

United States History

History 120, section 7. George Mason University. Fall 2004

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00 10:15 am. Robinson Hall B202

Prof. Zachary M. Schrag

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2 4 and by appointment.

Syllabus revised: August 27, 2004

This course provides an introduction to United States history from the 1770s through the 1970s. We will examine major debates and developments in politics, culture, and the economy, paying particularly close attention to debates over such institutions of political economy as slavery and industrial capitalism, and to the question of what makes a good citizen. And we will practice the skills of interpreting evidence and building effective arguments.

Books

Required

John Hollitz and A. James Fuller, *Contending Voices: Biographical Explorations of the American Past* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003 , volumes 1 and 2. These texts are in stock at the George Mason bookstore in the Johnson Center. I have asked that they be packaged together to lower the price.

Recommended

Steven Mintz et al., "Hypertext History,"

<http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/hyper_titles.cfm> 2003

Requirements

Participation 15 percent

You are expected to attend class twice a week. The participation grade is based on your prompt arrival and active participation in discussions, especially on those weeks when you have a paper due. You should be in your seat, ready to take notes at 9:00 am; chronic tardiness will lower your grade.

Basic classroom rules:

- Bring the appropriate volume of *Contending Voices* to class on Tuesdays.
- Do not eat in the classroom, before or during class.
- Turn off all cell phones, pagers, and other noisemakers.

Papers 15 percent each, total 45 percent

On four occasions you will submit five paragraph essays roughly 500 750 words or two double spaced pages in response to the assigned readings. The questions will be posted on the course WebCT site, at <http://webct38.gmu.edu>. Due dates vary. In each case, your essays must be posted on WebCT at least 24 hours before the

discussion. Papers posted less than 24 hours before the discussion will be penalized 1/3 of a grade. Papers sent after the discussion begins will be penalized two full grades, plus 1/3 of a grade for each additional 24 hours. In the event of a computer failure you may bring a hard copy to my office or to class; the same time penalties apply. The lowest grade will be dropped.

Exams 15 percent and 25 percent

We will have two closed book exams. For each exam you will be given a choice of primary documents and asked to interpret them in an essay, drawing on the views of people you have read about in *Contending Voices*.

Guidelines for reading efficiently, building strong thesis statements, and organizing essays can be found online at <http://www.schrag.info/teaching/teaching.html>.

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 *Contending Voices*, "Hypertext History," and materials found online. Consult Gordon Harvey's "Writing with Sources," <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~expos/sources> for instructions on when and how to cite, and 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.

Schedule

CV1 = *Contending Voices*, volume 1. CV2 = *Contending Voices*, volume 2.

Week 1

August 31. Course Introduction

September 2. Lecture: Revolutionary Gentlemen

Week 2

September 6. Group 1 papers due on WebCT 24 hours before class.

September 7. Discussion: CV1, Chapters 4 5

September 9. Lecture: Looking West

Week 3

September 13. Group 2 papers due on WebCT 24 hours before class.

September 14. Discussion: CV1, Chapters 6 7.

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

September 16. Lecture: Religion and Reform

Week 4

September 20. Group 3 papers due on WebCT 24 hours before class.

September 21. Discussion: CV1, Chapters 8 9

September 23. Lecture: The Nation United

Week 5

September 27. Group 1 papers due on WebCT 24 hours before class.

September 28. Discussion: CV1, Chapters 10 11

September 30. Lecture: The Nation Divided

October 1: **Last day to drop with no academic liability**

Week 6

October 4. Group 2 papers due on WebCT 24 hours before class.

October 5. Discussion: CV1, Chapters 12 13

October 7. Lecture: Total War

Week 7

October 12 NO CLASS COLUMBUS DAY

October 13. Group 3 papers due on WebCT 24 hours before class.

October 14 . Discussion: CV1, Chapters 14 15

Week 8

October 19. MIDTERM EXAM

October 21. Lecture: Agrarian Tradition, Industrial Progress

Week 9

October 25. Group 1 papers due on WebCT 24 hours before class.

October 26. Discussion, CV2, Chapters 2 3

October 28. Lecture: Progressivism

Week 10

November 1. Group 2 papers due on WebCT 24 hours before class.

November 2. Discussion, CV2, Chapters 4 5

November 4. Lecture: The Tribal Twenties

Week 11

November 8. Group 3 papers due on WebCT 24 hours before class.

November 9. Discussion: CV2, Chapters 6 7

November 11. Lecture: Depression and New Deal

Week 12

November 15. Group 1 papers due on WebCT 24 hours before class.

November 16. Discussion: CV2, Chapters 8 and 11

November 18. Lecture: America at War

Week 13

November 22. Group 2 papers due on WebCT 24 hours before class.

November 23. Discussion: CV2, Chapters 9 10

November 25. NO CLASS THANKSGIVING

Week 14

November 30. Movie

December 2. Lecture: The Affluent Society

Week 15

December 6. Group 3 papers due on WebCT 24 hours before class.

December 7. Discussion: CV2, Chapters 12 13

December 9. Conclusion

Final Exam

Tuesday, December 14, 7:30 am - 10:15 am.