Overview

“History… does not merely refer to the past,” novelist James Baldwin wrote in 1965. “History is literally present in all that we do.” From the colonial and revolutionary era to the making of the republic and its dissolution and reinvention in the Civil War, we explore the myriad ways in which our collective past shapes and helps us better make sense of the America we live in today. Through a range of readings, discussions, written assignments, and lectures, students will gain a deeper understanding of the early American experience. In addition to a broad sense of American history before the end of the Civil War, students will critically engage the different ways that professional historians have told these stories. The creation and continual reinvention of the American republic and the ideas of freedom that came with it are central themes in this course. So, too, are the social and cultural lives of the people (many of them enslaved) whose labor produced the cash crops that fueled the North American economy. It is the relationship between freedom and slavery in early American history that will shape our journey. As much as familiar stories of domination and resistance on southern farms and plantations, we explore the worlds of planters and enslaved people. With our focus on the rise of American democracy, we spend quite a bit of time in the world of “high” politics. We spend a great deal of time with such familiar figures as Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, and John C. Calhoun, but we also meet a range of lesser-known figures such as Nathaniel Bacon, Anne Hutchinson, and Harriet Jacobs. Finally, America exists today and, indeed, has always existed in relation to the broader world. Whenever possible, we keep in mind the ways in which our American story dovetails with and is better illuminated by broader global trends.

Learning Outcomes

Students who take History courses at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College are expected to show competency in the following outcomes:

1. Demonstrate the ability to analyze historical documents.
2. Identify Primary as opposed to Secondary documents/sources.
3. Demonstrate the ability to extract relevant information from maps and graphs.
4. Employ those facts and interpretations to extract primary arguments from primary and/or secondary sources.

These goals will be achieved through the verbal and written analysis of assigned readings from the course book as well as primary documents.

Class Format
We will meet three times each week and, for the most part, class time will be a mix of discussion and lecture. The fact that this is a survey course, however, means that we will cover quite a lot of material in a relatively short amount of time. Attendance and critical engagement with lectures and assigned reading is key.

Assessment
Students’ grades will be based on several different criteria. These include participation, three short essays, two quizzes, and cumulative final and mid-term exams. Grades will be posted in a timely fashion on D2L.

Grading
Participation: 10%
Short Papers: 30%
Quizzes: 20%
Mid-Term Exam: 20%
Final Exam: 20%

Participation – Attendance is central to participation. If a student is not present, then she/he cannot participate in class discussions. In order to participate effectively in class discussions, students must come to class prepared to talk and think critically about issues in the readings and lectures. Our class size and limited time means that each student cannot contribute every time we meet. Though contributing to class discussions with questions and comments is a major part of your assessment, it is equally important to listen and encourage others to participate. Keeping up with assigned readings will be critical to students’ ability to make meaningful contributions to class discussions. Reading guides will be posted on D2L for all assigned readings.

Short Papers – Analytical reading and writing are important ways that students engage course materials. Over the course of the semester, students will write a total of three 700-word essays responding to prompts on sections of the two books we read in class. Essays on are due on February 13, March 13, and April 17 at 11:59 pm. Each essay is due on turnitin.com. Each essay is due on turnitin.com. Login information for turnitin.com is as follows:

Class ID: 7452682
Password: federalism
Grammar and punctuation are part of your grade, but the purpose of the essay is to encourage students to critically engage academic texts. It is not necessary for the student to agree with a particular argument. It is, however, important that students take the texts seriously. Students may use their lecture notes for reference, but the bulk of their essays should explicitly deal with the text. A grading rubric will be available on D2L. Graded papers with comments will be available on turnitin.com in a timely fashion.

Exams – Students will complete a mid-term exam on February 20 and a final exam on May 1. The mid-term exam will cover all assigned reading and lectures up to that point in the semester. The final exam is cumulative. Each exam is divided into two sections. The first consists of short answer questions. The second section consists of multiple-choice and matching questions. Each section draws on the reading guides and lecture.

Quizzes – Students will complete two quizzes over the course of the semester. The first quiz will be at the beginning of class on January 30 and the second will be at the beginning of class on April 3. Each quiz is divided into two sections. The first consists of short answer questions. The second section consists of multiple-choice and matching questions. Each section draws on the reading guides and lecture. The quizzes are not cumulative. Quiz one will cover materials from weeks one to four. Quiz two will cover materials from weeks eight to thirteen.

Essay Format
Students will turn in all written assignments in a standard format. Essays must be typed in 12 point Times New Roman Font and be double-spaced with one-inch margins. It is not necessary for students to include citations in their short essays, but page numbers are required if a student includes a direct quote from the text.

Outside Help
I have listed my office hours at the beginning of the syllabus, but I am available by appointment on other days as well. I am happy to meet with students to discuss any problem or question they may have about course materials or assignments. Any student earning a C or below at the time of the mid-term must meet with me before submitting their next assignment.

Late Papers and Quizzes/Exams
Short essays are due on February 13, March 13, and April 17. Essays will be accepted late, but students will lose one letter grade for every 24 hours. Exams are eligible for make-ups only with documentation of official absences. Students unable to attend class must notify and make arrangements with me before hand in order to be eligible for a make-up quiz or exam.

Academic Honesty
Cheating of any kind will not be tolerated. In addition to being reported to the university, any student found guilty of plagiarism or cheating will receive a zero on the assignment and possibly a failing grade for the course. For more on Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College’s policies on academic dishonesty students should consult the school’s “Code of Conduct” at:
Attendance
Students are required to attend class. Official, university-sanctioned absences are excused only if students provide documentation before their absence. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor about rescheduling exams or quizzes. Only those students with official, university-sanctioned absences on exam or quiz days will be allowed to reschedule. Students are also responsible for all content covered in the class they missed (excused or not). It is the student’s responsibility to arrange to have a classmate take notes for them. Students may miss a total of five classes (excused or not) without incurring penalties other than those stipulated in the section above on “Late Papers and Quizzes/Exams.” Students missing six or more classes (excused or not) will earn a failing grade for the course. There will be no exceptions.

Disability Services
I fully appreciate that all of us have different learning styles. If you have a diagnosed condition requiring adjustments to the course, please set up an appointment with me during office hours so that we can work out a plan for the semester. Please meet with me as soon as possible. Evidence of legitimate need for this consideration must be provided. To obtain the proper documentation, please schedule an appointment with Disability Services (http://www.abac.edu/sd/disability/) by contacting Dr. Maggie Martin (mmartin@abac.edu) or her office at 229-391-5135.

Required Books

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One
January 9 – Introductions

Week Two
January 14 – The World in 1491
January 16 – The American Paradox
Read: Chapter One in Kolchin
Week Three
January 21 – Life and Labor in Colonial America
January 23 – Life and Labor in Colonial America (continued)
Read: Chapter Two in Kolchin

Week Four
January 28 – Empire and the People
January 30 – Democracy and Resistance
Read: Chapter One in Wilentz — Quiz One on January 30

Week Five
February 4 – Building a Resistance Movement
February 6 – Rethinking Slavery and Freedom
Read: Chapter Three in Kolchin

Week Six
February 11 – From Resistance to Revolution
February 13 – Making a Revolution
Read: Chapter Two in Wilentz — Essay One due at 11:59 on February 13

Week Seven
February 18 – Making a New Republic
February 20 – Mid-Term Exam
Read: Chapter Three in Wilentz

Week Eight
February 25 – The Problem of Federalism
February 27 – The Rise of Jeffersonian Democracy
Read: Chapters Four and Five in Wilentz

Week Nine
March 4 – Market Revolution
March 6 – Sectionalism and American Democracy
Read: Chapters Six and Seven in Wilentz
Week Ten
March 11 – Jacksonian Democracy
March 13 – Jacksonian Democracy (continued)
Read: Chapters Nine to Eleven in Wilentz — Essay Two due by 11:59 on March 13

Week Eleven
March 17 to 21 – Spring Break!

Week Twelve
March 25 – Life and Labor in the South
March 27 – Life and Labor in the South (continued)
Read: Chapters Four and Five in Kolchin

Week Thirteen
April 1 – Sectionalism and Slavery
April 3 – The Contours of Southern Reaction
Read: Chapter Six in Kolchin — Quiz Two on April 3

Week Fourteen
April 8 – The Contours of American Democracy
April 10 – The Problem of the West
Read: Chapters Eighteen and Nineteen in Wilentz

Week Fifteen
April 15 – Crisis of the 1850s
April 17 – John Brown’s Midnight Raid
Read: Chapters Twenty to Twenty-Two in Wilentz — Essay Three due by 11:59 pm on April 17

Week Sixteen
April 22 – Making the Case for Secession
April 24 – From Civil War to Revolutionary War
Read: Chapters Twenty-Three to Twenty-Four in Wilentz and Chapter Seven in Kolchin

Week Seventeen
April 29 – Redefining American Democracy

Final Exam on May 1 from 8:00 to 10:00