History 120: U.S. History Survey

Location:	Robinson B 218
Days/Time:	Monday, 7:20–10:00
Course Website:	http://clioweb.org/courses/history120/spring07/
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Office Hours:	Monday, 5:30-7; by appointment

Schedule (Tentative)

January 28: Introductions, Technology Orientation

February 04: Colonial America (Technology Requirements Due)

> Slavery (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavery)
> Transatlantic Slave Trade (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transatlantic_slave_trade)
> "Virginia Runaways" *Class Reader*

February 11: American Revolutions (Wikipedia topic due)

> American Revolution (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Revolution)
> Republicanism (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republicanism_in_the_United_States)
> U.S. Constitution (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._Constitution)
> Revolution of 1800 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolution_of_1800)

February 18: Expansion—Westward and Beyond (Post #1 Due)

> Origins of the American Civil War
> (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Origins_of_the_American_Civil_War)
> Blackface (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackface)
> Minstrel Show (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minstrel_show)
> "The Appeal of Blackface" *Class Reader*

February 25: No Class

March 03: Causes and Consequences of the American Civil War (Post #2 Due)

    American Civil War (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Civil_War)
    "Civil War in Images" *Class Reader*

March 10: No Class—Spring Break

March 17: Reconstruction and Segregation (Wikipedia bibliography due)

    Jim Crow Laws (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jim_Crow_laws)
    Plessy v. Ferguson (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plessy_v_Ferguson)
    "Race and Law in Virginia" *Class Reader*

March 24: Immigration and Imperialism

    Spanish-American War (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish_American_War)
    History of Nativism
    (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-immigration#History_of_nativism_in_the_United_States)
    "Menaces at Home and Abroad" *Class Reader*

March 31: Technology and American Society/Creating and Editing on Wikipedia

    Second Industrial Revolution (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Industrial_Revolution)
    Gilded Age (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gilded_Age)
    Wikipedia: Your First Article (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Your_first_article)
    Wikipedia: How to Edit a Page (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:How_to_edit_a_page)

April 07: Rise of Consumer Culture (Post #3 Due)

    "The American Dream in Advertising" *Class Reader*

April 14: The Second World War

    World War II (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_World_War)
    United States Home Front During World War II
    (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_home_front_during_World_War_II)
    "Internment" *Class Reader*

April 21: The Cold War (Wikipedia Entry Due)

      Cold War (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cold_War)
      McCarthyism (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/McCarthyism)
      Communism (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communism)

April 28: Civil Rights Movements

      American Civil Rights Movement,1898-1954
      (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Civil_Rights_Movement_%281896-1954%29)
      American Civil Rights Movement, 1955-1968
      (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Civil_Rights_Movement_%281955-1968%29)
      "Civil Rights and the Cold War" *Class Reader*

May 5: Vietnam War in American Culture (Post #4 Due)

      United States and the Vietnam War
      (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_United_States_and_the_Vietnam_War)
      "Music as Historical Sources" *Class Reader*

May 12: No Class (Wikipedia Reflection Post Due)

Introduction

This course is designed as an introduction to the major themes and arguments in U.S. history broadly defined, and as an exploration of the ways in which history permeates our culture and society. The course does not emphasize or reward the memorization and regurgitation of historical facts, but instead encourages you to think critically and analytically about how history is constructed and presented in a variety of forms. This is *not* to say that historical facts are unimportant; they are very important. *More important*, however, are the choices made in determining which facts to present and the manner in which to present them.

By the end of this course, you should:

- Become familiar with major debates and topics related to the history of the United States.
- Learn to read and analyze primary and secondary sources in a variety of forms.
- Learn to construct and critique arguments.
- Become familiar with a variety of ways to find, evaluate, and publish information online.

Requirements

Wikipedia

No books are required for this course. I will primarily assign various related articles from *Wikipedia*, a free, online encyclopedia using "wiki" software. (http://en.wikipedia.org).

You may be surprised that I use Wikipedia, but here's why: Textbooks are largely collections of facts, with little analysis, just like encyclopedias. I do not teach to a textbook, therefore you can use this free resource to acquire the facts you need to engage in the historical analysis we'll be doing this semester. Historical analysis and acquiring facts are two very different things; you certainly need facts to engage in historical analysis, but collecting facts alone is not analysis.

Be aware that anyone, anywhere, anytime can edit any entry on Wikipedia. Does this mean that the entries are unreliable? Yes and no. Because the entries change with varying frequency, you must be careful and closely read every entry. Do not accept what it says at face value. Think about what the entry says and ask yourself if you can trust it. If you are worried, check the entry's history to see what changes have taken place. See what references, if any, the entry uses. If you find an error or vandalism on an entry, log in and fix it!

You are required to obtain a user account for Wikipedia to complete the Wikipedia Article project.

Weblog

Everyone in class is required to sign up for a weblog at WordPress.com (http://wordpress.com). Please do not ask to use another service; I will only accept blog posts published through WordPress. WordPress is a reliable, easy-to-use service, and I do no have time to help troubleshoot other blogging services. You are free to cancel your blog at the end of the semester, but WordPress is a great service should you wish to continue blogging beyond this course.

Flickr

You are required to obtain a *free* account on the photo sharing service Flickr (http://flickr.com). We will use Flickr to complete several assignments throughout the course. If you already have a Flickr account, feel free to use that account, or create a new one for this class. I will *not* accept assignments using other photo-sharing services.

Newsreader

While you are not required to obtain a newsreader (also called a feedreader, or RSS aggregator), you are *encouraged* to do so, if only to make your life easier. Two free services available online I recommend are:

- Google Reader (http://google.com/reader)
- Bloglines (http://bloglines.com)

There are also applications you can install on your computer, and a few Firefox add-ons. With all of these options, the point is the same: to enable you to subscribe to your classmates blog and get instant updates, instead of visiting their sites each time a new assignment is due.

Policies

Contacting the Instructor

I am more than happy to talk with you about the class, about your work, and about any questions or concerns you may have about college in general. I **will not**, however, discuss grades by phone, email, or instant messenger. If you'd like to discuss your grade, please make an appointment to talk with me in person.

Honor Code

While I encourage students to discuss assignments and critique others' work, the work you turn in must be your own. You may not copy the work of other students or copy work published elsewhere. You may not have other students complete the work for you. If you wish to cite published works, you must include an academic citation. If you have questions about whether the manner in which you complete your work will be an Honor Code violation, contact me before you turn in your assignment, not after.

All Honor Code violations, not matter how small, will be forwarded to the Dean's office with a recommendation for punishment.

Attendance

I encourage students to show up to class every day, but I leave the responsibility of attendance up to you. While I will take attendance regularly, I will not give an attendance or "class participation" grade. As college students, you should be responsible for your own intellectual development. Keep in mind, however, that *all* assignments for this course draw extensively from class discussions and lectures. Thus, failure to attend class regularly can have a detrimental effect on your grade.

Students with Disabilities and Illnesses

If you are a student with a disability (cognitive, sensory, mobility, or other) and you need academic accommodations, please contact me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

Similarly, if during the semester you contract an illness, or are injured in some way that prevents you from completing assignments regularly, you will also need to contact the DRC.

Technology Requirements

This course requires basic computer competence. That is, you should be familiar with (1) a computer's operating system and basic features; (2) sending and receiving email; (3) opening a web browser and searching/surfing the Internet. I do hope that you learn a few more computer-related skills in this course. If, however, you are vehemently opposed to using a computer or the Internet, this course is not for you.

A Word of Warning: I **will not** accept technology-related excuses for late or incomplete assignments. Computers, like many other things built by human beings, are imperfect. A computer or other technology-related problem can (and probably will) occur, so you should take steps to minimize these problems. Back up your work *obsessively*. Complete your assignments as early as possible. If your computer shorts out, your hard drive crashes, or the Internet goes down, make sure you have access to other computer resources. There are several computer labs for students on campus, which are free to use.

Grades

Grades in this course represent an evaluation, **not a reward**. Grading for the course breaks down as follows: (1) 4 assigned weblog posts (400 points); (2) 10 Class Reflection Posts (20 points each = 200 points); (3) 10 weblog comments (20 points each = 200 points); (4) Wikipedia Article Project (200 points); TOTAL = 1000 POINTS. In general, grades reflect the following criteria:

A—Outstanding work, complete mastery of the material presented, combined with some originality.
B—Solid command of the material with some mistakes in a sound essay or discussion.
C—Some knowledge of the material; mistakes are acceptable if mixed with some understanding.
D—An incomplete and minimal knowledge of the material, major confusions and errors
F—A failure to present the material in a reasonably accurate and comprehensible manner.

I—There are absolutely no "incompletes" given in this course except in cases of bona fide and documented instances in accordance with the regulations of the university.
P—For a "pass" a "C" average is required.

If you receive a grade or criticism from me with which you do not agree, feel free to discuss it with me during my office hours or by appointment. I am open to changing a grade if given sufficient reason, but be *very* prepared to make your case. I will *not* discuss grades by email, phone, or instant messenger; only in person, by appointment.

Assignments

Assigned Weblog Posts

Assigned weblog posts refer to posts that are tied to a specific assignment given in class. These posts have specific goals, questions, and requirements, all of which are outlined in the assignment. Four (4) assigned

weblog posts are required for this course. Each is due at **5:00PM** on the due date stated in the syllabus schedule. Points are awarded for the following:

1. Promptness (0 or 20 points – 5 points will be deducted for each additional day late)
2. Introduction (0-10 points)
3. Thesis (0-20 points)
4. Argument (0-20 points)
5. Evidence (0-10 points)
6. Grammar (0-10 points)
7. Format (0-10 points)
   Total: 100 points

Assigned weblog posts should be between 350-500 words (roughly 1.5–2 pages). While they are relatively short pieces, they will involve considerable time and effort to compose. Below is a brief guide to help explain how I will grade blog posts:

Promptness

Punctuality is a virtue. Assignments that are submitted on time receive full credit; late assignments are docked 20 points. Late assignments have one week's grace period, but lose an additional 5 points for each subsequent day late. After that time, they receive no credit or a zero.

Title & Introductory Paragraph

A good post begins with a good title. A good title gets the reader's attention immediately and sets the tone for the rest of the entry. A title, such as "Entry #1," is not particularly effective or even interesting. Since this is a class, you must number the entries so that the reader knows which assignment you are addressing. Examples might include: "Assignment #1: Reading the Runaways" or "Reflection #2: The Patriot." You can be much more creative, but your post must have a number referring to the number for the assignment and kind of assignment. And if you use a catchy title that might be confusing or ambiguous, be sure that the document title(s) is indicated in the first paragraph.

Once you've decided on an interesting title, the next step is framing an introduction. An introductory paragraph can take many forms, but in a blog post, two strategies are usually successful: the brief anecdote or narrative or the quotation. How might these work? Here are two examples.

> The New Yorker magazine observed, "We believe that the truth can turn up in a cartoon, in one of the magazine's covers, in a poem, in a short story,...." The New Yorker statement might well apply to the British reactions to events preceding the Revolutionary War depicted in an early cartoon. [The quotation]

In 1770, Boston citizens skirmished with a small band of British soldiers in front of the Customs House. Although witnesses to the event differed on who was responsible for the starting the altercation, the results were not in dispute—five dead Bostonians. Four years later, the women of Edenton decided to oppose the British Tea Act by boycotting tea. [The short anecdote or narrative]

The last sentence of the introductory paragraph should be the thesis. You should be aware that it is acceptable (and often necessary because of time constraints) to skip the introductory sentences in an essay examination question and begin immediately with a thesis statement.

Thesis

A thesis is a proposition or statement of an argument. It is not "stage direction" (e.g., "In this paper I will tell you about the British and American attitudes toward pre-revolutionary activism, and then I'll show…). An adequate thesis is a clear, precise, declarative statement: "The British cartoon 'Women of Edenton, North Carolina,' suggests that the British attitude toward patriot activism was _____ and _____." Obviously, your interpretation of the source will determine what you put in the blanks. Note, too, that this statement identifies the source. You are required to **bold your thesis statement** to receive credit for it.

Argument

The body of your post follows the terms of your thesis and outlines your argument, beginning with a transitional sentence. (The easiest way to frame a transitional sentence is to take an important word or phrase from the sentence in the preceding paragraph and build on it.) In the Edenton example, the next paragraph would discuss the first "blank" and include the supporting evidence. The second paragraph would follow with a discussion of the second "blank" (usually its best to put the most compelling evidence last) and its evidence. The third paragraph would contain the conclusion.

A conclusion not only summarizes your argument—usually in a sentence or two—but also discusses its historical significance. The last is the most critical. A conclusion puts your argument into "the big picture," as Richard Nixon was fond of saying. It is an effort to relate your findings to a broader theme in the course. Does Edenton cartoon say something about how the British viewed patriot seriousness of purpose? Does the image offer any insights into British and American views on gender and politics? Et le voilà—your blog post is finished, and you have a nicely ordered 3–4 paragraph post.

Evidence

Evidence is a summary description or a short quotation from the source that supports the point that you wish to make in your paragraphs or provides an attribution for an author's idea. For example: "The cartoonist suggested that the patriotic women of North Carolina were _____ and _____ by depicting the women's careless parenting (the child under the table) and slovenly housekeeping (spilled food and the dog's urinating under the table)." If you use a quotation from a source other than the documents that are part of the assignment, you must use quotation marks and a citation. Since footnotes

and endnotes are difficult to achieve on the web, we'll go with the bracketed reference mark [1] at the end of the sentence containing the quoted material and a bracketed reference mark at the end of your post with the source.

Grammar

Grammar and mechanics are important for a variety of reasons—all of them good. All your posts should be grammatically correct in all of their particulars. Correctness includes spelling, punctuation, diction, and mechanics. If you need help with your writing or if I suggest that you visit the Writing Center, you can contact the Writing Center online to make an appointment.

Format

Online writing and reading differs from print for a variety of reasons. Clarity is the name of the game. Each post must conform to the following format:

1. Assignment number
2. Post title
3. Bolded thesis sentence
4. Space between paragraphs
5. Titles of books should be italicized, titles of articles or documents should put in quotation marks, and so on.
6. Use text links to comments should use the author's name. Do not simply use a URL.
7. Use text links to sources on the web. Do not simply use a URL.
8. Use footnotes, properly formatted, when appropriate.

Class Reflection Posts: 200 points

Ten (10) class reflection posts are required for the course. These posts are simply reflections on the topic we cover in a given class. They are due **one week after class,** or by Mondays at 5PM. These are entirely free form, have no word-count requirements, or any of the formatting requirements for Assigned Blog Posts. This is an opportunity to extend the class discussion, pose questions, or reflect on something you found interesting in class. More than anything, I would like these posts to show that you're actively thinking about the material we're covering in class. Consider these posts as an opportunity to express some intellectual playfulness.

- 20 points—Solid engagement with the materials read and covered in class; Good, thoughtful questions and answers; Shows a satisfactory understanding of the topic.
- 10 points—Weak engagement with the materials read and covered in class; Lacks an understanding of the topic; makes no attempt to actively engage with the materials and discussion from class.

Blog Comments: 200 points

You are required to comment on the Assigned Blog Posts (not class reflection posts) written by each of your fellow students in your group. I will grade ten (10) blog comments you make on assigned blog posts written by other students in your group. I will choose ten randomly, and each is worth 20 points. Comments are due **one week after the deadline for the blog post,** or by Mondays at 5PM. After that time, you can continue to comment on posts, but they will not count toward the ten required comments.

Wikipedia Assignment: 200 points

For this assignment you must create a user account on Wikipedia. The Wikipedia Assignment includes four parts, all of which must be completed to get credit for the assignment:

1. Topic - I **must** approve your topic before you get credit for this. If this is not completed before the due date, I will deduct **50 points** from your final Wikipedia Assignment grade. **Due Feburary 11.**

2. Bibliography - You must publish a tentative bibliography to your weblog by **March 24**. As with the topic, if this is not completed before the due date, I will deduct **50 points** from your final Wikipedia Assignment. The bibliography must explain why you've chosen the items in your bibliography, and must include at least the following:

- 4 Wikipedia articles
- 2 external websites
- 2 published books. **Not encyclopedia entries.**

3. Wikipedia Article – Contribute a 350-500 word article to Wikipedia. **Due April 21.**

4. Wikipedia Reflection – Write a 350-500 word blog post about (a) what happened to your entry after it was published, and (b) what you learned from writing for, and doing readings with, Wikipedia. **Due May 12.**