing. This 4 pages includes a half-page introduction and another half-page conclusion. Essays need to reference at least 3 books or articles, in MLA format. The essays have to deal with some topic within the content and time frame of

this class: United States history, from 1600 to 1877. If you are in any way unsure as to whether your topic fits these constraints, ask the instructor.

For your second essay assignment, you will re-submit your first essay, with any corrections that I have indicated to be made. Be advised that the grade you earn for your “second” paper will be commensurate with how much you have improved it. In other words, if you get a B on your first paper, make no changes, and then re-submit it, don’t expect anything near a B for the grade on your second paper.

Papers written before this semester started, or submitted to other classes, are not acceptable.

Essay Writing Assignment

Along with the first paper (to be turned in at the same time), you will turn in a form that I will pass out that you will use to frame your paper into an outline format. It is not necessary to turn this in with your second paper, although you certainly may use another copy of this form if it would help you.

Primary Source Assignments

Throughout the class, we will be reading primary source materials and filling out worksheets on them, as well as other themes in class. Because these readings and worksheets will be the result of class discussions, credit for each assignment will only be given for work done in class, on the day the class does it. Credit will be prorated according to how many of these assignments were completed in class, at the combined rate of 15% of the final grade.

I will hand out any readings that we will do, as well as the pages required for writing down the answers, for this work. You will be graded for it that night in class—you will not need to maintain a notebook for these assignments, to be turned in later on (although they sure might help on some exam questions!).

Participation

Participation counts for 5 percent of the overall grade. Your participation scores will be added up and pro-rated for the 14 Days we actually meet. To get a participation grade for each class period, students must be in attendance [no more than 10 minutes after class begins]. Your participation grade will be lowered or eliminated if your cell phone or pager goes off when class is in session, **or if your demeanor or behavior is such that I have to ask you to stop what you are doing (such as talking, etc.)**. The participation grade will also include exams on any films that I might show, as well as worksheets handed out during class. Earning the participation grade for each class gets a point; not earning it gets you nothing.

Cell phones: Keep in mind that if your pager or cell phone goes off, it disturbs the instructor, and many if not most of the students. If you have an emergency that requires your attention, you should probably attend to the emergency and not show up at class. If you have to have a cell phone go off, please set it to vibrate, and walk out of class before speaking. Talking on your cell phone, or having a cell phone or pager go off, can/will result in losing the participation grade for that class period. Regardless of the reason for taking a call, there is never any good reason for disturbing the rest of the class by talking on it in the classroom—all you need to do is quickly and quietly walk out the door, and then begin your

conversation. Please be considerate of others in this regard. Also, please do not bring children or other guests into the classroom. If you have children and absolutely have to have them here, let them sit outside the classroom close to the door; you can sit right in the doorway and keep an eye on them. This way, distractions will be minimized.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating is not permitted, and can result in receiving a 0 on the paper, without the option to submit the assignment again.

Critical Thinking Skills

During this class, students will develop and demonstrate critical thinking skills by drawing connections between related events, and by analyzing proposed causes and interpretations of events. Students will demonstrate such critical thinking skills in class discussions, as well as on the essay questions of exams and on the term paper. Specifically, students will need to analyze certain major events in American history from different perspectives:

- the Reconstruction from the standpoint of northern Republicans, southern blacks, and southern whites
- imperialism from the standpoint of the American populace and industry, as well as from the standpoint of countries that lost territory to the expanding United States
- The rise of Big Business, and the Progressive movement
- Differing reactions to the struggle against communism and Russian militarism, as articulated in American media and by American politicians

Measurement of student Learning Outcomes:

1. Substantial writing assignments, including essay exams and the term paper
2. Non-computational problem-solving demonstrations, including comparing different reactions to policies pursued by the United States government in a variety of historical settings
3. Skill demonstrations, including the ability to recite a variety of events and trends in American society, as leading up to or causing a subsequent event
4. Objective examinations, including exams on primary source readings and possibly historical videos
5. Enumerate the various powers given to the separate branches of government, and the powers that each have over the other.
6. Articulate constitutional theory, specifically, the concept of the state of nature, and social contract theory, and its contribution to the Declaration of Independence.

Late Work Policy

The Due Date is the Due Date is the Due Date. Work that is turned in up two weeks late (i.e., 14 calendar Days after the due date) will be given half credit. The **ONLY** way to avoid this penalty is to provide me with some documentation of an emergency (a towing receipt, a bill from your hospital for the x-rays, your death certificate, etc.). The only exceptions for the two week deadline are the term paper and the final exam, both of which are due during the last week of class. Of course, completing either of these two assignments late will result in the half-credit penalty. Absolutely no assignments will be accepted after the final exam!

Class Schedule

- June 9-13: Introduction to class: syllabus, term paper
 Ch. 1: review of world, 1500-1700; religious discontent in England
 Ch. 2, 3, 4: Constitutional history and theory, development of English government, colonial life in the 1600s, mercantilism
 Ch. 5: Issues leading up to Revolutionary War: French and Indian War; Proclamation of 1763; Taxation, exam review
 Declaration of Independence; **first midterm**
- June 30-July 3: Ch. 6: Revolutionary War
 Ch. 7: Articles of Convention, U.S. Constitution
First essay due (with essay writing form)
- July 7-11 Ch. 8, 9: Development of parties: Federalists; Democratic-Republicans; Alien-Sedition Laws; Jeffersonian Democracy
 Ch. 9: Napoleonic wars; War of 1812; development of Supreme Court under Marshall
 Ch. 10, 13: Issues in early years: banking; Slavery; tariffs; Second Great Awakening, exam review
 Ch. 11: Era of Good Feelings; Andrew Jackson; Bank of US;
 Ch. 12, 14 Westward expansion; early industrialism and railroads; **second midterm**,
- July 28-31: Ch. 16: 1850s: crisis of tariffs and slavery
 Ch. 17: Civil war,
 Ch. 18: Reconstruction, exam review
Final; second essay due