

# HIS 1200: American History

## Instructor: Dr. Allison Fredette

### Spring 2017, Sec. 106

**Meeting Times:** Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9-9:50am

**Room:** Anne Belk Hall 233

**Office Hours:** Monday/Wednesday 12-2 (or by appt)

**Office:** Anne Belk Hall 234H

**Email:** [fredettead@appstate.edu](mailto:fredettead@appstate.edu)

**Teaching Assistant:** Zach Dressel

**Office Hours:** Monday 12-2

**Office:** Anne Belk Hall 203

**Email:** [dresselzb@appstate.edu](mailto:dresselzb@appstate.edu)

### Course Description

This course explores American history from the early days of European colonization through the height of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s. To narrow this vast scope, this class will focus on a few major themes, including the role of race in American society, especially through the experience of African Americans; the development and expansion of American democracy and the concept of freedom; Americans' evolving and contested attitudes toward class and capitalism; and America's relationship with the global community throughout its history.

Throughout the semester, students will analyze a series of primary and secondary sources intended to address both major moments in American history, as well as important scholarly debates. Through the use of primary documents, students will learn to evaluate a source's meaning and biases, marshal evidence to support an argument, and construct or deconstruct a historical narrative. This class asks students to critically analyze their prior knowledge about American history and to draw connections between the events of the past and those of today. Specifically, who creates history, how, and why? Why do we study history, and finally, how does a better understanding of history influence our social interactions in contemporary America?

### Course Goals and Objectives

This course will enable students to:

1. Assess primary and secondary sources and synthesize knowledge within appropriate historical, cultural, and social contexts
2. Identify, conceptualize and evaluate social, cultural, economic, and political processes and to understand and explain human behavior in the context of American history
3. Promote an understanding of these processes in historical and cultural context and assist students in formulating and articulating, orally and in writing through analytical papers and class discussion, the methodologies that they employ
4. Examine individuals' relationships with one another and with their environments and societies, as well as examine relationships between social institutions

## **General Education Requirements:**

This course fulfills the requirements for the Liberal Studies Experience and the Historical Studies Designation in the General Education (2.0) curriculum.

NOTE: HIS 1200 DOES NOT COUNT TOWARD THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A HISTORY MAJOR OR MINOR.

This course strives to help students achieve the four General Education goals:

### **Goal 1: Thinking Critically and Creatively**

- A: Recognize, differentiate, and effectively employ appropriate and increasingly sophisticated strategies to collect and interpret information
- C: Examine and evaluate how their own personal, historical, and cultural perspectives affect the discovery and generation of knowledge
- E: Apply theories from a variety of disciplines and advance convincing reasons to connect as well as differentiate theories from different domains of knowledge

### **Goal 2: Communicating Effectively**

- E: Read actively and analytically at the college level and synthesize and apply information and ideas from their reading across disciplines

### **Goal 3: Making Local-to-Global Connections**

- C: Demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively about the relationship between local regions and global issues, processes, trends, and systems
- D: Demonstrate knowledge of contemporary issues related to cultural diversity in the United States and other areas of the world

### **Goal 4: Understanding the Responsibilities of Community Membership**

- A: Identify potential consequences that personal choices as well as political, economic, and other social forces may have on individual, societal, and environmental health
- B: Apply moral reasoning skills to an array of ethical issues confronted by individuals, groups, and communities

## Required Books (all books can be found at the university bookstore)

- Melton A. McLaurin, *Celia, A Slave*. New York: Avon Books, 1999.
- Scott Reynolds Nelson, *Steel Drivin' Man: John Henry, the Untold Story of an American Legend*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- James L. Roark, Michael P. Johnson, Patricia Cline Cohen, et al. *Understanding the American Promise* (1<sup>st</sup> Ed.) New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2011. (rental)
- Other articles and primary documents listed will be posted on AsUlearn

## Important Dates

**February 15** – Slave narrative analysis due

**February 27** – Exam #1

**April 3** – Exam #2

**April 24** – Song analysis due

**May 5** – Exam #3/Final

## Course Requirements and Grades

In this class, students are expected to attend all classes, keep up with all assigned readings and films, participate fully and positively in class discussion, prepare for unscheduled in-class quizzes, and take three exams. I will provide more information on the two written projects as the semester progresses.

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Exams (3)	45%
Participation	10%
Quizzes	15%
Slave narrative analysis	15%
Song analysis	15%

## Grading Scale

A	93-100		C	73-76.4
A-	90-92.4		C-	70-72.4
B+	87-89.4		D+	67-69.4
B	83-86.4		D	63-66.4
B-	80-82.4		D-	60-62.4
C+	77-79.4		F	0-59.4

## **Class Policies**

### **Attendance, Quizzes, and In-Class Behavior**

Students must attend all class meetings. The bulk of the material tested during the three exams comes from the lectures and class discussions. You cannot do well on those exams (45% of your grade) without attending class and taking good notes. I do not, under any circumstances, provide copies of the slides. If you have an excused absence, please come to my office hours to discuss the missed material.

You cannot do well on your participation grade (10% of your final grade), if you do not attend. Additionally, throughout the semester, I will give unannounced quizzes in class. They will be short in duration (5-10 minutes) and consist of short answer questions dealing mainly with the issues raised in class and in the readings. In order to do well on these quizzes, you must read all assigned material. The due date for each reading assignment is on the syllabus schedule. I will drop the lowest grade. These quizzes are given to ensure that you are keeping up on the reading and have a working knowledge of the subject matter.

In addition, when possible, this class involves discussion, and your participation is expected and required (in fact, it's 10% of your grade). You must complete all readings before class and come prepared to engage with both the professor and your fellow students in a lively discussion of the day's topic. Disagreement is expected, and often encouraged, but students must remain respectful at all times of their fellow classmates and professor.

Your grade is contingent on your full attention being given while in the class. Please refrain from facebooking, tweeting, instagraming, etc. while in class. If you are found doing so, it will seriously hurt your grade in the course. Above all, please turn off your cell phone when you enter class. We only have a short amount of time together. Let's make the most of it!

### **Assignments**

A rubric for each assignment will be given out the week before they are due. All written assignments should be done in 12-point double-space font (Times New Roman or comparable font) with one-inch margins. All papers must be turned in during class hours and will NOT be accepted via email.

Late papers and assignments will be penalized 10 percentage points for every day past the due date.

#### **Slave narrative analysis**

An important part of historical writing is the ability to analyze primary documents and to put this in context using secondary sources. For your first paper, you will read Melton McLaurin's *Celia, A Slave* and two slave narratives from the state of North Carolina. Then, in a 1-2-page paper due February 15<sup>th</sup>, you will analyze these primary documents, using McLaurin's book as context. You should address the following questions: what can historians learn from these narratives? What was life like for slaves in the American South? Be sure to think about the role of gender, sex, and region in these narratives.

### **Song analysis**

The second half of *Steel Drivin' Man* discusses the evolution of the John Henry ballad throughout the twentieth century. With the Great Migration and the Cold War, John Henry's story and music came to mean something different to a new generation of Americans. For this project, each student should choose one American song (written and recorded between 1900 and 1995) and, in a short blog post, explain the origins of the song and the way it was affected by or how it influenced the era in which it was created. This is a research project, and you will use secondary sources to analyze your song. Your grade is also contingent on you commenting on and engaging with your fellow students in this song forum.

### **Academic Integrity**

As a community of learners at Appalachian State University, we must create an atmosphere of honesty, fairness, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of each other. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of an Appalachian degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form and will oppose any instance of academic dishonesty. This course will follow the provisions of the Academic Integrity Code, which can be found on the Office of Student Conduct Web Site: [www.studentconduct.appstate.edu](http://www.studentconduct.appstate.edu).

### **Statement on Student Engagement with Courses**

In its mission statement, Appalachian State University aims at “providing undergraduate students a rigorous liberal education that emphasizes transferable skills and preparation for professional careers” as well as “maintaining a faculty whose members serve as excellent teachers and scholarly mentors for their students.” Such rigor means that the foremost activity of Appalachian students is an intense engagement with their courses. In practical terms, students should expect to spend two to three hours of studying for every hour of class time. Hence, a fifteen-hour academic load might reasonably require between 30 and 45 hours per week of out-of-class work.

### **Disability Services**

Appalachian State University is committed to making reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Those seeking accommodations based on a substantially limiting disability must contact and register with The Office of Disability Services (ODS) at <http://www.ods.appstate.edu/> or 828-262-3056. Once registration is complete, individuals will meet with ODS staff to discuss eligibility and appropriate accommodations.

### **Religious Observances Policy**

Faculty members are required to make reasonable accommodations for students requesting to miss class due to the observance of religious holidays. All ASU students are allowed a minimum of two absences per year for religious observances. Up to two absences for such observances will be excused, without penalty to the student, provided that the student has informed the instructor in the manner specified in the syllabus. Notice must be given by the student to the

instructor before the absence occurs and no later than three weeks after the start of the semester in which the absence(s) will occur. Arrangements will be made to make up work missed by these religious observances, without penalty to the student. For the purposes of this policy, ASU defines the term “religious observance” to include religious holidays, holy days, or similar observances associated with a student’s faith that require absence from class. Faculty, at their discretion, may include class attendance as a criterion in determining a student’s final grade in the course. On the first day of class, faculty must inform students of their class attendance policy and the effect of that policy on their final grade; both policies must be clearly stated in the class syllabus.

## **Weekly Schedule**

### **Week 1, January 18 & 20**

**Introduction to the Study of American History**

### **Week 2, January 23, 25, & 27**

**Expanding Colonial America**

- Read for Wednesday: John Mack Faragher, “But a Common Man: Daniel Boone,” *American Experiences: Reading in American History*, eds. Randy J. Roberts and James S. Olsen (New York: Pearson, 2007), 92-103.
- Optional: Roark, *UAP*, Ch. 4

### **Week 3, January 30, February 1 & 3**

**The Roots of the “Peculiar Institution”**

- Read for Wednesday: excerpt from Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano Written by Himself*. Marcus Rediker, “From Captives to Shipmates,” *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Penguin, 2008), 263-307.
- Optional: Roark, *UAP*, Ch. 3

### **Week 4, February 6, 8, & 10**

**Becoming a New Nation: From Revolution to Constitution**

- Optional: Roark, *UAP*, Ch. 6 & 8

### **Week 5, February 13, 15, & 17**

**Slavery in the Antebellum South**

- Read for Wednesday: McLaurin, *Celia, A Slave*. North Carolina slave narratives: Tom Jones, Moses Grandy, James Curry, and Harriet Jacobs.  
**\*\* Slave narrative analysis due\*\***

- Optional: Roark, *UAP*, Ch. 13

## Week 6, February 20, 22, & 24

### Social and Political Reform in Antebellum America

- Read for Wednesday: Susan Zaeske, "Signatures of Citizenship: Debating Women's Antislavery Petitions"
- Optional: Roark, *UAP*, Ch. 11

## Week 7, February 27, March 1 & 3

### A House Divided: The Coming of the Civil War

- Monday: EXAM #1
- Optional: Roark, *UAP*, Ch. 14

## Week 8, March 6, 8, & 10

### The Civil War

- Read for Monday: James West Davidson and Mark Hamilton Lytle, "The Madness of John Brown"
- Optional: Roark, *UAP*, Ch. 15

## Week 9, March 13-17

### SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

## Week 10, March 20, 22, & 24

### Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution

- Read for Friday: Scott Reynolds Nelson, *Steel Drivin' Man: The Untold Story of an American Legend*, pp. 1-92.
- Optional: Roark, *UAP*, Ch. 16

## Week 11, March 27, 29, & 31

### The Gilded Age & Its Discontents

- Read for Wednesday: "Social Darwinism" and "Social Gospel"  
"Wikipedia Policies Limit Editing Haymarket Bombing," NPR  
<http://www.npr.org/2012/10/03/162203092/wikipedia-politicizes-landmark-historical-event>
- Optional: Roark, *UAP*, Ch. 18

## Week 12, April 3, 5, & 7

### The Roaring '20s

- **Monday: EXAM #2**
- Read for Friday: James West Davidson and Mark Hamilton Lytle, "Justice Denied: The Trial of Sacco and Vanzetti"
- Optional: Roark, *UAP*, Ch. 23

## Week 13, April 10, 12, & 14

### The Great Depression and New Deal

- Read for Wednesday: T.H. Watkins, "The Shame and Misery of the Depression," *Portrait of America, Vol. 2*.
- Optional: Roark, *UAP*, Ch. 24

## Week 14, April 19 & 21

### The Cold War

- Optional: Roark, *UAP*, Ch. 25

## Week 15, April 24, 26, & 28

### The Civil Rights Movement

- Read for Monday: Scott Reynolds Nelson, *Steel Drivin' Man: The Untold Story of an American Legend*, pp. 93-173.  
**\*\* Song analysis due\*\***

## Week 16, May 1 & 3

### The Civil Rights Movement

- Read for Wednesday: Timothy Tyson, "Robert F. Williams: Change from the Bottom Up," *Major Problems in American History, Vol. 2* (New York: Cengage, 2011).
- Optional: Roark, *UAP*, Ch. 28

**Final Exam**: Friday, May 5, 2017 12-2:30pm