**History 206: The United States to the Civil War**

Instructor: Nat Zappia Class Time:

Class Location: HV Office Hours: TBA and by appt.

Office Hours Location: HV 201 Email: [nzappia@whittier.edu](mailto:nzappia@whittier.edu)

**Introduction:**

This course explores pre-contact, colonial, early national, and antebellum U.S. history. Relying heavily upon a transnational perspective, it looks at the role Native Americans and Afro-Eurasians played in the Americas and emerging world economy. It also investigates the historical construction of labor, race, ethnicity, gender, and the environment within the parameters of U.S. history.

Students will be encouraged to reconsider the transformation of regional and national identities during this time by showing their origins and effects through the lens of world historical connections. Most importantly, students will be asked to think outside of the traditional boundaries of American history. We will reexamine the construction of a “national history” during a period when the United States was not a unified nation-state. Ultimately, students will be asked questions that historians continue to tackle. Can we globalize early U.S. history? Is the U.S. truly exceptional? Or is it a product of (not separate from) globalization? What is the meaning of America?

**Course Goals and Learning Objectives:**

In this class, students will have the opportunity to learn key concepts and themes that shaped U.S. history before 1865, analyze and evaluate primary and secondary sources, and communicate knowledge gained in this course through writing and public presentation assignments. By the end of this course through in-class discussions, interactions, presentations, and written papers, students will demonstrate an ability to apply fundamental knowledge about U.S. history to other topics of study, understand the historical construction of race, gender, ethnicity, and nationalism, and possess effective communication skills in various formats for diverse audiences.

**Grading**:

Class Presentation 10%

Final Oral Exam 10%

Attendance and Participation 15%

Reading Reflection Quizzes 15%

Two Papers 30%

Final Take Home Essay 20%

**Course Requirements and Assignments**:

This course is intended to elicit extensive discussions and requires intensive reading and participation. You will be graded on respectful participation and articulate, thoughtful responses (more on participation below). Once during the semester, you will be responsible for leading group discussion, which includes presenting questions, context, and topics as well as managing participation. You will also be graded on your close reading of the material and are expected to bring the assigned texts (or notes) to every class. Weekly reading reflection quizzes and participation will be part of your overall grade.

*Writing Assignments*

**Due Dates:**

**Papers #1-2 Rolling deadlines TBD**

**5/9– Final Paper**

Paper assignments include 2 individual short papers (3-4 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1” margins), and a take home final essay (5-6 pages). The first two papers will analyze the assigned weekly readings. Students will compare and contrast issues discussed in the material and class discussions. I expect the paper to clearly identify the authors’ argument and signify the importance of this reading. I will provide questions for analysis that will frame your essay. I welcome students to disagree with the authors—provided they back up their viewpoints. **I won’t accept any papers after their due date**. I will provide paper prompts one week in advance.

*Final Essay*

The final essay will be a work of synthesis incorporating the themes, readings, and discussions over the course of the semester. I will issue essay questions two weeks before the due date. **The final essay is due on 5/9.**

*Leading Group Discussion*

Leading discussion is an important assignment that requires advance preparation. It includes submitting a one-page outline with discussion questions, context, and topics. You will also be responsible for moderating participation. You will sign up for a discussion topic in advance and meet with me during office hours to talk about your strategy.

Strategies for Successful Group Discussions:

* a brief overview of the themes discussed in the reading
* detailed analysis, praise, and critique of the author’s methods, insights, and shortcomings
* at least five questions to pose to the class during the discussion period
* bring the material alive and make it relevant—“own” the reading

*Quizzes*

Every week you will also have a reading reflection quiz that is worth one percent of your grade. This assignment is designed to encourage you to carefully read and think about the reading assignments.

*Plagiarism*

Plagiarism is a growing problem throughout higher education. Plagiarism constitutes “the act of using another person’s ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source” (MLA Handbook, 21). Many times, students inadvertently commit plagiarism without being fully aware of their transgression. In the first few classes, we will discuss ways to ensure that you avoid such pitfalls. Depending on the severity and extent of the offense, the penalties for plagiarism in this class will include an “F” grade on the assignment for the first occurrence and an “F” grade for the course on a second occurrence. To repeat, **IF YOU PLAGIARIZE, YOU WILL FAIL THE ASSIGNMENT AND POSSIBLY THE COURSE. YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE REFERRED TO THE DEAN OF STUDENTS FOR POSSIBLE ACADEMIC SUSPENSION.**

**Attendance and Participation:**

*Attendance*

Since you are graded for attendance, I will take roll call at the beginning of class. If you miss roll call, you will be counted absent so arrive on time—NO EXCEPTIONS. Failure to attend class will result in a lower grade. After you miss three classes, you will lose half-a letter on your final grade (for example, if you get a “B” for your final grade but missed 4 classes, you will automatically earn a “B-”; if you missed 5 classes, you will earn a “C+”. However, if you have perfect attendance you will receive 5 extra points on your final grade.

Students desiring accommodations on the basis of physical, learning, or psychological disability for this class are to contact Disability Services.  Disability Services is located in the Library building, first floor room G003 and can be reached by calling extension 4825.

*Participation*

**NO LAPTOPS OR ANY TECHNOLOGY WILL BE ALLOWED IN CLASS** (i.e. text messaging devices, mobile phones, etc.). Participation is also crucial during this course. There is no set criteria or “participation quota,” but I expect you to contribute through active conversation, listening, and visiting me during office hours. You must bring the assigned texts or notes on the text to class. I expect you to bring questions and thoughts for discussion. During the eighth week of the course, I will ask you for a 1-2 page self-evaluation of your class participation. This exercise will help you identify the variety of ways you have participated and locate other avenues for improvement.

Below are some strategies for effective participation (worth 15% percent of your grade):

* Read assigned materials carefully and take notes
* Contribute insights and ask questions of your peers (and professor) in class
* Write notes during class and share your thoughts when they fit with the conversation flow
* Respond to your peers’ presentations and questions
* Pay attention during discussions and follow up with relevant contributions
* Encourage others to speak
* Don’t monopolize the discussion – make sure others have a chance to speak

**Office Hours:**

While not required, I strongly recommend that you make at least a few appointments with me over the course of the semester. I am also available outside of my office hours if your schedule conflicts with my posted days/times. During my hours, I can provide some extensive feedback and give you a better sense of how you’re doing in class, so take advantage of this valuable time.

**Readings:**

You will be responsible for reading 100-150 pp. of text each week, and will be graded on it (via weekly quizzes/journal entries/leading discussion). Readings include a survey text, primary sources, secondary literature, and occasional passages available in the course packet. Based on my past purchase experiences, you can get all of them for less than $50 online and they will “age” well on your bookshelves. Indeed, some of the copies I still bring to class are from my undergraduate years. You are not required to bring your books to class, but I strongly recommend it since you will need them for your journal entries and quizzes (which are open book if you bring them!). (**NOTE: Not all of the books always arrive at the Poet bookstore, so be prepared to use other avenues to purchase books).** During the first week, we will explore the most effective active reading techniques and strategies so you can get the most out of these assignments. **ALL READINGS MUST BE COMPLETED *BEFORE* MONDAY’S CLASS.**

**Required Course Texts:**

*Textbooks*

Eric Foner, Voices of Freedom

Moodle Readings (TBD)

*Primary Sources*

The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Oladauh Equiano

Pauline Mauer, Declaration of Independence and other Founding Documents

David Walker, The Appeal

**Schedule:**

Week 1: Before America

1/31 – Introduction to Course: Placing the United States in the World

Week 2: The Birth of “America”: The New World Forged (1000-1491)

2/3 –Native America on the Eve of the Encounter

2/5 – Afro-Eurasian Tool Kits

2/7 – The Columbian Exchange – Or the Native American Discovery of Afro-Eurasians

Readings - Voices of Freedom

Moodle Readings (TBD)

Week 3: Foundations and Formations in the U.S – Ideas and Goods (1492-1650)

2/10 – Ambivalent Conquests, and Spain’s Global Perimeter

2/12 – Before Jamestown and Plymouth Rock: religion in America and the first global products

2/14 –Discussion

Readings - Eric Foner, Voices of Freedom

Moodle Readings (TBD)

Week 4: The African Diaspora and Indian Country (1500-1650)

2/17 – Africa, Africans, and Slavery in America

2/19 – Facing East from Indian Country: Native America and Colonial America

2/21 – Captivity Narratives and Early American Identity

Readings - Eric Foner, Voices of Freedom

The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Oladauh Equiano (TBA)

Week 5: The Tensions of Empires and Colonial Identities (1650-1750)

2/24 – The Lives of Colonial Cities

2/26 – The Construction of Racial and Gender Identities in Colonial America

2/28 – The Great Awakening: Religious Revivals in the Colonies (PAPER #1 DUE)

Readings - Eric Foner, Voices of Freedom

The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings (TBA)

Week 6: Rivers to Oceans: The Frontier and the “West” (1650-1750)

3/3 – “Black Robe” and the Frontier

3/5 – Horses, Furs and the “West”

3/7 – Discussion

Readings - Eric Foner, Voices of Freedom

Moodle Readings (TBD)

Week 7: The American Wars and the Formation of the U.S. (1750-1783)

3/10 – The First Global War and the End of Colonial Identity

3/12 – Global Enlightenment and the Founding Documents

3/14 – Rebellion or Revolution? The Revolution within the Revolution (PAPER #2 DUE)

Readings - Declaration of Independence and other Founding Documents *92 pp.*

Eric Foner, Voices of Freedom

WEEK 8: SPRING BREAK

Week 9: Defining the Nation (1783-1812)

3/24 – The Age of Revolutions and the Birth of Nations

3/26 – What is an American?: Federalists, Anti-Federalists, and the United States

3/28 – Defining the Founders

Readings - Eric Foner, Voices of Freedom (SELF-EVALUATION DUE)

Moodle Readings (TBD)

Week 10: Early U.S. Domestic and Foreign Policy (1812-1828)

3/31 – The Battle over American Values—Home and Abroad

4/2 – A National Economy?

4/4 – The Coming Storm: The Politics of Slavery (PAPER #3 DUE)

Readings - Eric Foner, Voices of Freedom

Moodle Readings (TBD)

Week 11: Defining Citizenship (1828-1840)

4/7 – Early National Suffrage and U.S. Citizens

4/9 – “Domestic, Dependent Nations”: Indian Removal in the South

4/11 – Commemorating Indian Removal

Readings - Eric Foner, Voices of Freedom

Moodle Readings (TBD)

Week 12: Manifest Destiny (1840-1860)

4/14 – American Communities: Industry and Slavery in the North and South

4/16 – Texas, the Alamo, and U.S. Identity/Westward Expansion, and the War with Mexico

4/18 - Walker Movie (PAPER #4 DUE)

Readings - Eric Foner, Voices of Freedom

Moodle Readings (TBD)

Week 13: Global Migrations and the U.S.(1840-1860)

4/21 – Discussion of Walker Movie

4/23 - Immigration across the Atlantic and Pacific: The Global Gold Rush

4/25 – TBD

Readings - Eric Foner, Voices of Freedom

Moodle Readings (TBD)

Week 14: The Great Divergence (1840-1865)

4/28 – Slaves, Abolitionists,Social Reform Movements and American Identity

4/30 – Sectional Crises on the Eve of the War

5/2 – The Civil War

Readings - David Walker’s Appeal *78 pp.*

WEEK 15: Reconstruction (1865-1877)

5/5 –The Civil War: Chronology, Impacts, and Public Commemoration

Readings – Eric Foner, Voices of Freedom

Week 15: Final Essay Due 5/10 at 10:00 AM