History of the United States to 1865

Thinking Historically and Interpreting Creatively

HIST 1301 ◆ Fall 2025 ◆ CRN: 10302

TR 10:30-11:50 ◆ UGLC 346

INSTRUCTOR: Brad Cartwright, Ph.D.
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TR 9:00 – 10:20 am, W 12:00 – 1:20 pm, & by appt.

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T 12:00 – 1:00 pm, R 12:00 – 2:00 pm, & by appt.

COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES:

This course explores American history through 1865 while introducing students to the interpretive nature of historical study. Alongside traditional reading, analysis, and writing, students will engage diverse perspectives and express their understanding through both critical and creative work. Emphasis is placed on how historical narratives are constructed and how they evolve over time.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Analyze and interpret primary and secondary sources using the historical thinking skills applied by historians.
- Explain how historical narratives are constructed, contingent on evidence, and subject to reinterpretation over time.
- Create historically grounded "unessay" projects—such as infographics and story maps—that combine research with creative expression.
- Evaluate dominant or mythologized accounts of American history by engaging with diverse perspectives, including Native American, European, African, Mexican, and Anglo-American experiences.
- Develop and articulate original historical interpretations that reflect a critical and nuanced understanding of the past.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

General: It is the instructor's utmost hope that everyone earns an "A" in this course. It is not designed to be difficult, and a good grade is easily attained when students attend class, complete the reading assignments, take notes on the recorded lectures, complete the course workshops, and submit assignments on time. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask them during class or through Slack (see below). Out of respect for other students and the professor, arrive to class on time and do not disrupt others during class.

Required Readings: All required materials for this course are either Open Educational Resources (OER) or Open Access (OA) and are available at no cost through Blackboard.
Slack: Students will use Slack to communicate with the instructor, the teaching assistants, and their peers. Do not use email. For questions about assignments or anything else related to the course, students should use the Slack #general channel. If discretion is necessary, such as inquiries about grades, students can send a direct message either to the instructor or to the TA's. Also, students must check Slack regularly as it will be

used to send important reminders and useful information throughout the semester. Just click on this **link** and download the app to your phone (Android or iPhone) or computer (PC or Mac). Lastly, make sure to use your name as it is listed in Blackboard and turn on notifications.

Peers Assisting Student Success (PASS): This is a free tutoring program offering student-led review sessions for historically challenging courses. Each weekly session is facilitated by a peer leader—a student who has successfully completed the course and works closely with the instructor to provide academic support. There will be three scheduled sessions per week, and you are welcome to attend as many as you'd like. PASS sessions for this course are led by **Raul Meza**. Please note that Raul is not a teaching assistant; he is a peer leader. He cannot grant extensions, share grades, or offer extra credit. His role is to support your academic success—not to provide lecture notes. Raul will communicate with the class via Slack using the #pass channel, where you'll find the session schedule and any relevant announcements. Research shows that students who regularly participate in PASS sessions significantly increase their chances of earning an "A" in the course.

Flipped classroom: This class is based on an instructional strategy that reverses the traditional learning environment by delivering instructional content outside of the classroom. This allows the instructor to actively engage with students during class while analyzing primary and secondary sources, as well as historical documentaries. Thus, it is imperative that students listen to and take notes on the weekly lectures available online to keep up with the course content.

Attendance and Engagement: Success in this course requires regular attendance, especially since a very significant portion of your grade consists of in-class workshops. Students who possess documentation verifying the necessity of an absence can make up missed exams. Only students who miss class because of school-sponsored activities can make up workshops. Please note that students who are late to class or leave early on workshop days may not receive full credit for that day's assignment.

Thinking Historically

Interpretation: History is not merely a set of facts to be memorized; instead, historians interpret the past and their interpretations continually change as a result of new evidence and changing perspectives.

Causation: Historians debate the causes of historical events and, since history is an interpretative discipline, historians often disagree over why events happened.

Change: Historians investigate what has changed over time and what has remained the same.

Connections: To avoid past mistakes and to make sense of the present, historians identify connections between the past and present.

Context: Historians insist that the past must be understood on its own terms; thus, any historical event, idea, or person must first be understood in the context of their historical era.

Contingency: Historians are aware that events happen for a range of reasons but change one factor and that event may not have occurred as it did.

iClicker: Students will use iClicker regularly to help the instructor assess understanding, encourage participation, and support learning. iClicker will also be used for many course workshops and to earn extra credit. Students must bring a smartphone, tablet, or laptop to participate in iClicker sessions during class. All students are required to setup an iClicker account during the first week of the semester using their official university email address and/or student ID. If you have an existing iClicker student account, use the + sign to search for this course: **HIST 1301 - Cartwright – Fall 2025**. To participate, download the iClicker app (Android or iPhone), or use the iClicker web app by signing in here as a student.

Quizzes: There will be ten quizzes worth a total of 20% of each student's grade. While these quizzes represent a significant component of your course average, individually they are just 2% of your overall grade. These

quizzes will be completed within Blackboard, and they are designed to encourage students to actively view and take notes on the video lectures. Each student gets two attempts on each quiz and the highest score will be counted. All quizzes are due on Sundays by 11:59 pm each week they are assigned.

Workshops: Over the course of this semester, students will complete 25 workshops worth 12 points apiece. Altogether they are worth 300 points, or 30% of a student's overall grade. These workshops are designed to help students develop skills in analyzing and interpreting historical evidence by engaging with primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are original, first-hand accounts or evidence from the time period being studied, offering direct insight into historical events, people or ideas, whereas secondary sources provide analyses and interpretations based on those firsthand accounts and are created by individuals who did not experience them firsthand. They provide context, explain significance, and offer interpretations based on primary and other secondary sources. By analyzing both types of sources, students will learn how historians construct evidence-based understandings of the past.

Unessays: All students will complete two unessay assignments. The unessay empowers you to creatively explore a historical topic beyond the traditional essay, challenging you to think critically about historical content while presenting it in a visually engaging and accessible way. For these assignments, you will delve deeply into a specific topic, event, or person in American history by creating infographics or story maps. Both unessay assignments require you to submit a proposal one week prior to the unessay assignment due date. Your unessays will be graded based on historical analysis, creativity and design, clarity and grammar, and sources. Unessay I represents 10% (or 100 points) of your total grade, while Unessay II represents 15% (or 150 points). All unessay assignments must be submitted by 11:59 pm on the assigned due date.

Exams: There will be a midterm and a final exam, both of which will require Blue Books purchased from the UTEP bookstore or library. Both the midterm and the final will include one question (see below). Student answers should be based on course lectures and their essays should demonstrate mastery of the writing skills developed in the course workshops. The midterm exam represents 10% (or 100 points) of the student's total grade, while the final exam represents 15% (or 150 points). All examinations must be completed at the time scheduled unless the student can present a verifiable and acceptable excuse. Make-up exams must be scheduled within one week of the original exam.

Midterm Exam Question: **What is the story of American history through 1789?**
Final Exam Question: **Is the early history of the United States a story of progress?**

Grade Breakdown:

- Unessay 1 (10%): 100 points
- Unessay 2 (15%): 150 points
- Midterm Exam (10%): 100 points
- Final Exam (15%): 150 points
- Quizzes (20%): 200 points
- Workshops (30%): 300 points

1000 points

CALENDAR AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Week 1	Preconquest America	Aug. 26	Course Introduction	HIST 1301 Orientation
		Aug. 28	**Workshop 1:** "America's First Immigrants"	
Week 2	Old Worlds Collide	Sept. 2	**Workshop 2:** Bartolomé de las Casas (1542)	
		Sept. 4	**Workshop 3:** "1491"	
Week 3	Conquest and Colonization, pt. I	Sept. 9	**Workshop 4:** "After the Mayflower" pt. I	**Quiz 1**
		Sept. 11	**Workshop 5:** "After the Mayflower" pt. II	
Week 4	Conquest and Colonization, pt. II	Sept.16	**Workshop 6:** Pueblo Revolt (1680)	**Quiz 2**
		Sept. 18	**Workshop 7:** "Blessed and Bedeviled"	
Week 5	Servitude and Slavery	Sept. 23	**Workshop 8:** Richard Frethorne (1623)	**Quiz 3**
		Sept. 25	**Workshop 9:** Virginia Slave Codes (1670)	
Week 6	Competing Empires	Sept. 30	**Workshop 10:** Unessays	**Quiz 4** **Unessay I Proposal**
		Oct. 2	**Workshop 11:** "Join or Die" (1754)	
Week 7	The American Revolution	Oct. 7	**Workshop 12:** The Bloody Massacre (1770)	**Quiz 5** **Unessay I**
		Oct. 9	**Workshop 13:** "God and the Founders"	
Week 8	Creating a Nation	Oct. 14	Midterm Exam Review	
		Oct. 16	**Midterm Exam**	
Week 9	A Nation Among Nations	Oct. 21	**Workshop 14:** "Tecumseh's Vision"	
		Oct. 23	**Workshop 15:** "Tecumseh's Vision"	
Week 10	Antebellum America	Oct. 28	**Workshop 16:** "Good, Evil, and the Presidency"	**Quiz 6**
		Oct. 30	**Workshop 17:** Indian Removal (1830)	
Week 11	American Slavery	Nov. 4	**Workshop 18:** "Slavery & the Making of America"	**Quiz 7**
		Nov. 6	**Workshop 19:** "Slavery & the Making of America"	
Week 12	Gender, Religion, and Reform	Nov. 11	**Workshop 20:** "The Abolitionists"	**Quiz 8**
		Nov. 13	**Workshop 21:** Unessays	

Week 13	Manifest Destiny & Its Consequences	Nov. 18	**Workshop 22:** Artwork of American Empire	**Quiz 9** **Unessay II Proposal**
		Nov. 20	**Workshop 23:** "The West"	
Week 14	A House Divided	Nov. 25	**Workshop 24:** John Brown – Villian or Hero?	**Quiz 10** **Unessay II**
		Nov. 27	**Thanksgiving Holiday!**	
Week 15	Civil War	Dec. 2	**Workshop 25:** "The Civil War"	
		Dec. 4	Final Exam Review	
Week 16		Dec. 11	**Final Exam** (10:00 am – 12:45 pm)	

The Fine Print

Accommodations: The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Students who become pregnant or have parenting responsibilities may also request reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations will be provided unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. The UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) will process requests for accommodations based on a disability, pregnancy, or parenting. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, or email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

Conduct: Any inappropriate behavior, disruptive conduct, or non-compliance with faculty directions can result in a charge of Academic and/or Personal Misconduct, possibly resulting in sanctions imposed either by the instructor or the Dean of Students. For further information refer to https://www.utep.edu/hoop/section-2/student-conduct-and-discipline.html.

Scholastic Integrity: Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline.

Changes to the Syllabus: Read this syllabus carefully because it contains important information about this course's requirements and assignments. Also, the instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus over the course of the semester.