

University of Detroit Mercy
250: History of the United States to 1877
3.0 Credits, Section 02
Fall 2003

Instructor: D. Muhammad
Office: 323 Briggs Hall
Office Hours: M., W., F., 9:00-10:00; 11:00-12:00; 1:00-2:00: by Appt.
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Course Meetings: M., W., F.: 12:00 to 12:50; 16 Briggs Hall
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Course Description: The purpose of this course is to provide students with a broad understanding of American history, beginning in the 1400s through Reconstruction (1877). The primary themes that will be explored are the following: freedom, justice, equality, democracy, culture, and “race.” In addition, significant attention will be given to historiography, and chronology will be the vehicle that carries the course from its inception to its conclusion.

Students will be required to take three exams; each exam will contain at least two essay questions, multiple choice questions, and key terms that were discussed in the readings and lectures, and true/false statements. In order to earn an “A,” each student must complete all of the reading assignments, recall some of the information, analyze it, and interpret in a contemporary framework; that is to say, how does the information relate to the United States and to him or her today. In addition, students must complete all writing assignments.

Course Structure: The instructor will lecture on Mondays and Wednesdays. Each Friday there will be a discussion session based on the assigned readings from American Realities: Historical Episodes from Settlement to the Civil War, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, or What They Fought For. Basic questions will be given to students before the class.

Course Objectives: (1) Students will know basic timelines and watersheds in American history, as well as many prominent people, organizations, and concepts in context (2) Students will be able to discuss competently the themes of liberty, justice, inequality, culture, democracy, and “race” as they relate to the development of the United States through Reconstruction. (3) Students will be able to write a persuasive historical essay free of grammatical and logical errors based on factual information.

Required Books: Brinkley, Alan. The Unfinished Nation: A Concise History of the America People Volume I to 1877. 4th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2004)

Douglass, Frederick, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave, As Written by Himself (New York: Dell Publishing, 1997)

McPherson, James M. What They Fought For. (New York: Anchor Books, 1995)

Youngs, J. William. American Realities: Historical Episodes from First Settlements to the Civil War. 6th ed. (New York: Longman, 2004)

Written Assignments: Students are required to write five three-page summaries and submit a seven to ten page book review. All assignments must be typed in black ink, double spaced, and submitted on white paper respectively. No late papers will be accepted unless an authorized excuse is presented.

Grades will be calculated in the following manner on a 500 Point Scale:

Discussion Summaries.....	50 Points
Quizzes.....	50 Points
Test 1.....	100 Points
Test 2.....	100 Points
Bookreview.....	50 Points
Final Exam (Comprehensive).....	150 Points

Other Considerations: (1) No prerequisites are required for the course. (2) Attendance rules: If a student is absent four or more times, his or her grade will be reduced by one letter (3) Basic civil manners that are conducive to learning will be upheld. (4) No extra credit will be assigned; simply do what is required. (5) Exceptional Rule: If a student earns 97 percent or higher on the first two exams, he or she will be exempted from the Final Exam.

Course Calendar and Reading Assignments

Week 1

Sept. 03 First Day of Class: Introduction, Review of Course Syllabus, Define “History” and Its Purpose in American Education and General

Sept. 05 Explain and Complete Bookreview List

Week 2

Sept. 08 Brinkley, Chp. 1 “The Meeting of Cultures”

Sept. 10 Brinkley, Chp. 1 Continued

Sept. 12 American Realities, Chp. 1 “The Native Americans” **Quiz**

Week 3

Sept. 15 Brinkley, Chp. 2 "Transplantations and Borderlands"

Sept. 17 Brinkley, Chp. 2 Continued

Sept. 19 Film: "Ship of Slaves" **Quiz**

Week 4

Sept. 22 Brinkley, Chp. 3 "Society and Culture in Provincial America"

Sept. 24 Brinkley Chp. 3 Continued; Begin Brinkley Chp. 4 "The Empire in Transition"

Sept. 26 American Realities, Chp. 3 "The English Background" **Summary Due**

Week 5

Sept. 29 Brinkley, Chp. 4 "The Empire in Transition" Continued.

Oct. 01 Brinkley Chp. 5 "The American Revolution"

Oct. 03 American Realities, Chp. 4 "The British American" **Summary Due**

Week 6

Oct. 06 Brinkley, Chp. 5 "The American Revolution" Continued; Test review

Oct. 08 Film: Thomas Jefferson by Ken Burns

Oct. 10 **Test 1**

Week 7

Oct. 13 Brinkley , Chp. 6 "The Constitution and the New Republic"

Oct. 15 Begin Brinkley, Chp. 7 "The Jefferson Era"

Oct. 17 **Film:** Jefferson Continued; Return Test 1

Week 8

Oct. 20 Brinkley, Chp. 7 "The Jefferson Era" Continued

Oct. 22 Begin Brinkley, Chp. 8 "Varieties of American Nationalism"

Oct. 24 American Realities, Chp. 8 "Republican Nationalism" **Summary Due**

Week 9

- Oct. 27 Brinkley, Chp. 8 and 9 “Varieties of American Nationalism” and “Jacksonian America”
- Oct. 29 Brinkley Chp. 9 Continued;
- Oct. 31 Douglass, Narrative of the Life, pp. 1-51 **Quiz**

Week 10

- Nov. 03 Brinkley, Chp. 10 “America’s Economic Revolution”
- Nov. 05 Brinkley, Chp. 10 Cont.
- Nov. 07 Douglass, Narrative of the Life, pp. 52-111 **Summary Due; Review for Test 2**

Week 11

- Nov. 10 **Test 2**
- Nov. 12 Brinkley, Chp. 11 “Cotton Slavery and the Old South”
- Nov. 14 American Realities, Chp. 9 “Limits of Jacksonian Democracy”

Week 12

- Nov. 17 Brinkley, Chp. 12 “Antebellum Culture and Reform”
- Nov. 19 Brinkley Chp. 12 Continued;
- Nov. 21 American Realities, Chp. 12 “Reform in the Early Republic” **Summary Due**

Week 13

- Nov. 24 Brinkley, Chp. 13 “The Impending Crisis”
- Nov. 26 Film on Civil War by Ken Burns **Quiz**
McPherson, What They Fought For, pp 1-25.
- Nov. 28 No Class/Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 14

- Dec. 01 Brinkley, Chp. 14, 15 “Civil War”
- Dec. 03 Brinkley, Chp. 15 Cont.
- Dec. 05 What They Fought For, pp. 26-69, **Quiz; Book Review Due**

Week 15

Dec. 11 Final Exam (11:00-12:00)

General Discussion Questions

Who is the author or editor?

What is the main idea? Or, what is the author's basic argument or overall thesis?

When do the events occur? Cite specific details and support?

Who are the characters?

What evidence did the author use to support his or her claims?

What are the author's conclusions? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

What audience is being addressed? Consider language usage and subject?

To whom would recommend this book or article and why?

Definitions of History

History is everything that ever happened, whether published or unpublished.

History is past, present, and future; history is the present in the sense that something or someone exist because of a cumulative effect of events and actions to date; history is the future by virtue of a cumulative set of actions and events to a distant point.

History is an agreed upon story, usually explained and perpetuated by an educated elite.

History is an interpretation of a given set of facts, based on available evidence, at a particular time.

History is an explanation of the process by which situations have changed over time.