

HIST 419: American Social and Intellectual History

Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30-10:45 in UC 335

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Course description: This course surveys the social and intellectual currents and ideas that influence and inform the American people. The aim is to stimulate critical thinking by having students read, discuss and analyze primary documents in American social and intellectual history.

COURSE TEXTS:

Required Text: Custom Courseware: Primary Source Documents for History. This is a customized reader that must be purchased in the bookstore of Texas A&M University-Texarkana in the University Center.

Variable Required Texts: Eric Foner, The Story of American Freedom, or a standard college U.S. history textbook. The textbook or textbooks should cover all of U.S. history. This might require buying both volumes of a standard college U.S. History textbook. The textbooks for Texarkana College's *American History 1301* and *1302* are acceptable. Another acceptable U.S. history textbook is David Kennedy, Lizabeth Cohen and Thomas Bailey, The American Pageant. Various copies of textbooks, including The American Pageant, are available for free at the Texas A&M University-Texarkana Library, although many of them are for library use only. Another option is buying your variable required texts through the internet. Used U.S. history textbooks books can usually be purchased for a reasonable price at <http://books.half.ebay.com>, <http://www.cheapbooks.com>, www.textbooks.com, www.gettextbooks.com, www.collegebooksdirect.com, www.amazon.com, www.directtextbook.com, <http://www.bookfinder4u.com> and www.bookcircus.com. (Please note: neither the instructor nor the university are responsible for any problems arising from purchasing textbooks through the internet.)

Purpose of the Variable Required Texts and Use of the Internet: The purpose of the variable required texts is to have a source of reference to place the assigned documents in context. Certain websites can also be a valuable resource for placing a document in context. Students should not entirely trust everything they find on the Internet, because many Web sites contain inaccurate information. Instead, students should practice their critical-thinking skills when reading materials found on the Internet—or anywhere for that matter. This entails noting, and perhaps investigating, the source of information found on a website, as well as corroborating the information with information found in your textbook, in other books or articles, or on other Web sites. In short, be cautious and skeptical in your search for information. The instructor and your fellow students have the right to question the validity of information discussed in class and to request the source of the information.

Student Learner Outcomes:

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to

1. demonstrate knowledge of:
 - a. certain social and intellectual currents in American history.
 - b. some of the individuals and ideas that have shaped American society.
2. analyze primary documents and place them in historical context.
3. demonstrate critical thinking through assignments, classroom discussions, and debates over the ideas and main points of the documents. (Read "Goals of Course Discussion and Debate" at the end of the syllabus.)

Each student will be expected to carry out the following tasks:

1. Take three examinations (100 points each) covering the lectures and reading materials.
2. Read the assigned materials.
3. Make two oral presentations (25 points each).
4. Participate in class discussions and complete class assignments (50-200 points).

Course Requirements and Means of Evaluation:

90–100% = A, 80–89% = B, 70–79% = C, 60–69% = D, 59% or less = F. In accordance with university policy, grades will not be posted nor reported over the telephone or e-mail.

Examinations: 300 points (100 each)

Assignments: 50-200 points (mostly answering “Questions to Consider” at the beginning of a document)

Two Oral Presentation and Main-Points Assignments: 50 points (25 points each)

TOTAL: Between 400-600 points, depending on the number of assignments

Examinations (300 points):

Three examinations worth 100 points each. The examinations will be a mixture of multiple-choice questions, identification questions, short-answer questions and essay questions. The examinations may also have a take-home component.

Tardiness for examinations: Any student who enters class after the first test-taker has left may be required to take a make-up examination.

Academic Integrity: Academic honesty is expected of students enrolled in this course. Cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, falsification of research data, plagiarism, and copying or undocumented use of materials from any source, constitute academic dishonesty, and may be grounds for a grade of "F" in the course and/or disciplinary action. The student is responsible for reading and understanding the University Policy on Academic Integrity.

Absences from examinations: Students are expected to take the examinations when they are scheduled. They must make arrangements for missed examinations in advance of their absence or prior to the next class. Documented medical and job-related issues are appropriate excuses for missing an examination. The deadline for arranging a makeup examination is the first class period following the scheduled examination day. All examinations should be completed within one week of the scheduled date. Students who do not adhere to this deadline may receive a grade of “F” for the examination. Make-up examinations may be essays.

Request for Permission to Makeup an Examination or an Assignment

I, _____, a student in _____, request permission to
makeup _____ (examination or assignment). The reason for this request is

If the makeup is approved, I will complete the assignment by _____ .

Signature

Class assignments (50-200 points):

The instructor designs assignments to encourage critical thinking, enhance class discussions and assist students' performance on examinations. There will be a minimum of five and a maximum of twenty class assignments. The aggregate value of the assignments will be between a minimum of 50 points and a maximum of 200. The assignments will vary and will not all have the same value, although most will be worth either 10 or 20 points. They may consist of short essays, short written answers to specific questions, quizzes, or participation in group projects¹ and presentations.

Most of the assignment will require answering the questions under the heading "Questions to Consider" at the beginning of the document. Answers should be thoughtful and one to five sentences in length.

The instructor will determine the number of assignments based on the pace and needs of the course. The number of assignments has been purposely left undetermined to provide the course an element of flexibility. Since students do not know when there will be an in-class assignment, assignments also serve the purpose of encouraging regular attendance. Missed in-class assignments cannot be made up. Late take-home assignments will be penalized the equivalent of one letter grade.

Two Main-Points Presentations and Follow-up Assignments **50 Points (25 points each)**

Main-Points Presentation:

Each student will be assigned two primary documents during the first class session. On those days that the instructor scheduled discussion of the student's assigned documents, the student is required to present a 10-minute oral report that explains the document's context, main points and significance. In addition, the **student must present a written list** of the document's main points for the entire class to view. There are several formats that students can use to present their list to the class, but a simple handout has traditionally been the most common. Alternative or additional formats include a PowerPoint or a MS Word document using the overhead projector, the ELMO overhead projector, or the board (**written before class**). If you use MS Word or PowerPoint to present your material, you are responsible to have a backup format of your material in case of computer problems. You should always have a hardcopy. To guard against digital damage or lack of access to your documents, please save your document to an accessible format. You may want to use several backup formats (e.g. CD, flash drive, floppy disk).

PRESENTATIONS SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- ✓ **Placing the document in historical context**
- ✓ **Listing the document's main points**
- ✓ **Explaining the document's historical significance**

- **Historical Context:** Placing the document into historical context involves answering some the following questions:

¹ In assignments that involve participation in group projects, all students in the groups who participate will be given a common group grade. Those who are absent during in-class group assignments will not receive any grade points. The instructor will grade all of the other assignments listed based on the individual student's performance. The instructor will announce the number of possible points for each assignment upon the assignment's announcement.

- What is the author's background? For example, what is the author's race, class, educational experience, religion? Where was he or she reared? What transforming events occurred in the author's life?
- What are his or her viewpoints concerning the major issues of his or her time?
- What can be said about the author's time? In other words, what are the major issues and events concerning the author and affecting society at the time the document is being conceived and written?
- Who is the intended audience?

• **Main Points:** Students should ask the following questions to understand the document's main points:

- Why was the document written? In other words, what points did the author most want to convey?
 - This requires students to distill the essential points of the document. The points should be written as complete sentences. In most cases, the main point should not be a quotation, but rather a concise statement in the student's own words. However, students are encouraged to support the main points with appropriate quotations, usually inserted directly underneath the relevant main point.

• **Historical Significance:** Students should address the following questions when determining and evaluating the document's historical significance:

- What impact did the document have on the author's society?
- What impact did it have on later generations?
- What groups in particular did the document impact?
- Was this impact important and, if so, why?

After the Main-Points Presentation:

After the presentation, the class will discuss the document and come to a consensus as to the main points. If the resulting consensus differs from your main points, do not take it personally. Instead, carefully write down the classes' concluding main points and e-mail the final list to the professor (mperry@tamut.edu).

You will not receive any credit for the presentation until you have successfully e-mailed the professor with the final list of the main points reached by consensus.

The professor will then post the lists of main points on the course website.

No late presentations will be allowed.

Late presentations tend to throw the course off schedule. Keep the presentation date and your schedule in mind when choosing a presentation and planning your semester. Despite best efforts, the class schedule sometimes runs behind. Therefore, do not be surprised or upset if your presentation is postponed to the next class session.

Course Reading:

Students must carefully read and analyze each document in Custom Courseware before the class session for which the document is assigned for discussion. For each hour in class, students are expected to spend 2-3 hours of study outside of class. Reading for a college course differs significantly from casual reading. Course materials should be read actively.

Active reading involves:

- taking note of major points
- writing down questions or concerns
- summarizing important paragraphs or sections.

One strategy of active reading is to ask and attempt to answer why the author wrote each paragraph? Determining the purpose of each paragraph often helps the reader to follow and understand better the author's logic.

Disability Accommodations: Students with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations through the A&M-Texarkana Disability Services Office by calling 903-223-3062.

A&M-Texarkana Email Address: Upon application to Texas A&M University-Texarkana an individual will be assigned an A&M-Texarkana email account. This email account will be used to deliver official university correspondence. Each individual is responsible for information sent and received via the university email account and is expected to check the official A&M-Texarkana email account on a frequent and consistent basis. Faculty and students are required to utilize the university email account when communicating about coursework.

Drop Policy: To drop this course, a student needs to complete the Drop/Withdrawal Request Form; this form is located on the University website (<http://tamut.edu/Registrar/droppingwithdrawing-from-classes.html>) or obtained in the Registrar's Office. Students must submit the signed and completed form to the faculty member for each course indicated on the form for their signature. The signature is not an "approval" to drop, but rather confirmation that the student has discussed the drop/withdrawal with the faculty member. The form is submitted to the Registrar's office for processing either in person, email (Registrar@tamut.edu), or fax (903-223-32140). Incomplete forms missing any of the required information will not be accepted by the Registrar's Office for processing. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the form is completed properly before submission. At the end of the semester, students who have not dropped the course must receive a grade. In effect, faculty members are required to fail students who 1) have not completed the course work and 2) have not dropped the course. **Dropping the course prior to the deadline is the student's responsibility.**

Opportunities for Enriched Study

Students have the option of contracting enriched-study projects. The purpose of this option is to enrich the learning experience by enabling students to study areas in American Intellectual and Social history that are of particular interest to them. Enriched-study projects also provide students with a means to improve their course grade. Most projects will probably improve a student's course grade, although there is no guarantee of this. The projects will be evaluated, and a low grade will yield minimal benefit. Moreover, if a student fails to submit a contracted project, the instructor will subtract one-tenth the value of one examination from the student's total score for the course.

The number of points contracted through enriched-study projects will correspondingly increase the total possible points for the course. For example, the final grade of a student who contracts to complete a project worth 100 points will be calculated from a possible total of 500 points. (90% of 500 = 450; 90% of 400 = 360.)

The evaluation of projects is by its nature subjective. The following are tentative criteria that are intended to be general guides to evaluation. Student initiative in working with the instructor will improve the process of evaluation. The student should seek guidance and evaluations from the instructor throughout the semester. The student should also keep written records of the teacher's suggestions and the student's responses to those suggestions. The student should not wait until the due-date, submit the project, and then be surprised by a lower grade than anticipated. The instructor will help the student to do her or his best work. The instructor will evaluate the work fairly to the best of his ability.

The deadline to submit a project for approval is February 13.

1. **In-depth Analysis of an Excerpt (50 points).** With the instructor's assistance and approval, a student may contract to write an in-depth analysis of an excerpt apart from the document assigned to the student. The analysis should briefly review the excerpt's content, place the excerpt in historical context and draw some

general conclusions. The written analysis should be 2-5 pages in length, and will be evaluated on the quality of the analysis and the writing. Students may contract up to two *Analysis-of-Excerpt* projects. Each project is worth up to 50 points. Students are encouraged to contract *Analysis-of-Excerpt* projects within the first month of the semester.

2. **Book Project (100 points).** With the instructor's assistance and approval, a student may contract to read one or more scholarly books concerning U.S. social and intellectual history. The student has the option of writing an essay or a critique on the approved book. Students who write an essay will meet with the instructor when the book is approved to discuss the topic. The student will write the essay in the testing center. A student who chooses to write a critique should obtain a guide from the instructor. The instructor will evaluate the essay or critique on the quality of the analysis, the quality of the writing, and adherence to guidelines.
3. **Research Project (200 points).** With the instructor's assistance and approval, a student may contract to write a research paper. The instructor will provide a research guide and work closely with the student on a tutorial basis. The student must submit an outline and rough draft of the paper before the class period following the second exam. The paper will be evaluated on the quality of the research and analysis, the quality of the writing, and adherence to the guidelines.

Tentative Schedule

January 18: Introduction and Class Organization. John Cotton, *The Devine Right to Occupy the Land* (1630).

January 23: John Winthrop, *A Model of Christian Charity* (1630) and *Little Speech on Liberty* (1645); *The Trial Of Anne Hutchinson* (1637).

January 25: Samuel Adams, *The Rights of the Colonists* (1772); Samuel Johnson, *Taxation No Tyranny* (1772); Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1776).

January 30: Documentary on Thomas Jefferson.

February 1: Thomas Jefferson, *Declaration of Independence* (1776); Thomas Jefferson, *Jefferson on Slavery* (1784).

February 6: Edmund Burke, *Conciliation with America* (1775); Adam Smith, *America and the Wealth of Nations* (1776); Michael St. John de Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782).

February 8: James Madison, *Federalist #10* (1787-1788); Daniel Webster, *Against Universal Manhood Suffrage* (1820).

February 13: George Bancroft, *The Office of the People* (1835); Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1835).

February 15: Examination 1.

February 20: Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self-Reliance* (1844); Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Young American* (1844).

February 22: John O'Sullivan, *Manifest Destiny* (1845); Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience* (1849).

February 27: George Bancroft, *The Progress of Mankind* (1854); Frederick Douglass, *What To The Slave Is The Fourth Of July?* (1852).

February 29: Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855); Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861).

March 5: Alexander Stephens, *Slavery and the Confederacy* (1861); B.M. Palmer and M.J. Raphall and Henry Ward Beecher, *Fast Day Sermons* (1861); Abraham Lincoln, *The Gettysburg Address* (1863).

March 7: Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (1893); Theodore Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life* (1900).

March 12 & 14: Spring Break.

March 19: William Graham Sumner, *What the Social Classes Owe to Each Other* (1883); Thorstein Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899).

March 21: Seneca Falls Convention, *Declaration of Sentiments* (1848); Horace Bushnell *Against Women's Suffrage* (1869).

March 26: U.S. Supreme Court, *Bradwell v. The State of Illinois* (1873); Margaret Sanger, *Woman and the New Race* (1920); IDA B. Wells, *A Red Record* (1895).

March 28: Booker T. Washington, *Atlantic Exposition Address* (1895); W.E.B. Du Bois, *Strivings of the Negro People* (1887); W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Niagara Movement* (1905).

April 2: U.S. Supreme Court, *Abrams v. United States* (1919).

April 4: Examination 2.

April 9: Herbert Hoover, *Relief Efforts* (1931); Socialist Party, *Socialist Party Platform*, (1932).

April 11: Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Inaugural Address* (1933); Franklin D. Roosevelt, *Four Freedoms* (1941).

April 16: Harry S. Truman, *The Truman Doctrine* (1947); J. Edgar Hoover, *The Communist Menace* (1947).

April 18: Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Farewell Address* (1961).

April 23: U.S. Supreme Court, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954); Sam J. Ervin and Others, *The Southern Manifesto* (1956).

April 25: Martin Luther King, *Letter from Birmingham Jail* (April 16, 1963); Patrick Moynihan, *The Negro Family* (1965).

April 30: Jimmy Carter, *Energy and National Goals* (1979); Ronald Reagan, *Support for the Contras* (1984).

May 2: Andrew Sullivan, *This Is a Religious War: September 11 was Only the Beginning* (October 7, 2001)

May 7: **Final Examination.**

Goals of Course Discussion and Debate

Ideological harmony is **not** a goal of this course. We are not a congregation or a political party. We are students exploring and discussing controversial issues. The instructor will try to elicit an agreement as to the main points of a document to clarify material fair to place on examinations. However, consensus is not important, even on examinations. Instead, well-informed and well-argued answers to examination questions are the most significant determinants of a good grade; not the reflection of a popular point of view or the viewpoint of the instructor.

Your contribution is important.

If in the course of discussion you feel that someone “shoots down” your ideas, do not take it personally. Listen to what that person says with an open mind. If you agree with that person, reformulate your ideas. If you are not sure what you think about the issue, think about it more and try to clarify your position. If you disagree with the other person’s position, think about how you can better articulate and defend your position in the future.

Three interrelated goals of the class are:

- To become exposed to important—and often controversial—issues in American history, and **TO THINK ABOUT THEM.**
- To comprehend historically significant and often complex ideas, and to articulate a position regarding them.
- To listen to others with an open yet critical mind, and to become more clear and persuasive in arguing your own position.

Some realities of class discussion:

Although the instructor will enforce a certain degree of civility (e.g. no personal attacks), discussions of controversial issues are often a power-struggle of ideas. You may at times feel frustrated, lost, elated or angered by the course of class discussion. This is natural. Discussions of the type encouraged in this class are unpredictable and may not go the way you want. Nevertheless, the process of participating in a discussion or debate is meant to be useful and constructive. It propels us to **THINK**, which is our most important goal.

Learning to think does not necessarily mean agreeing with your instructor or your classmates. **You are encouraged to question authority and the majority. You will not be penalized for disagreeing with your instructor during any class discussion of a document. In the same light, do not be put off if the instructor makes clear that he disagrees with you.**

Memorization and knowledge are important tools that will enhance your argumentation, but they are not the type of **THINKING** that the course readings, discussions and debates are designed to promote.

Discussions and debates in this class do not have winners or losers, and your instructor will never view any of the *active* participants as winners or losers. The only possible losers are the non-active participants who have something to say but are too timid to say it. Not all non-talkative students are timid, and sometimes they simply do not have anything they particularly wish to contribute. This is fine. But if you have something to say, you should try to say it.

Not all students will be able to voice what they want when they want to say it. This is the nature of class discussions and debates, and, admittedly, it can be **frustrating**. The instructor will try to be as fair as possible in allowing different students to participate. For the active students, this might mean the instructor not allowing you to speak when you want. For the less active students, this may mean the instructor calling on you. You can assist the instructor in this delicate and complex process by raising your hand when you have something to say.