

Syllabus

U. S. HISTORY TO 1877

HIST 1501W
FALL 2015



Instructor: Dr. Jamie Eves, evesj@easternct.edu , themillmuseum@gmail.com

Office:

Office Hours: TTh, 1:00-2:30 PM; and by appointment

Classroom: 109 Laurel Hall, TTh, 3:30-4:45 PM

Subject: What we'll be doing

HIST 1501W is a survey (overview) of United States history from the first peopling of North America (c. 25,000 BCE) until the end of the Reconstruction Era (1877 CE), intended for first- and second-year university students. As with most university courses, we will be advancing beyond “high-school history,” with its emphasis on memorizing raw historical data, and examine the ways that professional historians learn about, interpret, and explain America’s past.

HIST 1501W is also a “W,” or “writing-intensive,” course. According to University of Connecticut guidelines, in W courses, at least 50% of the graded work should be in the form of written, take-home assignments, and on those assignments, at least 50% of your grade should be based on composition, grammar, and other writing skills. The purpose of W courses is not to teach you to be literate (you already are), nor is it to teach you how to write like a professional writer (one class is not enough to accomplish such a goal.) Rather, the purpose of W classes is to combine with other college-level classes with writing content as part of an integrated program that will, by the time you graduate, teach you how to write like a college graduate. This particular W course is meant to build upon what you already learned in your freshman college composition

course and prepare you to write basic college essays and papers at the 2000 and 3000 levels. To those ends, you will be practicing such skills as writing topic sentences, writing introductions to essays, writing conclusions to essays, constructing good paragraphs, and constructing and organizing compelling arguments.

Method: How all this happens

To achieve these outcomes, we will use a variety of learning strategies, including analytical lectures, narrative lectures (storytelling), guided discussions, question-and-answer sessions, reading and reflecting on the interpretations of academic historians, examining primary sources, completing weekly homework assignments, writing in-class essay exams, and writing take-home papers. The reason for using multiple strategies is that not everyone learns things the same way. Some of you will respond best to discussions, others to lectures, and yet others to rolling up your sleeves and writing your own interpretations. Using a variety of methods gives all of you a chance to learn.

By listening and taking notes in class, participating in class discussions, completing the reading assignments on time, handing in the writing assignments on the days they are due, and thinking critically about the material, you will be prepared to make active, informed, and thoughtful contributions – both verbally and in writing – skills that will serve you throughout your study at the University, and beyond.

Required readings: The tools we'll use to do this

- Victoria Bissell Brown and Timothy J. Shannon, *Going to the Source: The Bedford Reader in American History*, third edition, vol. 1, to 1877 (2012). This is a college-level source book, and it is way cooler than a textbook. Each chapter contains different kinds of source materials for major topics in Early American History. Its purpose is to teach you how to read and think like a historian – how to correctly use the many different kinds of sources that historians use when they research and write history. The book has homework exercises based on these sources in the form of grids, which you will fill out and hand in as graded homework.
- Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*.
- Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.

Practice and assessment: Helping you test yourself and improve

Class participation (10%)

You will actively participate in class. Participation is worth 10% of your grade, and will be based on both the quantity and quality of your verbal comments.

Papers (60%)

You will write six short papers. The purpose of each paper is to examine an historical event from the perspectives of actual participants, to see history through the eyes of those who lived it.

You will write each paper twice – once as a first draft, and then again as a rewrite. (You will not need to rewrite a paper if you receive an “A” on the first draft.) Each paper will be worth 10% of

your semester grade – 5% for the first draft and 5% for the rewrite. Your papers should be typed, double spaced, and approximately two or three pages long, using standard one-inch margins and an eleven-point Times New Roman font, which is the default setting for Microsoft Word. (You should realize that it is more difficult to write a good short paper than a good long paper, and thus you are advised to write more than one draft.) Late papers will be penalized one-half letter grade for each class day they are late. (Exceptions may be made if you can present empirical evidence of a genuine emergency. The acceptance of any and all such excuses is solely up to me. Papers delivered by any means other than handing them to me during class are at your risk. Balky, unreliable word processors and printers are your problem, not mine. For learning purposes, I ask that you base your papers solely on class materials – please do not use any outside sources unless I have given you permission to do so. For each paper, a big part of your task is to demonstrate that you have actually read and mastered all of the relevant assigned reading; consequently, a good strategy is to use copious data culled evenly from throughout the reading assignment. For every quote, idea, example, or fact that you use, you must cite the page number in the reading where that quote, idea, example, or fact can be found. Further instructions may be given in class.

Paper topics:

1. Based on Chapter 1 of *Going to the Source*: Imagine a semiliterate European contemplating migration to the New World in 1650. Explain how his/her exposure to these images would affect his/her decision. Based on these images, would he/she find one region more attractive than another? Why?
2. Based on Chapter 2 of *Going to the Source*: How did gender shape the captivity experience? Does Rowlandson's narrative differ from that of Cabeza de Vaca or Jogues in any significant way because she was a woman? Why do you think female captivity narratives came to dominate the literary genre?
3. Based on Chapter 4 of *Going to the Source*: How did the debate over the use of smallpox as a weapon in the eighteenth century parallel or diverge from debates over the use of weapons of mass destruction (both biological and nuclear) today? Have modern technology and warfare increased or decreased the likelihood of such weapons being used today?
4. Based on *Common Sense*: What arguments did Paine use in favor of independence?
5. Based on Chapter 9 of *Going to the Source*: How did Boudinot and Evarts challenge the reasons and evidence given in support of Indian removal by state and federal officials? What stereotypes about Indians were Boudinot and Evarts trying to overturn, and in what ways did they question the "civilization" of their opponents?
6. Based on *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*: How did being a slave, being female, and being a mother shape Jacobs's life and experiences?

Examinations (30%)

You will take two exams, a midterm exam (worth 10% of your semester grade) and a two-hour final exam (worth 20% of your semester grade). I will post study guides in advance on Blackboard. You

will be allowed to bring one 8 ½ x 11" sheet of paper with notes to each exam, which you will hand in with the exam.

Extra Credit

There will not be any extra credit assignments in this course.

Instructor: Who am I?

My name is Jamie Eves, and I have been teaching history at the university level for more than twenty-five years. I have a Ph.D. in American History from the University of Connecticut, as well as an M. A. in American History from the University of Maine. My research specialties are eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American environmental history, the history of New England, and public history – although over the years I have taught more than a dozen different subjects. My doctoral dissertation was a study of the interrelationship of nature and culture in the Piscataquis River Valley in northern Maine, 1760-1870; my M.A. thesis traced a migration of farm families from Cape Cod in Massachusetts to the lower Penobscot River Valley in Maine, 1760-1820. I am also the Director of the Windham Textile and History Museum in Willimantic, CT, and the official town historian of Windham, CT. Most of my published articles have been about Maine and Connecticut history – some have appeared in professional history journals, while others have been in publications aimed more at popular audiences. I was drawn to history by a love of the narrative form, and I try to emphasize good storytelling in all my classes. I believe that history belongs to the people, and that everybody has a right to know their history – that history has to be accessible, readable, local, and affordable. I am particularly annoyed at “junk history” – history that is inaccurate, oversimplified, and/or bent towards some political, religious, or philosophical agenda. I am a husband, father, and grandfather. I am on Facebook, and post a lot of local history content on the Museum’s FB page. Like most professional historians, most of what I do is easily available to the public at little or no cost. If you want to see some of the history I have written, check out the web site of the Windham Textile & History Museum (www.millmuseum.org) – most of the history content posted there is mine. My doctoral dissertation is shelved in Babbidge Library at UConn, in the sub-basement, where I suspect it is nibbled by giant mutant rats. I have published articles in *Technology and Culture*, *Connecticut History*, and *Maine History*, and book reviews in a variety of journals. I’m also pretty sure that you can read all about me on ratemyprofessor.com.

Schedule: What you need to do for each class

UNIT I: COLONIAL AMERICA

09/01 Introduction to the Course.

09/03 Lecture: On the Back of a Turtle: The History of Precolumbian America.

09/08 Lecture: The Columbian Exchange and the Spanish Century.

09/10 Discussion: Monsters and Marvels (read Brown, chapter 1). **Paper #1 due.**

- 09/15 Lecture: The Fall of Tsenacommacah and the Founding of Virginia.
- 09/17 Discussion: Captivity Narratives (read Brown, chapter 2). **Paper #2 due.**
- 09/22 Lecture: The Great Migration and the Founding of Colonial New England.
- 09/24 Lecture: From Colony to Province, from Puritan to Yankee, from Colonist to American (read Brown, chapter 3). **Paper #1 rewrite due.**
- 09/29 Lecture: George Washington and the Crucible of War.
- 10/01 Discussion: Germ Warfare on the Colonial Frontier (read Brown, chapter 4). **Paper #3 due.**

UNIT II: THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

- 10/06 Lecture: The Road to Revolution.
- 10/08 Lecture: The Road to Revolution (read Brown, chapter 5). **Paper #2 rewrite due.**
- 10/13 Lecture: The Indispensable Man and the Achievement of Independence.
- 10/15 Discussion: The Decision for Independence (read *Common Sense*). **Paper #4 due.**

UNIT III: THE EARLY REPUBLIC

- 10/20 **Midterm examination.**
- 10/22 No Class (read Brown, chapter 6).
- 10/27 Lecture: The Early Republic and the War of 1812.
- 10/30 Lecture: The American Renaissance (read Brown, chapter 7). **Paper #3 rewrite due.**
- 11/03 Lecture: The Story of Nancy and Tom: Westward Expansion.
- 11/05 Discussion: The Meaning of Cherokee Civilization (read Brown, chapter 9). **Paper #5 due.**
- 11/10 Lecture: A Gneiss Prospect: The Industrial and Market Revolutions.
- 11/12 Lecture: A Gneiss Prospect: The Industrial and Market Revolutions (read Brown, chapter 8). **Paper #4 rewrite due.**

UNIT IV: THE CIVIL WAR

- 11/17 Lecture: The Crisis of Union.
- 11/19 Discussion: Antebellum Slavery (read *Incidents*). **Paper #6 due.**
- 11/24 Thanksgiving: No class.
- 11/26 Thanksgiving: No Class.
- 11/30 Lecture: The Crisis of Union.
- 12/02 Lecture: And the War Came (read Brown, chapter 11). **Paper #5 rewrite due.**

12/08 Lecture: Why the Union Won the Civil War.

12/10 Lecture: Battle Cry of Freedom: The Meaning of the Civil War (read Brown, chapter 12).

Paper #6 rewrite due.

Final exam during finals week

Other important things to remember

Accessibility

If you are a student with a disability and believe that you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact the Office of Accessibility. To avoid any delay in the receipt of accommodations, you should contact the Office of Accessibility as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from the Office of Accessibility. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Academic Misconduct

As always, cheating – including plagiarism – is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Plagiarism includes quoting someone else without quotation marks and/or without proper citation; using someone else's ideas without proper attribution; and "close" paraphrasing. It also includes copying all or part of another student's paper, allowing another student to copy your paper, or turning in the same paper in more than one course. In your papers, you **MUST** cite all of the sources you have consulted. (Because of time and space constraints, I will not require you to use proper citations on exams and homeworks – but you better use them on papers!) Unless it is enclosed in quotation marks and properly cited, all of the material included in your papers and exams **MUST** be in your own words. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, you should seek guidance from me or your TA. The penalty for plagiarism in this class will be: (1) For papers and homeworks, you will receive a grade of "0" for the assignment. (2) For exams, you will receive a grade of "0" for the exam essay question on which the plagiarism occurred. (3) For a second offense, you will receive a grade of "F" for the course. Cases of plagiarism and other forms of cheating may also be reported to the appropriate university authorities for further action.

Etiquette

Although your participation is encouraged and your comments are welcome, I nevertheless expect you to treat me, your TA, your classmates, and the material with respect. I expect you to arrive on time, pack up to leave only after the class is dismissed, and avoid getting up in the middle of class and wandering around. I and your TA reserve the right to remove disruptive and/or unprepared students from the classroom. I do not expect you to agree with everything I say or laugh at my lame jokes. I greatly respect and admire students who are able to present their own positions, provided that they do so in a rational, logical, and well-spoken manner.