Fall 2006  
Class: Monday and Wednesday 10:10am to 11:20am  
Office: Comenius 306  
Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00–3:00  
       Wednesday 1:30-2:30  
       Or by appointment  
Contact: jpaxton@moravian.edu  
       610-625-7897  

Course Description: The period between the end of the War of 1812 and the outbreak of  
the Civil War in the United States was marked by territorial expansion, economic growth,  
and democratic reform. Some historians have characterized the period as “The Era of the  
Common Man,” but it was also a time of sectional tension, alienation, inequality, and  
hardening race relations. Neither comprehensive nor chronological, this course will  
explore these themes by focusing on how Americans promoted, accommodated, directed,  
and resisted four major and interrelated “revolutions” that shaped mid-nineteenth-century  
American society: the market revolution, westward expansion and the rise of Jacksonian  
democracy, religious revivals and reform movements, and sectional politics. Americans  
responded to these developments in a variety of ways that contributed to intellectual  
radicalism, westward movement, the spread of slavery, and the rise of reform and  
abolitionism that exacerbated sectional tensions. By examining these developments,  
students will be able to decide for themselves why Americans went to war with each  
other in 1861.
Course Objectives

Students will

- become familiar with the main events and themes in American history from the end of the War of 1812 until 1877.
- become familiar with some of the major schools of thought and historiographical debates that have shaped historians’ understanding of the United States in the Antebellum period.
- understand the ways in which historians have “constructed” the past.
- learn to critically evaluate secondary sources.
- further develop clear and effective oral and written communications skills.

Class Organization

Classes will be a combination of lecture and discussion. We will usually begin with a 20-30 minute introduction to the week’s topic followed by a student-led discussion of the assigned readings.

Required Texts


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

Attendance

While there is no formal penalty for missing classes, students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes. Success in the course depends upon comprehension of the lecture material and participation in class discussions. Lateness will not be tolerated.

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

Grade Distribution

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Essay 1</td>
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<td>Essay 2</td>
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<td>Essay 3</td>
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<td>Journals</td>
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<td>Participation</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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The participation grade reflects the quality and quantity of your participation. It is not an attendance grade. However, if you do not attend class, then you cannot participate.

**Journals**
Throughout the semester you will write a total of six journal responses to the readings. Which classes you hand in a journal is up to you, but do not leave them to the end of the course. The journals should succinctly state the author(s) main arguments. When you are writing your journals, consider how the readings relate to one another and to the work we have done in the course. Journal entries should be 1-2 pages, typed, double-spaced, with a one-inch margin. In terms of style, journal entries may be less formal, but they will still be marked for spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Journals **must** be handed in at the beginning of the class in which they are due.

**Assignments**
During the course you will become an expert in one area of nineteenth-century American history. By the third week you will choose a topic, which you will explore in-depth through three essays. The essays will be historiographical in nature. Papers are due at the beginning of the class. The first essay will be a 2-3 page book review. The second essay will compare the book you reviewed in essay one with another book on the same subject. It should be 3-4 pages in length. The final essay will be a 6-7 page historiographical essay assessing five books. You may substitute three articles for a book. A historiographical essay provides comment and analysis on a number of works pertaining to one subject. Do not summarize the contents of the books. Instead, analyze the book’s evidence and conclusions and then compare the author’s evidence and conclusions with what you have found in other works.

**Late Policy**
Papers turned in after the beginning of the class on which they are due will be assessed a penalty of 10% for the first day they are late and 5% for each day thereafter. Computer and printing problems are not acceptable reasons for lateness.

**Schedule**
Week 1 – Introduction
Aug. 28 – Antebellum America

Aug. 30 – Historiography of the United States
Reading and Writing Essays

I. Expansion
Week 2
Sept. 4 – No Class – Labor Day

Sept. 6 – The Western Frontier

Is the “frontier” a useful concept in American history?

**Week 3**

Sept. 11 – Pioneer Settlements

Does Usner support Turner’s frontier thesis?

Sept. 13 – Indian Removal
Faragher, *Sugar Creek*, xiii-xvii, 3-36.

Why did the United States remove Native Americans? Was removal genocide?

**Essay Topics and Bibliography Due**

**Week 4**

Sept. 18
Faragher, *Sugar Creek*, 39-75, 121-42.

What did settlers value? What did they hope to achieve in the west?

Sept. 20 – The Age of Jackson
Faragher, *Sugar Creek*, 143-155.

How would you characterize the Age of Jackson?

**II. Market Revolution**

**Week 5**

Sept. 25 – Overview

What is the Market Revolution?

Sept. 27 – The West
Week 6
Oct. 2 – The Rural North
How did Americans respond to the Market Revolution?

Oct. 4 – The Urban North
How did the Market Revolution affect the lives of urban workers?

**Essay 1 Due**

### III. Religion and Reform

Week 7
Oct. 9 – No Class – Fall Recess

Oct. 11 – Second Great Awakening
Faragher, *Sugar Creek*, 156-170.
What was the Great Awakening? What role did play in Americans’ lives?

Week 8
Oct. 16 – Nineteenth-Century Women
Faragher, *Sugar Creek*, 96-118.
Read Faragher and two of the other articles. Consider how gender, race, and class shaped definitions of “woman” in nineteenth-century America? Of race, class, and gender, which was most important to women’s identity?

Oct. 18 – Unorthodox Sects, Part 1
Johnson and Wilentz, Kingdom of Matthias, 3-90.

Week 9 – Unorthodox Sects, Part 2
Oct. 23
Johnson and Wilentz, Kingdom of Matthias, 91-179.
What need did the Kingdom of Matthias fill for its adherents?

IV. The South and Slavery

Oct. 25 – Introduction to the Old South
Essay 2 Due

Week 10
Oct. 30 – Native Peoples of the South
James Taylor Carson, Searching for the Bright Path: The Mississippi Choctaw from Prehistory to Removal (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 70-111.
Reserve
How did Native Americans adapt to the changes in American society?

Nov. 1 – The Institution of Slavery
Do you agree with Elkins’ characterization of plantations as concentration camps?

Week 11
Nov. 6 – The Plantation Community
Joyner, Down By the Riverside, xv-xxii, 1-40.

Nov. 8
Joyner, Down By the Riverside, 41-89.

Week 12
Nov. 13
Joyner, Down By the Riverside, 90-171.

Nov. 15
Does Wyatt-Brown’s interpretation challenge Joyner’s? How?

Week 13
Nov. 20
Joyner, *Down By the Riverside*, 172-224.
Compare and contrast Stampp and Joyner’s interpretations of slavery.

V. Sectionalism, Civil War, and Reconstruction

Nov. 22 – The Irrepressible Conflict?
Was the Civil War inevitable?

Week 14
Nov. 27 – Reading Day
**Essay 3 Due**

Nov. 29 – Secession
Read two articles and consider how Americans responded to the crises of the 1850s?
What factors were most important in bringing about the Civil War?

Week 15
Dec. 4 – Why They Fought?
Randall C. Jimerson, “All that We Hold Dear,” in *The Private Civil War: Popular Thought During the Sectional Conflict* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press), 8-26. Reserve
Read McPherson and either Mitchell or Jimerson. Why did Americans fight in the Civil War?
Dec. 6 – Who Freed the Slaves?
Joyner, *Down By the Riverside*, 225-242. Reserve

Week 16
Dec. 11 - Conclusion