

# **United States History**

## **History 120, section 1**

### **George Mason University. Fall 2006**

MWF, 10:30 - 11:20 am, Robinson Hall B224

Course website: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~zschrage/hist120fall06/home.htm>

Course wiki: <http://history120.pbwiki.com/>

Professor Zachary M. Schrag

Robinson B 375C. Tel. 703/993-1257. [www.schrage.info](http://www.schrage.info)

E-mail: [zschrage@gmu.edu](mailto:zschrage@gmu.edu) (please include "120" in subject header).

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2-4 pm, and by appointment.

Syllabus revised August 21, 2006

On June 5, 2006, Florida governor Jeb Bush signed into law House Bill No. 7087, requiring that in Florida's public schools "American history shall be viewed as factual, not as constructed, shall be viewed as knowable, teachable, and testable, and shall be defined as the creation of a new nation based largely on the universal principles stated in the Declaration of Independence."

In this course, students will study both this nation's past and the process of writing history by testing two of the propositions of the new law: first, whether history, as a subject, is best viewed as "as factual, not as constructed," and second, whether the United States has been "based largely on the universal principles stated in the Declaration of Independence."

## **Goals**

By the end of this course, you will

- become familiar with major debates and developments in politics, culture, and the economy over two centuries of American history
- learn to analyze primary documents
- practice writing interpretive essays, using primary sources in support of clear thesis statements

This course is designed to prepare you for further study and professional life by building your knowledge and skills of communication and analysis. But its primary aim is to prepare you for civic life. Whether your ancestors came to this continent thousands of years ago or whether you yourself arrived yesterday, you have a stake in the future of the United States. And you cannot shape that future wisely without understanding something of the past.

### **Administrative information**

All assignments are governed by the George Mason University **honor code**, online at <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/unilife/honorcode.html>. You are expected to work independently and to acknowledge all sources, including assigned texts and materials found online.

Gordon Harvey's *Writing with Sources* is required reading and should answer most questions about **citation**, but ask me if you need clarification. In general, any sentence in your work that can be traced to a single sentence in someone else's work should bear a footnote. Any collaboration, such as consultation with the Writing Center, should also be acknowledged. Violations of academic integrity will be reported to the administration and may result in grade penalties, including failure of the course.

In case of **inclement weather**, please call the main switchboard at 703-993-1000 or consult the main web page at <http://www.gmu.edu/> to see if classes are cancelled. I expect to cancel class only when the university cancels all classes.

If you are a student with a **disability** and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

All students are expected to check their **gmu.edu e-mail** regularly and are responsible for information sent to their GMU addresses.

### **Group Work**

Students will be divided into groups. You will exchange draft essays with members of your group for comments. On four occasions during the term, your group will present an illustrated lecture to the class, for which you will receive a group grade. On a Friday preceding each of these assignments, our class will not meet. You are expected to use this time to meet with your group members and prepare your lecture, or to find another 50-minute period in which to meet. If you miss class, please ask members of your group to fill you in.

### **Requirements**

#### *Participation (15 percent)*

Much of this course is discussion based, which means that each student's learning depends on the other students' being prepared, punctual, and active. The participation grade is designed to encourage you to help other students learn, and to prepare you for a lifetime of meetings.

You are expected to attend class three times a week. The participation grade is based on your prompt arrival and active participation in discussions. You should be in your seat, ready to take notes at 10:30 am; chronic tardiness will lower your grade. To be counted

as on time, you must sign in by 10:30. To be counted present, you must sign the late attendance sheet.

Basic classroom rules:

- Bring both document readers to class on discussion days.
- Bring materials for taking notes. If you take notes on a computer, bring a pen or pencil anyway to make notes on handouts and classmates' papers.
- Do not eat in the classroom, before, during, or after class.
- Turn off all cell phones, pagers, and other noisemakers.
- Wait until the end of class to begin packing up your belongings.

*Essays (45 percent total; 15 percent each)*

Four essays are assigned over the course of the semester in response to the lectures and assigned readings, and your best three grades will count toward your final grade. Each essay should run 750-1000 (roughly three or four double-spaced pages). Specific assignments will be handed out in class and posted on the course website.

For each day that reading is due, you will be asked to answer a question in an electronic journal entry. Your entries will not be graded individually, but their presence will factor into your essay grades.

*Group Presentations (20 percent)*

On four occasions you will join with a group of your classmates to produce a short presentation of visual material from the period we are studying. You are expected to collaborate with members of your group, and each student in the group will receive the same grade for the presentation. We will go over this assignment in more depth on September 8.

*Final Exam (20 percent)*

The final exam will be a take-home essay exam. You will be asked to answer a question that draws together themes from all four units of the course.

*Extra Credit (15 percent)*

Fifteen points of extra credit are available as follows:

- **Memorization tests.** Three points each, six points total. Following our discussions of the Declaration of Independence (September 6) and the Gettysburg Address (October 16), students will have ten minutes to write, from memory, the first 272 words of the Declaration (from "When in the Course of human events" to "their future security") and the whole of the Gettysburg Address. Three points will be given for versions with up to ten errors, two points for versions with eleven to twenty errors, and one point for versions with twenty-one to thirty errors.

- **News items.** Two points each, four points maximum. At any point in the semester, students who find a newspaper article, magazine article, editorial essay, or other printed news item (but not a blog entry) up to two weeks old that refers to the Declaration of Independence or the Gettysburg Address may present that item for two points of extra credit, maximum two items per student during the term. The item may refer to either document by name or adopt one or more of their signature phrases, e.g., “We hold these truths to be self-evident.” After selecting your item, write a one-paragraph entry on your journal explaining how the author uses the document to make his or her point. Be prepared to read this paragraph to the class if called upon. Be sure to include a full citation for the item.
- **Glossary entries.** One point each, five points maximum. If you find in a primary document a word or reference you do not understand, look it up in a reputable reference source and add it to the class website’s glossary page: <http://history120.pbwiki.com/Glossary>. Be sure to include a full citation to the source you used, and to sign and date your contribution.

## Readings

*Required—Available at the bookstore in the Johnson Center*

- Zachary M. Schrag, ed., *Retrieving the American Past*. This custom-printed reader is available only in the university bookstore.
- Zachary M. Schrag, ed., *Declaring Independence*. This reader is available as a coursepack in the university bookstore and as a download from the course website. If you cannot find it at the bookstore, please ask a store employee for help.
- Gordon Harvey, *Writing With Sources: A Guide for Students* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998).

*Required—available online*

- Zachary M. Schrag, “Guidelines for History Students,” <http://www.schrag.info/teaching/teaching.html>.

These guidelines offer suggestions for reading efficiently, building strong thesis statements, and organizing essays. Following them closely will improve your grade.

*Recommended*

- Steven Mintz et al., “Hypertext History,” [http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/hyper\\_titles.cfm](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/hyper_titles.cfm) (2003)

Students who have little background in U.S. history may find it useful to read portions of this text relevant to the material covered in lecture.

## Schedule

RTAP = *Retrieving the American Past*

DI = *Declaring Independence*

### Week 1

August 28. Course Introduction

---

### UNIT I: GOVERNMENTS ARE INSTITUTED AMONG MEN

August 30. Lecture: Revolutionary Gentlemen

- RTAP: Munford, *The Practice of Eighteenth Century Politics*
- RTAP: Adams, *Property and the Right to Vote*

September 1. Workshop: What is critical reading?

- “How to Read a Primary Source”  
<http://www.schrag.info/teaching/primary.html>
- “Document Analysis”  
<http://www.schrag.info/teaching/documentanalysis.html>

### Week 2.

September 4. NO CLASS (LABOR DAY)

September 6. Discussion: Who deserves independence?

- DI: Thomas Bradbury Chandler, “The Friendly Address to All Reasonable Americans,” 1774
- RTAP: *The Virginia Declaration of Rights* (4)
- RTAP: Paine, *Common Sense*
- DI: *The Declaration of Independence*

Declaration quiz

September 8. Workshop: How to Prepare Presentations

### Week 3.

September 11. Lecture: Who needs a Constitution?

- DI: *Articles of Confederation*
- DI: *The U.S. Constitution, 1787*

**September 12. Last day to add a class or to drop without tuition liability.**

September 13. Workshop: what is a thesis?

- *Writing with Sources*
- “Elements of a Thesis Statement”  
<http://www.schrag.info/teaching/thesis.html>

September 15. NO CLASS. Group meetings for presentations

### Week 4.

September 18. **Presentations: Founders**

September 20. Discussion: Constitutional debates

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RTAP: Bryan, An Anti-Federalist Critique</li> <li>• RTAP: Virginia Ratification Debates</li> <li>• RTAP: Federalist 9 and 14</li> <li>• DI: The Bill of Rights</li> </ul>  |
| September 22.                                      | <b>ESSAY 1 WORKING DRAFT DUE</b><br>Peer Writing Workshop   |
| <b>UNIT II:</b>                                    | <b>ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL</b>  |
| <b>Week 5</b>                                      |   |
| September 25.                                      | Lecture: Looking West<br><b>ESSAY 1 FINAL DRAFT DUE</b>   |
| September 27.                                      | Discussion: Employees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RTAP: Notes on the State of Virginia</li> <li>• DI: Hamilton, Report on Manufactures</li> <li>• RTAP: Factory Regulations at the Dawn of the Industrial Age</li> <li>• RTAP: Factory Regulations in Lowell</li> <li>• DI: The Working Shoemakers of Philadelphia, “Address to the Public”</li> </ul> |
| September 29.                                      | Discussion: Indians <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RTAP: Defense of the Lewis and Clark Expedition</li> <li>• RTAP: Jackson, Cherokee Removal</li> <li>• RTAP: Memorial and Protest of the Cherokee Nation</li> <li>• RTAP: Worcester v. Georgia</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Last day to drop with no academic liability</b> |   |
| <b>Week 6</b>                                      |   |
| October 2.   | NO CLASS  |
| October 4.   | Lecture/Discussion: Religion and Reform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DI: Catharine Esther Beecher, A Treatise on Domestic Economy</li> <li>• RTAP: The Seneca Falls Convention</li> <li>• DI: Hunt, Protest against Taxation without Representation</li> </ul>  |
| October 6.   | NO CLASS. Group meetings for presentations  |
| <b>Week 7</b>                                      |   |
| October 9.   | NO CLASS (COLUMBUS DAY)   |
| October 10.  | <b>Presentations: Slaves</b>  |
| October 11.  | Lecture: Slavery  |
| October 13.  | Discussion: Abolitionists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DI: Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, Query 14</li> <li>• RTAP: Garrison, American Anti-Slavery Society</li> <li>• DI: Calhoun, Speech on the Oregon Bill</li> </ul>  |

**Week 8**

October 16.

- DI: Douglass, What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?

Discussion: Lincoln

- RTAP: Dred Scott
- RTAP: Lincoln-Douglas debates
- RTAP: Lincoln Responds to Greeley
- RTAP: Gettysburg Address
- RTAP: Lincoln, Second Inaugural

Gettysburg quiz

October 18.

Lecture: Reconstruction

- RTAP: Debate over the Civil Rights Act
- DI: The Civil War Amendments

October 20.

Peer Writing Workshop: Essay 2

**ESSAY 2 WORKING DRAFT DUE**

---

**UNIT III:**

**THEIR JUST POWERS**

**Week 9**

October 23.

Lecture: Industrial Progress

**ESSAY 2 FINAL DRAFT DUE**

October 25.

Discussion: Labor and Capital

- RTAP: Powderly, The Knights of Labor
- RTAP: Barry, Women and Separatism: The Knights of Labor
- DI: Richard T. Ely, A Declaration by the Representatives of the Wage-Workers of the United States in Congress Assembled
- DI: Omaha Platform
- DI: Henry Ward Beecher, Communism Denounced
- DI: William Graham Sumner, The Concentration of Wealth

October 27.

NO CLASS. Group meetings for presentations

**Week 10**

October 30.

**Presentations: Workers**

November 2.

Lecture: Progressivism

November 4.

Discussion: Progressivism

- RTAP: Carnegie, Carnegie Steel
- RTAP: Carnegie, Gospel of Wealth
- RTAP: Taylorism
- RTAP: Roosevelt, New Nationalism
- RTAP: Roosevelt, The Character of American Citizens

- RTAP: Weyl, The Revolt of the Ultimate Consumer

**Week 11**

November 6.

Lecture: Depression and New Deal

- RTAP: Letters to Hoover
- RTAP: Terkel, The Great Depression

November 8.

Discussion: Depression and New Deal

- RTAP: Hoover, The Administration's Record
- RTAP: Roosevelt, Acceptance Address at the Democratic Convention
- RTAP: Long, Share Our Wealth
- RTAP: Dewey, The Case Against the New Deal

November 10.

Peer Writing Workshop. Essay 3

**ESSAY 3 WORKING DRAFT DUE**

**UNIT IV:**

**THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS**

**Week 12**

November 13.

Lecture: The Consumer's Republic

**ESSAY 3 FINAL DRAFT DUE**

November 15.

Discussion: Communism

- RTAP: Kennan, Containment
- RTAP: Truman, Internal Security
- RTAP: Neibuhr. Evil of the Communist Idea
- RTAP: Whyte, A Generation of Bureaucrats

November 17

NO CLASS. Group meetings for presentations

**Week 13**

November 20

**Presentations: Consumers**

November 22

NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)

November 24.

NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)

**Week 14**

November 27.

Discussion: The Great Society

- RTAP: Carson, Silent Spring
- RTAP: Port Huron
- DI: Johnson, Great Society
- DI: Reagan, A Time for Choosing

November 29.

Lecture: Civil Rights

December 1

Discussion: Civil Rights

- RTAP: Clark, Segregation's Human Cost

- RTAP: Baker, Bigger than a Hamburger
- RTAP: Civil Rights Act
- DI: Johnson, To Fulfill These Rights
- RTAP: Stokeley Carmichael, “Black Power”
- RTAP: Wallace, The Average Man on the Street

## **Week 15**

December 4

Discussion: Feminism

- RTAP: Friedan, The Sexual Sell
- RTAP: Bill of Rights for Women
- RTAP: The Founding of NOW
- RTAP: Schlafly, Anti-Feminism

December 6

Peer Writing Workshop: Essay 4

**ESSAY 4 WORKING DRAFT DUE**

December 8

Conclusion

**ESSAY 4 FINAL DRAFT DUE**

## **Final Exam**

Take-home exam.

- Distributed in class, December 8.
- Due in History Department, Robinson B 359, Wednesday, December 13, 1 pm.

## Essay Assignment

### Deadlines

Essay 1: Working draft due in class September 22. Final draft due in class Sept. 25.

Essay 2: Working draft due in class October 20. Final draft due in class October 23.

Essay 3: Working draft due in class November 10. Final draft due in class Nov. 13.

Essay 4: Working draft due in class December 6. Final draft due in class December 8.

### Task

*Please visit the class website*

*<<http://mason.gmu.edu/~zschrage/hist120fall06/assignments.htm/>>*

*for specific assignment questions.*

Please write an essay of roughly 750-1000 words or (three or four double-spaced pages) answering the assignment question. Support your answer with evidence from the primary sources assigned for the relevant unit, quoting from them when appropriate. Your essay should follow the standards of formal academic writing, as stated in *Writing with Sources* and my “Guidelines for History Students,” <http://www.schrage.info/teaching/teaching.html>

### Goals

This assignment requires you to

- read primary sources critically and carefully.
- think about the sources analytically, so that you present an interpretive argument rather than just a list of facts.
- become familiar with the norms of academic writing, with particular attention to thesis statements, topic sentences, and citation.

### Process Stages

- Read the materials for the relevant unit and review your lecture notes and journal entries. You may also wish to read your classmates’ entries. As you read, consider how each document might help you answer the essay question.
- Write out several potential answers to the question. Choose the most surprising answer you can support with evidence and use it as your thesis statement.
- Outline your essay, with the thesis statement in the introduction and a series of points to support your argument.
- Build your essay by turning each outline point into a paragraph consisting of a topic sentence supported by evidence.
- As you write, cite all your sources, including lecture notes and classmates’ journal entries.
- Compare your essay to the pre-submission checklist at <http://www.schrage.info/teaching/checklist.html> and correct any lapses.

## Submission

- **Working Draft:** Bring **two copies** of a completed working draft. Give them to two members of your group for comments.
- **Final Draft:** Submit the following, collected in a folder:
  - The two copies of your working drafts, with signed and dated comments from the classmates who read them.
  - One copy of a revised draft.
  - A printout of your journal entries for the unit.
  - A process memo explaining how you addressed the comments of your peers, and listing the two papers on which you commented. If a classmate gave you particularly helpful advice, please note this. For essays after the first one, please note how each essay improves on the one that came before.

## Grading Criteria

### *Journal entries: 10 percent*

I will review your entries to make sure they were submitted on time and addressed the question posed.

### *Drafts and comments: 10 percent*

I will award 6 points for your turning in the two copies of your paper with peers' comments, and 2 points each for your having provided useful comments to your peers. Thus, if you miss the peer workshop, you will lose 10 percent of your paper grade.

### *Final essay: 80 percent*

When I read your paper, I will look for interpretive arguments supported by evidence from primary sources. Your grade will be based on:

- The interpretive power of your **thesis statement**. The more surprising your finding, the more it is worth.
- Your ability to support your thesis statement with **evidence** from primary sources, especially direct quotations. This includes the **accuracy** of your accounts of events and your summaries of the sources you use.
- The **quality of your writing** and its conformity to academic norms. I will look for topic sentences that support your thesis, complete sentences, appropriate grammar, spelling, punctuation, and Chicago-style citation.

For more information, see my Grading Standards,  
<http://www.schrag.info/teaching/gradingstandards.html>

Your essays must be brought to the start of class. Late papers, including papers brought late to class, will be penalized a full grade and 1/3 of a grade (e.g, B to B-) for each additional 24-hour period or fraction thereof. Late papers should be sent by e-mail to [zschrag@gmu.edu](mailto:zschrag@gmu.edu). Include the term "120" in the subject line of your message and paste the text of your paper into the body of the e-mail in case your attachment does not go through.

## Presentation Assignment

### Deadlines

1. September 18. Founders
2. October 10. Slaves
3. October 30. Workers
4. November 20: Consumers

### Task

*Please visit the class website*

*<<http://mason.gmu.edu/~zschrage/hist120fall06/assignments.htm/>>  
for specific assignment questions.*

Working as a group, please prepare a web page featuring a set of images from American history. Each member of the group should find one or two images.

### Goals

This assignment requires you to

- learn how to find historical images on the World Wide Web and elsewhere.
- think about the images analytically
- practice working in groups
- practice public speaking

### Process Stages

- Individuals: Explore a number of relevant images, looking for common themes.
- Group: Choose the most surprising theme. Select a set of images that illustrate that theme and choose an order. Determine which individuals will be responsible for which images.
- Individuals: Prepare a brief description and analysis of one or two images your group has selected. Using the template provided at <http://history120.pbwiki.com/Template>, post your image and accompanying text to the course wiki. Emphasize the details that relate to the theme.

### Presentation

- Prior to the start of class on presentation days, all the images should be posted to the wiki.
- Each group will have a turn to present. Each member of each group should present at least one image during the group's presentation.
- Time will be tight, so please plan to stay within the time allotted, probably 5-6 minutes.

### Grading Criteria

I want this assignment to be fun, but still rigorous. I will look for:

- Thematic coherence. You need not prove a thesis as rigorously as in an essay, but each group should show that it has selected images thoughtfully, rather than choosing the first few it stumbled across.
- Detailed analysis. Your written descriptions and analyses should pay attention to specific details in each image and the circumstances of its creation.
- Enthusiastic presentation. Each group should keep the rest of the class awake and interested.