

# U.S. History 1492-1877

**History 2050-80/88**

Online

Winter 2014-15

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Welcome to the on-line version of HIST 2050: US History 1492-1877.

You should familiarize yourself with Blackboard, if you do not know the software already. We will mostly use the “Course Documents” and “Discussion Board” sections. Answers to your questions about technical aspects of using Blackboard can be found at <http://bb.wpunj.edu>.

Feel free to e-mail me with any other problem or concern you might have related to the course or your further work in History.

**Course Objectives/Overview:** Students will learn the major issues and events in U.S. history for this time period and also become acquainted with the major scholarly and historiographical approaches to understanding American history.

**Course Readings:**

Our textbook is online at Digital History (<http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/>),

The only book you must get is:

Frederick Douglass, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*

This book has not been ordered; it is easily available in a cheap edition from any bookstore or [www.bn.com](http://www.bn.com) or [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or <http://www.powells.com/>. It is also available free online @ the following link:

[http://www.ibiblio.org/ebooks/Douglass/Narrative/Douglass\\_Narrative.pdf](http://www.ibiblio.org/ebooks/Douglass/Narrative/Douglass_Narrative.pdf)

Other readings will be posted on the course webpage at <http://bb.wpunj.edu> under “Course Documents”

### **Course Requirements:**

*Exams:* There will be three essay exams. (16% & 16% & 20% of grade.)

*Discussion Board:* Each student will contribute substantially to the class discussions. The basic structure of the course: each day we will cover one issue, reading from the Digital History site (<http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/>), other websites, and primary source documents I have posted in the "Course Documents" section of the Blackboard site. (Each section's discussion is 4% of grade.)

In general, new discussions will begin every day or so. We will discuss the material, focusing our discussion around the documents. You will raise questions, answer questions, debate each other and me, and so on. I expect active participation from each of you for every section of the course.

The discussions are meant to be informal. This means: you do not have to footnote your comments; you do not even have to worry too much about spelling and punctuation (so long as we can understand you). Your thoughts do not even have to be fully developed. This is the place where we work our ideas through, test them on each other, wrestle with the issues raised by the historical material, and try to bring evidence to support our assertions.

You should log on and contribute to discussion regularly with questions or comments on that section's reading. You should respond to both my questions and comments and your fellow students' postings. The quality as well as the frequency of your participation counts toward your final grade. I will post some general questions on each section to guide you in your reading. I expect a few hundred words per discussion forum from each of you, but you don't have to post all those words at once. You may log on several times a day to monitor and contribute to the discussion. You do not have to post your comments to the discussion board right away. **BUT: if you don't post by midday, then you MUST respond to the comments posted since I first raised the general questions. You cannot simply repeat what others have said. That way our conversation can build throughout the section.**

A word on **plagiarism**: it is absolutely not acceptable for you to use someone else's words or ideas as your own. In the discussions, you should feel free to bring in material from outside sources, but you must make clear that you are doing so. Do not simply copy from Wikipedia or some other online source. To present someone else's work as your own is cheating, and will result in failure of the course. It is okay, even good, to use someone else's work; just be sure to give credit. One of your tasks as a student – especially in the discipline of history – is to demonstrate your ability to understand and assimilate other people's ideas. You should WANT to properly credit your sources; it shows you are participating in the scholarly exchange that is essential to the academic mission.

Defined briefly, plagiarism consists of the unacknowledged use of another person's words or ideas. If you plagiarize you will fail the course. Please read the WPU Academic Integrity Policy on pages 74-79 of the Student Handbook at <http://www.wpunj.edu/dotAsset/c5ed889a-e87a-4fb8-a9c1-a5e6721749ca.pdf>.

For help with academics, check out the homepage of the Academic Support Center @ <http://www.wpunj.edu/academicsupport/>

Students who need help with their writing should go to the [Writing Center](#) at Atrium 128.

Important semester dates are available at <http://www.wpunj.edu/registrar/calendars/winter.dot>.

Please note that it is possible the course requirements will change as we go along.

**Grading:**

Discussion: 48% of course grade (12 topics x 4% each)

Exams: 52% of course grade (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> exams 16% each; final exam 20%)

Late work will be accepted, but marked down. I will not give any Incomplete grades for the course.

**Topics:**

Dec 22 – BEFORE COLUMBUS	Jan 3 – THE MARKET REVOLUTION
Dec 23 – CREATING A NEW WORLD	Jan 5 – <b>SECOND EXAM due by 6pm</b>
Dec 24 – COLONIZATION	Jan 6 – DEMOCRATS & WHIGS
Dec 27 – BRITISH NORTH AMERICA	Jan 7 – SLAVERY & ANTI-SLAVERY
Dec 29 – <b>FIRST EXAM due by 6pm</b>	Jan 8 – THE CIVIL WAR
Dec 30 – REVOLUTION	Jan 9 – RECONSTRUCTION
Dec 31 – THE CONSTITUTION	Jan 11 – <b>FINAL EXAM due by 6pm</b>
Jan 2 – THE EARLY REPUBLIC	