

HIST 231-8A  
The Foundations of American Society: Beginnings to 1877  
Fall 2008, MWF 10:40-11:30  
Language 201

Dr. Susan Youngblood Ashmore  
Office: Language Hall 205A  
Office Hours: MW 2:00-3:30  
T Th 3:30-4:30 or by appointment  
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## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Course Description:

This course will introduce you to the history of the United States from pre-colonial times through the Civil War by paying particular attention to how historians do their work. As a survey course that concentrates on the foundations of American society we will focus on what it means to be an American and how that has changed over time with specific emphasis on leadership, migration, diversity, the concept of individual freedom, the creation and maintenance of the Union, and how that Union is threatened. We will learn about the political and economic development of the United States as well as the social history of the country. Special emphasis will be given to the colonial experience, slavery, the American Revolution and its aftermath, social and cultural life in nineteenth-century America, sectional crisis, and the Civil War.

### Course Goals:

There are several objectives for this course. First, by gaining a factual knowledge of this historical period the course seeks to assist students in learning to think historically, or to become historically minded, by recognizing and criticizing evidence and using primary and secondary sources to reason inductively going from specifics to generalizations. Second, this course hopes to teach students to ask questions about the past to gain an awareness of the various dimensions of history—political, economic, social, and cultural and to incorporate aspects of ethnicity, gender, race, and class into the explanation of these various historical dimensions. Third, the course strives to help students discover, understand, and appreciate the interplay of forces that shape historical change in America's past including individuals and social groups as creators of history. Fourth, this course will help students develop reading, researching, and writing skills that will benefit them in upper division classes. At the end of the course students should be able to recognize a historical argument when they see one, be able to interpret primary documents by placing them in their historical context, understand the various perspectives historians have taken as they write about America's past, be familiar with the most important people, ideas, and events of early American history, and realize their significance for today.

**Required Readings:** These books are available at the campus bookstore and on reserve at the library.

Francis G. Couvares, Martha Saxton, Gerald N. Grob, and George Athan Billias, editors, *Interpretations of American History: Volume One Through Reconstruction*, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition, Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2009.

Alfred F. Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1999.

Daina Berry, *Swing the Sickle for the Harvest Is Ripe: Gender and Slavery in Antebellum Georgia*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007.

William E. Gienapp, *Abraham Lincoln and Civil War America: A Biography*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Primary documents on E-Reserves (that are located on the Oxford College Library web page under Hist 231 8A, Ashmore).

### Grading and Assignments:

Exam (10%) given on **September 25**; Midterm Essay Exam (20%) given on **November 11**; Historical Essay (20%): a 5-7 typed pages, double-spaced essay using an assigned document in conjunction with Imperial Crisis readings essay due at the *beginning* of class on **October 19**, quizzes (announced and unannounced) and journal entries from assigned reading material—including books as well as primary documents on E-Reserves and essays and journal articles from *Interpretations of American History* reader (10%); attendance and general class participation (10%); final essay exam (30%) given on **Thursday December 10 from 7:00-10:00 p.m.** All assignments as well as your final course grade will be based on the +/- system. Study questions for all exams will be distributed at least one week prior to each exam.

**Honor Code:**

We are a community of scholars. Therefore, academic dishonesty is not tolerated. Your signature or name on any work submitted for credit in this course shall indicate you have neither given nor received unauthorized information or assistance on the work, nor have you condoned the giving or receiving of unauthorized information or assistance by others. As a student at Oxford College of Emory University you have agreed to abide by the honor pledge and have taken upon yourself the responsibility of upholding the Honor Code; you are encouraged to inquire of the Honor Council about any doubtful case at any time throughout the semester. For complete details on the Honor Code please see the Oxford College 2009-2010 Catalog found online on the Oxford College website.

**Attendance Policy:**

Class begins at 10:40 and ends at 11:30. Regular attendance and active participation in class are assumed to be essential parts of the learning process. You will sign in for yourself at the beginning of each class. *Do not* sign in anyone else. Signing in for another classmate is dishonest; I consider this a violation of the honor code. Students are allowed three absences, every absence after that will deduct points from the attendance/class participation portion of your final course grade. Occasionally participation in a college-sponsored event will not be counted as an absence. However, you must inform me prior to the event and present written proof of college sponsorship. It is your responsibility to obtain missed lecture notes and turn in all assignments on time. I expect you to be awake and focused on the material at hand in class. Do not study for another course while you are in my class. During discussions of reading material I expect you to have prepared before class and to actively participate with your classmates in the discussion.

If you miss an examination, **only absences due to medical or family emergencies** (for example, you are in the hospital) are valid. You will need to present written evidence of your illness or family emergency to take a makeup exam. Students will only be allowed to make up missed work after presenting written proof of a medical or family emergency. All make-up exams will be given on the last day of class (December 8) during my office hours. You cannot change the time of your final exam because of travel plans, vacation plans, job opportunities, or having more than one final exam on one day.

**Turning in Assignments and Late Penalties:**

If you miss the due date on a written assignment, a late penalty of **five points per day** (including weekends) will be deducted from your grade for that assignment. If you turn your written assignment in after the beginning of class but on the same day it is due you will be deducted **2.5 points** from your grade for that assignment. **I also do not accept written assignments via e-mail, such as your historical essay.** I only accept hard copies of written assignments. If you turn in your assignment after the beginning of class, slide it **under** my office door, Language Hall 205A.

**Class Etiquette for the Digital Generation:**

**Visiting me in my office:** I encourage you to visit me during my office hours, or make an appointment with me if my office hours do not coincide with your schedule. One of the positive experiences you can have at Oxford College is getting to know your professors well. So, take advantage of that opportunity and come see me throughout the semester. My office is on the second floor of Language Hall, Office 205A.

**Cell Phones:** I do not accept phone calls during class, nor should you. Turn off your cell phones before the beginning of class. If a ringing cell phone becomes a common occurrence, I will ask you to leave the class. Do not bring your cell phone to class during any exam. I will ask you to leave your cell phone with me at the front of the class if you bring it on exam day. Do not compose or read text messages during class. I consider this the equivalent of receiving a phone call on your cell phone.

**MP3 Players:** You cannot listen to music on an MP3 player while you take an exam.

**Laptop Computers:** You may **not** use a laptop computer to take notes in class. Laptop computers may be used only on specific days to access primary documents found on E-Reserves.

**E-mail:** We will have a class conference on LearnLink that corresponds with this course. I will post on the conference all assignments as well as other pertinent items that may enhance class discussion. When communicating with your fellow classmates on the conference or with me on my personal e-mail address do not post anything that you would not be comfortable saying to your classmates or to me in person.

E-mail is an important part of our society. All of us use it on a regular basis. However, the convenience of e-mail can often lead to informality and misunderstanding. For this reason, there are different rules for writing in formal situations—class discussions, e-mail messages to professors, student discussion lists—that do not necessary

apply when writing to friends and family. So, here are my suggestions for using e-mail in our class. When writing to me or on our LearnLink class conference you should use a serious tone. Address me by my proper title, follow rules of grammar and mechanics, and do not use all lower or upper case letters or instant messaging abbreviations. You should use black ink in your e-mail messages. Avoid using curse words and other slang in formal situations. I have heard it said that writing is like fashion, one style is not appropriate for every situation. For example you would not wear your bathing suit to a job interview at a bank. So, get in the habit of using your professional voice when communicating as a professional, in your case your profession right now is being a college student. Most importantly, remember that even though you cannot see them, you are communicating with real human beings whenever you send e-mail. Do not let the impersonal screen make you forget to be as respectful in your communication as you would be when speaking face to face. Take time to think about your message before you send it. Never send a message when you are feeling emotional, particularly if you are upset or angry.

Do not assume just because you *can* get in touch with me when you want to that I will be available to read your message. I rarely check e-mail once I leave campus, which is usually around 4:30 p.m., and I don't check e-mail over the weekend. So, note that I read e-mail from 9:00-4:30 Monday through Friday. **I also do not accept written assignments via e-mail, such as your historical essay.** I only accept hard copies of written assignments. If you do not turn your assignment in at the beginning of class you can place it **under** my office door, Language Hall 205A.

Finally, remember that e-mail is not a very private communication system. Your messages can be printed out, and they can also be sent on to others as forwarded messages. Any private message you send potentially can come under public scrutiny; therefore you should not write anything that would cause you or someone else embarrassment or trouble should your e-mail become public.

## SCHEDULE

Aug 26	Syllabus, What Does It Mean to be an American?	
Aug 28	Natives and Colonizers	
Aug 31	Introduction to U.S. historiography Reading Journal Entry due	Couvares, pp. 1-24.
Sept 2	Jamestown, Virginia	E-Res: 17 <sup>th</sup> Cent Chesapeake
Sept 4	Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake Quiz and discussion of Chap 4 "The Atlantic Slave Trade: racism or Profit?"	E-Res: 17 <sup>th</sup> Cent Chesapeake, Courvares, pp.96-126
Sept 7	<b>No Class -- Labor Day Holiday</b>	
Sept 9	Colonial New England	E-Res: 17 <sup>th</sup> Cent New Engl., Couvares pp 25-40.
Sept 11	Colonial New England	Couvares, pp. 41-51.
Sept 14	Discussion of Chap 2 "The Puritans: Orthodoxy or Diversity?" Reading Journal Entry due	
Sept 16	Colonial Pennsylvania	E-Res.: Col PA and NY
Sept 18	Colonial New York	E-Res: Col. PA and NY
Sept 21	Imperial Crisis	E-Res: Imperial Crisis
Sept 23	Imperial Crisis	E-Res: Imperial Crisis
Sept 25	<b>Essay Exam</b> —includes readings and lecture notes from Natives and Colonizers through Colonial Pennsylvania and New York; bring a pen or pencil to exam	
Sept 28	Imperial Crisis	Young
Sept 30	Imperial Crisis	Young
Oct 2	War for Independence	E-Res: War for Indep, Young
Oct 5	War for Independence	E-Res: War for Indep, Young
Oct 7	War for Independence	E-Res: War for Indep, Young
Oct 9	Discussion of Young and Chap 5 "The American Revl: Moderate or Radical?" Reading Journal Entry due	
Oct 12	No Class--Fall Break	
Oct 14	New Nation	E-Res: New Nation
Oct 16	New Nation Last day to drop without penalty	E-Res: New Nation
Oct 19	New Nation <b>Essay on Imperial Crisis Due at the beginning of class; Discussion of Essays</b>	
Oct 21	Federal Constitution and Bill of Rights (First Ten Amendments)	
Oct 23	Discussion of Chap 6 "The Constitution: Conflict or Consensus?", pp. 165-201. Reading Journal Entry Due	
Oct 26	Jacksonian Democracy	
Oct 28	Antebellum South	E-Res: Antebell South & Berry
Oct 30	Antebellum South	E-Res: Antebell South & Berry
Nov 2	Antebellum South	E-Res: Antebell South & Berry
Nov 4	Discussion of Berry <i>Swing the Sickle</i> and Chap 9 "Slave Culture: African or American?" Reading Journal Entry due	
Nov 6	No Class	

Nov 9	Antebellum Reform	E-Res: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Great Awakening & Antebellum Reform
Nov 11	<b>Midterm Essay Exam</b> covering Imperial Crisis through Antebellum South, e-reserve readings, essays from <i>Interpretations of American History</i> , Young, Berry, lectures through Nov 4. Bring pen or pencil.	
Nov 13	Antebellum Reform	E-Res: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Great Awakening & Antebellum North
Nov 16	Discussion of "Antebellum Reform: Evolving Causes and Strategies," Chap 8, pp. 235-273. Reading Journal Entry Due	
Nov 18	Sectional Conflict 1840s	E-Res: Sectional Conflict, Gienapp
Nov 20	Sectional Conflict 1850s	E-Res: Sectional Conflict, Gienapp
Nov 23	Sectional Conflict 1850s	E-Res: Sectional Conflict, Gienapp
Nov 25	<b>No Class Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	
Nov 27	<b>No Class Thanksgiving Holiday</b>	
Nov 30	Sectional Conflict–Dred Scott to Lincoln	E-Res: Sectional Conflict, Gienapp
Dec 2	The Coming of the Civil War	E-Res: Civil War
Dec 4	Discussion of "The Civil War: Repressible or Irrepressible?" Chap 10, pp. 309-346. Reading Journal Entry Due	
Dec 7	Discussion of William Gienapp, <i>Abraham Lincoln and Civil War America</i>	
Dec 8	The Civil War Aftermath	
Dec 9	Reading Day	
Dec 10	<b>Final Essay Exam, 7:00-10:00 p.m., bring pen or pencil</b>	

**Hist 231 Electronic Reserves**  
**Primary Documents and Journal Articles**

**Seventeenth Century Chesapeake:**

**Documents:**

James Revel, "The Poor Unhappy Transported Felon's Sorrowful Account of His Fourteen Years Transportation at Virginia in America," c. 1680, in William A. Link and Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, eds, *The South in the History of the Nation Vol 1: Through Reconstruction*, (Bedford/St. Martin's Press: Boston, 1999), pp. 42-49.

William Byrd, "Entries from His Secret Diary," 1709, in Link and Spruill, pp. 64-68.

**Seventeenth-Century New England**

**Documents:**

John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity" sermon

**Readings:**

"The Puritans: Orthodoxy or Diversity?" Chapter 2, *Interpretations of American History*, pp. 25-59.

**Colonial Pennsylvania and New York**

**Readings:**

Gordon S. Wood, "Becoming a Gentleman," in *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*, Penguin Press: New York, 2004, pp. 17-60.

**Imperial Crisis and War for Independence**

**Documents:**

The Stamp Act

Broadside on the Boston Massacre, "A monumental Inscription on the Fifth of March," Boston, Printed by Isaiah Thomas, 1772, the American Antiquarian Society. (Receive this in class)

John Adams' courtroom argument, from trial of Boston Massacre

The Olive Branch Petition

The Declaration of Independence

Documents from the British Library (Receive citations in class)

**Reading:**

Alfred F. Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution*, Beacon Press: Boston, 1999.

Gordon S. Wood, "The Greatness of George Washington," in *Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Different*, Penguin Press: New York, 2006, pp. 31-63.

"The American Revolution: Moderate or Radical?" Chapter 5, *Interpretations of American History*, pp. 127-164.

**The New Nation**

**Document:**

The U.S. Constitution

Thomas Jefferson, "Virginia Statue on Religious Freedom"

**Reading:**

"The Constitution: Conflict or Consensus?" Chapter 6, *Interpretations of American History*, pp. 165-201.

**Antebellum South**

**Documents:**

Thornton Stringfellow, "A Brief Examination of Scripture Testimony on the Institution of Slavery," in Drew Gilpin Faust, ed., *The Ideology of Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Antebellum South, 1830-1860*, (Louisiana State University Press: Baton Rouge, 1981), pp. 136-167.

Slave Sales found in Nineteenth Century Newspapers

**Reading:**

Daina Ramey Berry, *Swing the Sickle for the Harvest is Ripe: Gender and Slavery in Antebellum Georgia*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

"Slave Culture: African or American?" Chapter 9, *Interpretations of American History*, pp. 274-308.

**Second Great Awakening and Antebellum Reform**

**Documents:**

William Lloyd Garrison, "Truisms," January 8, 1831, "On the Constitution and the Union," December 29, 1832, in William E. Cain, ed., *William Lloyd Garrison and the Fight Against Slavery: Selections from The Liberator*, (Bedford/St. Martin's Press: Boston, 1995), pp. 74-76, 87-89.

**Reading:**

"Antebellum Reform: Evolving Causes and Strategies," Chapter 8 *Interpretations of American History*, pp. 235-273.

**Sectional Conflict**

**Documents:**

Bishop Andrew Letter, Special Collections, Woodruff Library, Emory University  
Dred Scott v. Sanford, 1857, in Paul Finkelman, *Dred Scott v. Sandford: A Brief History with Documents*, (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 1997).

**Civil War**

**Documents:**

Walt Whitman, "States," *Leaves of Grass*, (W.W. Norton: New York, 1973), pp. 608-610.  
Lincoln's First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861.  
Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, 1863.  
Gary Wills, "The Gettysburg Address, 1. Spoken Text, 2. Final Text," in *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words That Remade America*, (Simon and Schuster: New York, 1992), pp. 261-263.  
Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address

**Reading:**

William E. Gienapp, *Abraham Lincoln and Civil War America: A Biography*, Oxford University Press: New York, 2002.

"The Civil War: Repressible or Irrepressible?" Chapter 10, *Interpretations of American History*, pp. 309-346.