

History 121, American History to 1877  
Cedar Crest College  
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Fall 2008  
(Day/Evening)

### COURSE INTRODUCTION (Course Objectives, Format, Evaluation, and Outcome)

This course surveys American history from the time of Christopher Columbus to the mid-1870s. It is designed to offer the student a broad overview of the subject. Classroom lectures, discussion, films, and reading assignments will provide information about different periods and people. Topics will include not just the traditional subject matter of history courses (politics, economics, religion, ideas, etc.), but also less traditional fare (the history of women, blacks, sports, and architecture).

The purpose of this course, however, goes well beyond the accumulation of data about such subjects. By asking intelligent questions about history, by thinking about evidence critically, by applying the principles of logic to historical facts and theories, the student will begin to think as a historian. Such an inquiry is not just an exercise in research and sound thinking. It is also an exercise in self-analysis and ethics. Historians must ask what preconceptions they hold that might prejudice their thinking, and they must also possess the integrity to reveal and consider evidence that fails to square with their own ideas.

Students often ask: What good is historical knowledge? There are many answers to such a question. But one need only think of men and women who know nothing of the past. For them governments rise or fall, wars are fought, nations are dispossessed – seemingly without explanation. Trapped in the small world of their own experience, such people are similar to the superstitious folk of past ages. They fall prey to forces beyond comprehension. At best they are given to apathy, at worst to paranoia.

Students who successfully complete this course will be well on their way to escaping such a condition. They will have gained an introductory knowledge of American history up to 1877 (assessed by tests and an exam). They also will be able to understand and analyze local, national, or international events logically and with growing sophistication. Finally, they will tend to avoid many of the pitfalls of logical thinking – for example, overgeneralizations, over simplification, and ad hominum reasoning.

The study of history cannot answer all questions. Nor can it offer a perfect understanding of earlier times. Still, it can often provide explanations, as imperfect as they might be, for the human condition, both past and present.

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With this in mind, the student needs to know how this course will be taught and how student work will be evaluated. Concerning the first question, I shall use several teaching methods, including lectures, films, classroom discussion, and outside reading. In all of this, the approach is simple: college students are adults, and so I expect them to shoulder much of the responsibility for their own education. Students must keep up with the readings and study diligently for tests. As to the evaluation of student work, the latter portion of this syllabus shows how much weight each course requirement will receive.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### READINGS

George Brown Tindall America, Brief 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, Vol. I

Robert James Maddox, American History, 20<sup>th</sup> Edition, Vol. I

Declaration of Independence (in text)

Constitution and Amendments (in text)

Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, Seneca Falls Convention, 1848 (on-line)

Please remember that used copies of the above books may be found at amazon.com.

### TESTS, QUIZZES, AND GRADING

Tests and quizzes give students the opportunity to demonstrate their mastery of the course material. Consequently, we will have a mid-term and a final exam. Each will count thirty percent of your final grade. In addition, two quizzes will be given, each worth twenty percent of your final grade. The quizzes, mid-term, and final test will have both objective and short essay questions. Make-up or early tests, which can only be had with the instructor's permission, will be essay tests. If you are ill, or if you have some other legitimate excuse for missing a test, you will need to get a note to that effect from the office of the Dean of Student Affairs. The dates of the tests and quizzes are:

First Test: September 23 (20%)

Mid Term: October 21 (30%)

Second Quiz: November 11 (20%)

Final Test: TBA (30%)

If you wish to have as much as two points added to your final grade, you may write a three page research paper on some topic related to this course. Before you begin your work on this project be sure to get my approval of your paper. This paper will be due in class on November 18. The paper must include the following statement signed by you: "I have carefully read and understand

the handout entitled ‘Citations, or How to Avoid Plagiarism.’” I will discuss this project in more detail in class.

#### MISSED CLASSES

If you are unable to make it to a class, it is your responsibility to get the missed notes. It is also your responsibility to be aware of any announcements – for example, assignments, schedule changes, etc. – that may have been given during the class.

#### DISABILITIES

Students with documented disabilities and who need academic accommodations should discuss these needs with me during the first two weeks of class. Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodation should contact the Advising Center.

#### OFFICE HOURS

Office visits are welcomed. If you have questions or problems with the course or if you just want to chat, please feel free to drop by. My hours are on Wednesday and Thursday 11:00-11:30 a.m. If these times are not convenient, see me after class for an appointment. I am also available, by appointment, on Tuesday evening 9:00-9:15 p.m.

THIS COURSE WILL BE TAUGHT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CEDAR CREST COLLEGE HONOR SYSTEM AND THE CLASSROOM PROTOCOL CODE FOUND IN THE CUSTOMS BOOK. CHEATING AND OR PLAGIARISM WILL RESULT IN FAILURE OF THE COURSE. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONMS ABOUT THIS, PLEASE SEE ME.

## History 121, Course Outline

### I. Early Exploration of the Americans

The Natives of North America

The Colonies of Spain, France, Holland, etc.

Readings: Tindall, pp. 9-10, 12-15

Maddox, "America's First Immigrants," pp. 3-7

### II. The English Colonies

The Puritans of New England, the Quakers of Pennsylvania, and the Slaveholders of the South

Reading: Maddox, "America, the Atlantic and Global Consumer Demand," pp. 23-27

### III. The American Revolution

Origins and Significance

Readings: Tindall, pp. 107-123

Declaration of Independence, Tindall, Appendix, pp. A45-A49

Maddox, "Dirty Little Secret," pp. 55-57

### IV. Creating a New Nation

The Articles of Confederation

Jefferson, Hamilton, and the Constitution

Reading: The Constitution and Amendments, Tindall, Appendix, pp. A58-A79

### V. Preserving the Nation

The War of 1812

Reading: Tindall, pp. 231-236

### VI. American Social Life in the Antebellum Years

Reading: Tindall, pp. 320-328

### VII. Manifest Destiny

Old Hickory Disposes of the Indians and Young Hickory Disposes of the Mexicans

Readings: Tindall, pp. 370-382

Maddox, "Andrew Jackson Verses the Cherokee Nation," pp. 138-143

### VIII. Romanticism and Reform

Readings: Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions, Woman's Rights Convention,  
Seneca Falls, New York, 1848 (on-line)

Tindall, pp. 346-348, 350-352

IX. The Nature of Slavery

Reading: Maddox, "African Americans in the Early Republic," pp.124-127

X. The Civil War

A Struggle to End Slavery? To protect Industrial Capitalism? Or What?

Readings: Tindall, pp. 464-467

Maddox, "A Gallant Rush to Glory," pp. 167-171

XI. Reconstructing the Unreconstructed South

The Freedmen, the KKK, and the Stolen Election of 1876