

Dr. Ben Wright - bgw@utdallas.edu

Class dates - Jan 18- May 5

Course Description This course covers the main themes of U.S. History through 1865. The first objective of this course is to provide you with an overview of American history through the Civil War. We will study the main political, economic, social, and cultural developments during this period so that you will have a basic understanding of the chronology of U.S. history. Another objective is to enhance your ability to evaluate historical information. An adequate overview of any historical period requires a balance of factual knowledge and critical analysis. Memorization of facts is useless without an understanding how they fit into a bigger picture. The course will require a good bit of reading and writing. In addition to the examination of U.S. History, this course is also designed to improve your skills as a college student and modern professional, making you more educated, employable, and interesting. All of our required course materials are open-access and entirely free.

Participation = 10%:

These points reflect how you have actively helped other students learn during the discussion sessions. The only way to earn these points is to attend and positively participate in the discussion sessions. That means speaking up and, if you are joining virtually, keeping your camera on for the entire session.

Quizzes = 15%:

You will be required to complete brief online quizzes through eLearning. The purpose of these quizzes is to ensure that you have a basic understanding of the events covered in class. You may take each quiz up to 10 times, but you should take each at least once before the week's lecture begins. I want you to do this on your own. Sharing answers constitutes academic dishonesty.

Exam 1 = 15%:

Your first exam has two components. 1. Essay questions. These questions are drawn directly from the discussion questions that frame our lectures and class discussions. Attending the lectures, taking good notes, participating in discussion sessions, and reviewing all of the above is the only way to prepare. You may ONLY use your lecture notes to answer this exam. Using any material besides your lecture notes constitutes cheating. Also, share notes with caution. If students have identical language in their exams, they will be referred to the dean of students for investigation. 2. Write brief annotations for any 15 primary sources you have read in the first six chapters of *The American Yawp Reader*. The purpose of this assessment is to make sure you are preparing for your final exam. For each of the sources, identify who wrote the document, what it says, and how it relates to the final essay question: "What actions did early Americans take that made the world a better place?"

Exam 2 = 20%:

Like the midterm, you will answer several short essay questions drawn directly from the weekly discussion questions. You may ONLY use your lecture notes to answer this exam. Using any material besides your lecture notes constitutes cheating.

Final Essay = 30%:

Answer the final essay question with a well-structured, coherent argument that draws upon all relevant primary sources. Only consult your course notes and the documents we have read in

class. This paper should be between 1,800 – 3,000 words. The question is “Did the people we have studied this semester make more decisions out of fear or love?”

Choose your own assignment (10%):

Students can select an additional assignment based on their personal interests. See the last page of the syllabus.

Readings You will not need to purchase any books for this class, unless you want to. Our textbook and primary source reader are both available free and online. Each week you will need to read at least one chapter of the textbook and all of the corresponding primary sources. If you would prefer to read a physical book, low-cost copies of the textbook are available online at Stanford University Press or Amazon. Be aware, however, that the print textbook does not include the primary sources, so you will still need to read those online.

mail policy There are a lot of students in this class. In order to maintain my sanity and make sure I have enough time to prepare course lectures, grade assignments, and do the other things required of me, I ask that you email your TA before you email me. If you have a question that your TA can't answer, they will email me. If you haven't gotten a response to an email in 2 business days, feel free to email your TA again. If they haven't responded to two emails, then email me. There will be other opportunities for you and me to connect. I do look forward to getting to know you.

Course Schedule:

WEEK 1 - Jan 19 AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 1

WEEK 2 Jan 24, 26 AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 2

WEEK 3 Jan 31, Feb 2 AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 3

WEEK 4 Feb 7, 9 AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 4

WEEK 5 Feb 14, 16 AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 5

WEEK 6 Feb 21, 23 AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 6

WEEK 7 Feb 28, Mar 2 EXAM 1

WEEK 8 Mar 7, 9 AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 7

WEEK 9 Mar 14, 16 SPRING BREAK

WEEK 10 Mar 21, 23 AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 8-9

WEEK 11 Mar 28, 30 AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 10

WEEK 12 Apr 4, 6 AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 11

WEEK 13 Apr 11, 13 AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 12

WEEK 14 Apr 18, 20 AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 13

WEEK 15 Apr 25, 27 AMERICAN YAWP CHAPTER 14

WEEK 16 May 2, 4 EXAM 2 Final Essay: What is more powerful, fear or love? Did the people we have studied this semester make more decisions out of fear or love?