

Syllabus
EARLY AMERICAN HISTORY

HIST 1501-001
FALL 2016



Instructor: Dr. Jamie Eves, jamie.eves@uconn.edu, themillmuseum@gmail.com

Office: 312 Wood Hall

Office Hours: T, Th, 1:00-2:30 PM; a half hour before class begins in the hallway outside the Classroom. Your T. A. will also keep office hours, and will post them on Blackboard (HuskyCT).

Classroom: Lectures will be held in 102 Laurel Hall, 9:30-10:20 AM, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On Fridays, you will meet with your T. A. in one of several different discussion sections. The time and place of your discussion section should be indicated on your class schedule.

Subject: What we'll be doing

HIST 1501 is a survey (overview) of United States history from the discovery of North America by the Paleo-Indians (perhaps 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.

Objectives: What you'll get out of this

1. A structure of early American history: For those of you who did not learn it in high school (or for those of you who learned it, but subsequently forgot it), HIST 1501 will provide you with the basic structure of American History up to 1877.

2. Theoretical tools to help you interpret early American history: Data (facts) are pretty much useless unless you can interpret (analyze) them to figure out what they mean. HIST 1501 will expose you to ways that trained historians have interpreted early American history, and teach you the difference between a fact and an interpretation, and between an interpretation and an opinion. It will also challenge you to evaluate standard interpretations, and to develop new interpretations of your own. Most of what I will do in class is intended to meet this objective.

So, let's give you your first lesson:

(a) *Fact:* George Washington (President of the United States, 1788-1796) declined to run for a third four-year term as President.

(b) *Interpretation:* By declining to run for a third term as President, George Washington set a precedent that, in effect, prevented the kind of presidents-for-life that have ruled as dictators in many other post-revolutionary countries.

(c) *Opinion:* George Washington was America's greatest President.

3. Improved critical thinking skills: HIST 1501 will help you improve your ability to think critically about complex subjects.

4. Meet requirements: HIST 1501 meets several important University and/or major requirements. It also meets the State of Connecticut requirement for a U. S. History survey course for public school teacher certification.

5. Preparation for future study: HIST 1501 will prepare you for the further study of early American history, whether as a student in advanced courses here at the University or on your own.

6. Learning to think and behave like a professional: HIST 1501 will introduce you to the ways that professional historians practice their discipline. To this end, I will be requiring you to do certain things the way that professionals do them, such as (for example) typing (rather than handwriting) your take-home assignments.

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, reading and reflecting on the interpretations of academic historians, examining primary sources, completing weekly 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.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the entire class will meet here together. I will present broad overviews, using empirical data to argue for (or against) various historical interpretations. I have not assigned a narrative text to go along with these "lectures" (or stories, if you will), because narrative texts are very expensive and – truth to tell – most students don't bother to read them, anyway. But that means that if you miss class, you miss important material. Missing

important material almost always has an impact on students' grades. (And by the way, any student who asks me, "Did we do anything important in the class I missed?" will earn a withering stare, the reply "Everything we do in class is important," and a letter-grade deduction.)

On Fridays, you will meet in separate discussion groups with your T. A. (teaching assistant). These Friday discussions will be built around specific reading assignments that will be either posted on Blackboard (HuskyCT), or which you can look up using an online tool called JSTOR. (Your T. A. will teach you how to use JSTOR.) You will hand in a take-home assignment at each Friday discussion, designed to prepare you to participate in the class conversation. The T. A.'s are senior graduate students in the University's History Department, and consequently are trained historians. They know their stuff.

The T. A.'s will be the grading all assignments and exams.

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

There are no textbooks for this course. Instead, the following readings are available on Blackboard (HuskyCT) or JSTOR.

1. *Navajo Creation Myth: The Story of the Emergence* (excerpts)
2. "A History of Jamestown," including video "Merchants of Virginia,"
<http://www.historyisfun.org/jamestown-settlement/history-jamestown/>
3. Mayflower Compact
4. John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity"
5. Anne Bradstreet, "Dialog Between Old England and New"
6. Moses Rischin, "Creating Crevecoeur's 'New Man': He Had a Dream" (1981) – JSTOR
7. Declaration of Independence
8. Articles of Confederation

9. Joel Perlmann, et al., "Literacy, Schooling, and Teaching Among New England Women, 1730-1820" (1997) – JSTOR
10. James Fennimore Cooper, *The Pioneers* (excerpt)
11. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables* (excerpt)
12. Lydia Maria Child, "Home and Politics"
13. Jamie H. Eves, *A Valley White with Mist: Settlers, Nature, and Culture in a North Woods River Valley, 1800-70* (2005) (excerpt)
14. Declaration of Sentiments
15. Tables: Industrialization in the Antebellum North
16. Harriet Hanson Robinson, *Loom and Spindle* (excerpts)
17. Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (excerpts)
18. Frederick Douglas, "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?"
19. Abraham Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address"
20. Abraham Lincoln, "Second Inaugural Address"

Practice and assessment: Helping you test yourself and improve

Class participation (10%)

You will actively participate in class discussions. Participation is worth 10% of your grade, and will be based on both the quantity and quality of your verbal comments. The responsibility for participating is yours, and you are advised to enter into the discussion as often as you can. You may always discuss any special problems with me or your T. A. during office hours.

One-page Essays (20%)

You will complete ten short, one-page essays based on reading assignments, each worth 2% of your grade.

Take-home Essays (20%)

You will write two longer take-home essays. The purpose of each essay is to examine an historical event covered in class. Each essay will be worth 10% of your semester grade. Your essays should be typed, double spaced, and approximately five 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 essay than a good long essay, and thus you are advised to write more than one draft.) Late essays 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 your T. A. or me. Papers delivered by any means other than handing them to your T. A. during class are at your risk. Balky, unreliable word processors and printers are your problem, not ours. For learning purposes, I ask that you base your papers solely on class materials – please do not use any outside sources unless your T. A. has given you permission to do so. For each paper, a big part of your task is to demonstrate that you have actually mastered all of the relevant class material. For every quote, idea, example, or fact from the readings 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.

Take-home essay topics:

1. Do you think that the American Revolution fits Crane Brinton's model of revolutions? Defend your position with material covered in class.
2. Write an essay titled "A Tale of Two Harriets," where you compare and contrast the lives and experiences of Harriet Hanson Robinson (and New England "mill girls" in general) and Harriet Jacobs (and Southern slave girls and women in general), based on class readings.

Examinations (50%)

You will take two exams, a midterm exam (worth 20% of your semester grade) and a two-hour final exam (worth 30% of your semester grade). I will post study guides in advance on Blackboard (HuskyCT). 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 for more than thirty 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 rise and fall of the American textile industry, 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 an 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; you are more than welcome to “like” the Museum. 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, 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

- 08/30 Introduction to the Course.
- 09/01 Lecture: On the Back of a Turtle: The Peopling of Precolumbian North America.
- 09/02 Discussion: Introduction to Class Discussions
- 09/06 Lecture: The Neolithic Revolution in North America.
- 09/08 Lecture: The Columbian Exchange and the Spanish Century.
- 09/09 Discussion: **Read: *Navajo Creation Myth: The Story of the Emergence* (excerpts).** **One-page essay topic: What role did gender play in Navajo culture?**
- 09/13 Lecture: The Fall of Tsenacommacah and the Founding of Virginia.
- 09/15 Lecture: The Fall of Tsenacommacah and the Founding of Virginia.
- 09/16 Discussion: **Read: “A History of Jamestown” and watch video “Merchants of Virginia.”** **One-page essay topic: How does the “traditional” history of the Jamestown settlement, as shown on the website, differ from the interpretation presented in class?**
- 09/20 Lecture: The Great Migration and the Founding of Colonial New England.
- 09/22 Lecture: The Puritan Hegemony.
- 09/23 Discussion: **Read *Mayflower Compact*, “A Model of Christian Charity,” and “Dialog Between Old England and New.”** **One-page essay topic: According to Winthrop and Bradstreet, why did Puritans migrate to North America?**
- 09/27 Lecture: The Six Cultural Hearths of Colonial British North America.
- 09/29 Lecture: From Colony to Province.
- 09/30 Discussion: **Read Moses Rischin, “Creating Crevecoeur’s ‘New Man’: He Had a Dream.”** **One-page essay topic: According to Crevecoeur, how did Americans differ from Europeans?**

UNIT II: THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

- 10/04 Lecture: William Phipps, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Israel Putnam, and the Crucible of War.
- 10/06 Lecture: Towards a Theory of Revolutions.
- 10/07 **Midterm Exam.**
- 10/11 Lecture: The American Revolution: The Reform Stage.
- 10/13 Topic: The American Revolution: The Reform Stage. [There will not be class on this date; instead, I will leave you an online reading assignment.]
- 10/14 Discussion: **Read: Declaration of Independence. One-page essay topic: How could the Declaration of Independence have been used to help create a revolutionary coalition?**
- 10/18 Lecture: The American Revolution: The Radical Stage.
- 10/20 Lecture: The American Revolution: The Radical Stage.
- 10/21 Discussion: **Read: Articles of Confederation. One-page essay topic: How did the Articles of Confederation differ from the Constitution?**
- 10/25 Lecture: The American Revolution: The Reactionary Stage.
- 10/27 Lecture: The American Revolution: The Reactionary Stage.
- 10/28 Discussion: **Read: Joel Perlmann, et al., "Literacy, Schooling, and Teaching Among New England Women, 1730-1820." One-page essay topic: Did the Revolution bring any changes in women's education?**

UNIT III: THE EARLY REPUBLIC

- 11/01 Lecture: Jefferson, Hamilton, and the Early Republic.
- 11/03 Lecture: The War of 1812 and the American Renaissance.
- 11/04 Discussion: **Read: Excerpt from *The Pioneers*, excerpt from *The House of the Seven Gables*, and "Home and Politics." First take-home essay due.**
- 11/08 Lecture: The Story of Nancy and Tom: Westward Expansion.
- 11/10 Topic: The Age of Jackson. [There will not be any class on this date; instead, I will leave you an online reading assignment.]
- 11/11 Discussion: **Read: Jamie H. Eves, *A Valley White with Mist: Settlers, Nature, and Culture in a North Woods River Valley, 1800-70* (excerpt). One-page essay topic: In what ways could frontier settlement be viewed as a bioinvasion?**
- 11/15 Lecture: A Gneiss Prospect: The Industrial and Market Revolutions.
- 11/17 Lecture: A Gneiss Prospect: The Industrial and Market Revolutions.
- 11/18 Discussion: **Read: Industrialization tables, excerpts from *Loom and Spindle*, and the Declaration of Sentiments. One-page essay topic: What was the impact of education, literature, and politics on the "mill girls"?**

THANKSGIVING VACATION

UNIT IV: THE CIVIL WAR

- 11/29 Lecture: Roll, Jordan, Roll: Slavery in the Old South.
12/01 Lecture: The Crisis of Union.
12/02 Discussion. **Read: Excerpts from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?”** *One-page essay topic: How did Harriet Jacobs’s girlhood experiences differ from Harriet Hanson Robinson’s.*
- 12/06 Lecture: The Crisis of Union.
12/08 Lecture: And the War Came.
12/09 Discussion: **Read: “Gettysburg Address” and “Second Inaugural Address.”** *Second take-home essay due.*

Final exam during finals week.

Other important things to remember

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, except in the case of direct quotes – but you better use them on take-home papers!) Unless it is enclosed in quotation marks and properly cited, all of the material included in your take-home papers and exams **MUST** be in your own words. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, you should seek guidance from me. The penalty for plagiarism in this class will be: (1) For take-home papers, 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 classmates, and the material with respect. I expect you to arrive on time, pack up to leave only after the class is dismissed, and refrain from getting up in the middle of class and wandering around. I 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.