HIST 113 A – The United States to 1877

Fall 2005
Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:50 –10:00, Comenius 305

Instructor: James Paxton
Office: Comenius 306
Office Hours: Wed. 10:00-12:00, 1:30-2:30
Th. 3:30-4:30
By appointment
Contact: jpaxton@moravian.edu
610-625-7897

Course Description

This survey course provides an introduction to the political, economic, ideological, and social developments in the United States from contact to 1877. The first part of the course will trace the developments that allowed colonists from thirteen disparate colonies to see themselves as one people that should constitute one nation. Following independence, Americans struggled with the meaning and consequences of their Revolution. They debated the contradiction between the ideals of liberty and equality and the existence of slavery and other forms of dependence; they argued how best way to protect state interests in a federal system of government; and they negotiated the competing political ideologies of republicanism and liberalism and economic ideologies of agrarianism and capitalism that shaped American society. Within a hundred years of the Revolution, these issues had so polarized the North and South that the election of a Republican president, Abraham Lincoln, in 1860 prompted the secession of eleven slaveholding states. Only four years of bloody civil war restored the Union and destroyed slavery. This course will provide students with an opportunity to examine and discuss the significance of the American Revolution, Market Revolution, Jacksonian Democracy, and other important issues in American history as they explore the roots of sectionalism and Civil War. Particular attention will be paid to the interactions of America’s Native American, African, and European.

Course Objectives

Students will

- become familiar with the main themes and events in American history from contact to 1877.
- consider human agency, causality, and contingency in historical change.
- identify the roles and contributions of First People, Africans, and Europeans to the development of the United States.
- learn how critically evaluate and interpret a variety of primary sources.
- develop clear and effective oral and written communications skills.
Class Organization

The class will meet twice a week. Most weeks will consist of one lecture and one seminar, although some weeks will be taken up by two lectures. Lectures provide the background and context for seminar discussions and readings. The seminars will focus on student-led discussions of the readings. Students are advised that they will be expected to discuss textbook readings and lecture material during lectures.

Required Texts

Thomas Paine, _Common Sense_, ed. Diana Gabaldon (Random House Bantam Classics)

Required texts are available in the Moravian College bookstore. Additional readings will be placed on reserve in Reeves Library.

Attendance

Attendance is the student’s responsibility. While there is no formal penalty for missing classes, students are strongly encouraged to attend all meetings. Success in the course depends upon comprehension of the lecture material, completing assigned reading, and participation in discussions. Lateness will not be tolerated.

Please turn off or mute all electronic devices in the classroom.

Grade Distribution

Essay One 15%
Essay Two 15%
Essay Three 15%
Mid-Term 15%
Final Exam 25%
Participation 15%

The participation grade is based on the quality and quantity of the student’s participation. It is not an attendance grade.

Assignments

In addition to attending lectures, students will be required to write three essays, two exams, and prepare for and participate in seminar discussions. In each of the three papers
students will analyze primary documents. More detailed instructions will be handed out in class. (1) The first will be a three-page essay on runaway slaves and servants in colonial Virginia. (2) The second will be a three to four-page essay on Cherokee removal. (3) The last essay will be a four to five-page paper comparing the lives of two slaves, Nat Turner and Frederick Douglass.

Essay One due September 15
Essay Two due October 27
Essay Three due November 22

All assignments are to be handed in at the beginning of the class in which they are due. Because the essays form the basis for seminar discussion, late papers will not be accepted without a doctor’s note. Computer and printing problems are not acceptable reasons for lateness.

Academic Dishonesty

According to the Moravian College Student Handbook, the following constitutes plagiarism: “as the use, deliberate or not, of any outside source without proper acknowledgment.” Plagiarism shall result in the offender receiving zero in the course. Please consult the Student Handbook for more details.

Students with Disabilities

Students with physical, learning, or medical disabilities should speak to me and contact Laurie Roth, Director of the Learning Center, to arrange the appropriate accommodations. Please make these arrangements in the first weeks of the semester.

Class Schedule

Part I. Exploration and Settlement

Week 1
Aug. 30 – Introduction
Carnes and Garraty: Prologue, Ch. 1 (pp.-19-30)

Sept. 1 – Lecture – Invasion of America
Was America invaded?

Week 2
Sept. 6 – Lecture – Virginia
Carnes and Garraty: Ch. 1 (30-45), Ch. 2 (49-62)

Sept. 8 – Seminar – Two Creation Stories
Sky Woman and Genesis
Week 3
Sept. 13 – Lecture – New England
Carnes and Garraty: Ch. 2 (62-77)
Was New England or Virginia more successful in the seventeenth century? Why?

Sept. 15 – Essay One Due
Short Lecture – Great Awakening
Seminar – Runaway Slaves and Servants

Part II. Revolutions

Week 4
Sept. 20 – Lecture – Imperial Crisis
Carnes and Garraty: Ch. 3
Were American colonists justified in their resistance to Great Britain?

Sept. 22 – Seminar – Common Sense
Why was “Common Sense” popular with Americans? As a slaveholder, was Jefferson a hypocrite?

Week 5
Sept. 27 – Lecture – Revolution
Carnes and Garraty: Ch. 4, Ch. 5 (141-151)
For whom was it a Revolution?

Sept. 29 – Lecture – Confederation and Constitution

Week 6
Oct. 4 – Seminar – Constitutional Convention
How would you design the Constitution?

Oct. 6 MID-TERM EXAM

III. The Early Republic

Week 7
Oct. 11 Fall Recess – No Class

Carnes and Garraty: Ch. 5 (151-167), Ch. 6, Ch. 7 (191-202)
Week 8
Oct. 18 – Lecture – The Era of Good Feelings and Bad, 1815-1828
Carnes and Garraty: Ch. 7 (202-221), Ch. 8.

Oct. 20 – Seminar – One Slave’s Revolt

Part IV: Revolutions: Political, Material, and Spiritual

Week 9
Oct. 25 – Lecture – The Age of Jackson
Carnes and Garraty: Ch. 9
How would you define the Age of Jackson?

Oct. 27 – Essay Two Due
Short Lecture – Second American Party System
Seminar – Indian Removal

Week 10
Nov. 1 – Lecture – The Second Great Awakening and Reform
Carnes and Garraty: Ch. 10, Ch. 11.
Were abolitionists fanatics?

Nov. 3 – Seminar – Slavery Attacked, Slavery Defended
George Fitzhugh, Cannibals All!, 52-82, 190-98.
Hinton Rowan Helper, The Impending Crisis.
Who presents the most persuasive argument?

38pp.

Part V: Sectionalism and the Politics of Slavery

Week 11
Nov. 8 – Lecture – Manifest Destiny, Mexican War, Compromise of 1850
Carnes and Garraty: Ch. 12, Ch. 13.
Was the United States imperialist?

Nov. 10 – Seminar – Compromise of 1850
Week 12
Carnes and Garraty: Ch. 14.

Nov. 17 – No Class – Instructor Away

Week 13
Nov. 22 – Essay Three Due
– Seminar – One Slave’s Escape
Frederick Douglass

Nov. 24 Thanksgiving – No Class

Part VI: War and Reconstruction
Week 14
Nov. 29 Thanksgiving – No Class

Dec. 1 – Lecture – War, Emancipation, and Reconstruction
Carnes and Garraty: Ch. 15, Ch. 16.

Week 15
Dec. 5 – Seminar – Valley of the Shadow
Class will be held in a computer lab. Location to be announced.
Beforehand students will read:

Dec. 8 - Conclusion

The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus with appropriate notification.