

# **HIST 5305: Studies in United States History: Understanding the Nineteenth-Century United States**

Dr. Adam I. Arenson  
Office: LART 325  
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Spring 2009  
CRN 24564  
Wednesday 1:30-4:20pm  
Class Location: LART 310

## **Course Description**

This readings course introduces the key questions in the study of the nineteenth-century United States, including defining the early republic; the nature of American slavery; market expansion and urbanization; the Civil War and Reconstruction; and the place of the United States in the world. This course will allow students to understand cultural and social perspectives on the basic political narrative of the era, highlighting innovative studies that ask new questions and investigate new sources and populations.

Students will write a historiographic essay, exploring in further detail one of the topics raised in this class, and will be encouraged to identify research leads or ways in which course material can shape their teaching. Students will be expected to attend regularly, participate in discussion, and provide written analyses of the weekly readings.

## **Course Method and Objectives**

In class, we will follow a few systematic guidelines for each week's material, plumbing the specific, general, and generic elements of each historical work, how it can inform our notions of local and national history and the history in textbooks.

**Specific:** What is this book's topic? What is its argument? What sources were used to provide evidence? What is the chronology considered? What are the key events—origins, turning points conclusions? What is the key evidence? What do you particularly admire about the book's specifics? What are its weaknesses? What is a key quotation of these specifics?

**General:** What historical fields are addressed? What theoretical models are used? What established works in the field are referenced? How does the work alter how you understand, teach, or research the period discussed? What do you particularly admire about how the work grapples with its scholarly context? What are its weaknesses? What is a key instance of this?

**Generic:** What choices of genre, method, and rhetoric does the book employ? What do you particularly admire about the book's choices of structure, perspective, or style? What are its weaknesses? What is a specific example of these generic choices?

In addition, we will use supplementary articles to discuss the connections between the local history of El Paso and the U.S.-Mexican borderlands in contrast and in conversation with the broader narratives of United States history.

## Explanation of Participant Requirements

**Each week**, students should come to class prepared to discuss the readings, having thought about the course methods described above. They should read the introductory essay and post a question or comment in response. (Class Participation and Weekly Responses = 15% of final grade)

**Five times during the semester**, students will use the course-method questions to dissect the week's main reading, providing a memorable and useful review of the book. At least two of these analyses should be completed by Week 9. (Five Book Analyses = 30% together, 6% each)

**Once during the semester**, students will introduce discussion, posting a five-page paper to WebCT Discussions for their classmates by noon Tuesday, 24 hours before seminar, and then responding to their comments and adding to their written introduction in the first ten minutes of class. (Introduction = 15%)

**For a final assignment**, students should select the one cumulative-assignment option below most appropriate for their program of study (Final Assignment = 40%):

**Historiographic Essay:** Students can write an essay of 10-20 pages exploring a weekly theme or subtheme, reading a number of outside works to discuss with the week's assigned works.

**Sample Syllabus with Rationale:** Students can craft a sample syllabus for an upper-division undergraduate lecture course on a nineteenth-century topic, and then provide a companion rationale, reflecting on the periodization and focus, the reading and lecture themes chosen, the course learning objectives, and the proposed assignments.

**Research Project Prospectus:** Students can write a prospectus of 5-10 pages plus bibliography for an original research project (article- or dissertation-length) on a subject in the nineteenth century, discussing topic, research questions, primary sources, and scholarly context, including the relevant works from this course. It should include a preliminary argument, outline, and discussions of genre and methodological choices. Prospectus should also include a timeline for the work proposed, potential funding sources, and potential presentation and publication venues. *Students will not complete this research in this course, but I will be happy to work with them in future semesters toward its completion, if the student desires. It can also simply be a useful research-proposal exercise.*

## Main Texts:

Edward L. Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies: War in the Heart of America, 1859-1863* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003). [ISBN# 0393326012]

Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008). [ISBN# 0300119321]

Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001). [ISBN# 081392104X]

- Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996; 1997 Vintage reprint). [ISBN# 0807855731]
- Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War With a New Introductory Essay* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970; 1995 reprint). [ISBN# 0195094972]
- Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). [ISBN# 0195078942]
- Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997). [ISBN# 0674893085]
- Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000). [ISBN# 0809016281]
- Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999). [ISBN# 0674005392]
- Heather Cox Richardson, *West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007). [ISBN# 0300136307]
- Willie Lee Nichols Rose, *Rehearsal for Reconstruction: The Port Royal Experiment* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964; 1999 University of Georgia Press reprint). [ISBN# 0820320617]
- John Stauffer, *The Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001). [ISBN# 0674013670]
- Alan Taylor, *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* (New York: Knopf, 1995; 1996 Vintage reprint). [ISBN# 0679773002]
- John Kuo Wei Tchen, *New York before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture, 1776-1882* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999). [ISBN#0801867940]

You will also be required to read a textbook of your choice (and, ideally, already in your possession) that covers nineteenth-century U.S. history. The additional essays listed below, will be available These items will be available through the UTEP library electronic reserves.

## Course Policies

- Come to class prepared, having done the readings and advanced your research.
- Please arrive on time. If you foresee chronic lateness, contact me immediately.
- Students with special needs should contact me within the first two weeks of class.
- Many of you have families and/or work 40 hours a week—please do not fall behind.
- It is official UTEP policy that all suspected cases or acts of alleged scholastic dishonesty must be referred to the Dean of Students for investigation and appropriate disposition. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Full policy: <http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=23785>
- Please treat all the opinions and views expressed here with respect.

## Course Schedule

### **Week One (Jan 21)                      Introductions: The Nineteenth Century Defined**

Introductions • The Specific, the General, and the Generic • A Philosophy of Graduate Reading • National Textbooks and Regional Lives • When is the Nineteenth Century? • Week 12 Change and Introduction Sign-ups

*In class:* Jürgen Osterhammel, “In Search of a Nineteenth Century,” [Sixteenth Annual Lecture of the German Historical Institute, November 14, 2002] and Ira Berlin, “Comments on Jürgen Osterhammel’s ‘In Search of a Nineteenth Century,’” *GHI Bulletin* No. 32 (Spring 2003), pp. 9-32.

### **Week Two (Jan 28)                      The Young Republic: Economic and Political Legacies**

Inheriting the Revolution • Borderlands of the New Nation • Market Revolution or Emergence? • Community Roots and Routes • Measures of Isolation • Memory and Founding Myths

Alan Taylor, *William Cooper’s Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* (New York: Knopf, 1995; 1996 Vintage reprint).

\*Carey McWilliams, “The Heart of the Borderlands,” Chapter 4 of *North From Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking Peoples of the United States* (1948; 1968 or 1990 reprints), 67-81. (ACLS Humanities)

### **Week Three (Feb 4)                      The Nature of American Slavery I: Origins and Patterns**

American Slavery in Comparative Perspective • Slavery and Rebellion • Evidence Questions • Degrees of Freedom • Race and Class among Slaves

Michael P. Johnson, “Denmark Vesey and His Co-Conspirators.” *William & Mary Quarterly* 3rd Series 58.4 (October 2001), pp. 915-976. (JSTOR)

Reactions from Edward A. Pearson, Douglas R. Egerton, David Robertson, Philip D. Morgan, Thomas J. Davis, Winthrop D. Jordan, James Sidbury, Robert L. Paquette, and Michael P. Johnson *William & Mary Quarterly* 3rd Series 59.1 (January 2002), pp. 135-202. (JSTOR)

\*James Brooks, “Violence, Exchange, and the Honor of Men,” Chapter 1 of *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute-University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

**Week Four (Feb 11)                      “Jacksonian America” Reconsidered**

An Age of Jackson? • Image and Reality in American Transformation • Communication and Transportation • Whig History • The Second Great Awakening • The Challenges of Synthesis

Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

\*Deena J. González, “La Tules of Image and Reality,” in *Building With Our Hands: New Directions in Chicana Studies* Beatriz Pesquera and Adela de la Torre, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 75-90. (NetLibrary)

**Week Five (Feb 18)                      Americans New and Old: The U.S. War with Mexico**

The American 1848 • Integrating the Mexican Cession • Indians Nations and American History • Defining American Empires • Race, Language, and National Memory

**Guest visit by Brian DeLay, University of Colorado, Boulder.**

Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

\*Shelley Streeby, “City and Empire in the American 1848,” from *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 3-37. (NetLibrary)

**Week Six (Feb 25)                      The American World I: Transnational Communities**

National Borders and Global Circuits • Revealing Economic Imperatives • Creating the Racial Other • The Rise of the Newspapers • Tensions of Assimilation

John Kuo Wei Tchen, *New York before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture, 1776-1882* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

\*Susan Lee Johnson, Prologue, “Joaquín Murrieta and the Bandits,” and Chapter 1, “On the Eve of Emigration,” from *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), pp. 25-95.

**Week Seven (Mar 4)                      The Nature of American Slavery II: Mechanics of Power**

Slavery by Age, Geography, and Gender • The Market Nexus Reconsidered • Constructing Masters and Slaves • Agency and Resistance • Exceptional Places, Exemplary Evidence

Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

\*William Carrigan, “Slavery of the Frontier: The Peculiar Institution of Slavery in Central Texas” *Slavery & Abolition* 20.2 (1999), 63-96.

The Nature of Reform • Abolitionists and their Options • The Geography of Slavery and Freedom • International Slavery, International Abolition? • Is Interracialism Real? •

\*Sean Kelley, “‘Mexico in His Head’: Slavery and the Texas-Mexico Border, 1810-1860,” *Journal of Social History* 37.3 (2004) 709-723. (Project MUSE)

## Week Ten (Mar 25) Deconstructing Politics before Secession

Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001).

The Civil War's Borders • A War between Brothers • The Lessons of a Community Study •  
Homefront and Battlefield Reconsidered • The Rio Grande Perspective on the Civil War

\*Jerry D. Thompson, Chapter 6, “Union Tejanos,” from *Vaqueros in Blue and Gray* (Austin: Presidial Press, 1976 [or reprint edition]), pp. 81-96.

>>>>>>>>> ***RESCHEDULED DATE AND TIME:*** \_\_\_\_\_ <<<<<<<<<<  
Changing the Chronology of Reconstruction • Reconstruction's Borders • The Army's Role in  
American History • Uniting American Indian and African American History

\*Elliott West, "Reconstructing Race," *Western Historical Quarterly* 34.1 (Spring 2003), pp. 7-26. (History Cooperative)

### **Week Thirteen (Apr 15)      Understanding Confederate Motivations**

Confederate Nationalism • Women at War • Probing the Breaking Point • The Geography of the Defeated South • Redefining White Southernhood • Memory, Identity, and the Lost Cause

Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996; 1997 Vintage reprint).

\*Sarah Cornell, Chapter 4, “‘Like a Dog Returning to Its Vomit’: Confederates and the Failure of White Supremacy in Maximilian's Mexico, 1865-1867,” from “Americans in the U.S. South and Mexico: A Transnational History of Race, Slavery, and Freedom, 1810-1910,” (book manuscript in process; made available during the semester)

### **Week Fourteen (Apr 22)      Greater Reconstruction II: Struggles of Class and Race**

Reconstruction from the Bottom Up • Changing Definitions of Work and Freedom • Combining Issues of Race and Gender • International Implications of Reconstruction

Tera W. Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

\*Nancy Cohen-Lack, “A Struggle for Sovereignty: National Consolidation, Emancipation, and Free Labor in Texas, 1865,” *Journal of Southern History* 58.1 (February 1992), pp. 57-98. (JSTOR)

### **Week Fifteen (April 29)      Greater Reconstruction III: Struggles of Politics and Memory**

Uniting South and West • The Creation of American Regions • Redefining Capital, Race, and Borders • How and When was Reconstruction Lost? • The Historical Significance of Violence

Heather Cox Richardson, *West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

\*Karl Jacoby, “Between North and South: The Alternative Borderlands of William H. Ellis and the African American Colony of 1895,” from *Continental Crossroads: Remapping U.S.-Mexico Borderlands History* Samuel Truett and Elliott Young, eds. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), pp. 209-239.

**Week Sixteen (May 6)      The American World II: Incorporation and Empire**  
Inventing and Reforming Race • Defining the U.S. Empire • Studying the White Races •  
The Crisis of Masculinity and its Implications • Scrutiny at Geographic and Cultural Borders

Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000).

\*Grace Peña Delgado, “At Exclusion’s Southern Gate: Changing Categories of Race and Class Among Chinese *Fronterizos*, 1882-1904,” from *Continental Crossroads: Remapping U.S.-Mexico Borderlands History* Samuel Truett and Elliott Young, eds. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), pp. 183-207.

**Final papers due May 13, one week after the last class.**