HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES TO 1877

This course is designed to introduce students to important themes in the history of the United States between the earliest history of European colonization in North America and the U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction. An emphasis of the course will be on the cultural history of the colonial era, the American Revolution, and the first century of the new republic.

The following comprise the principal objectives of this course:

- Expose students to the art of critical reading and historical analysis of primary source documents.
- Allow students to develop their own interpretative frameworks for understanding the significance of various developments in the United States’ first century.
- Provide students with a strong conceptual background to interpret conflict and change in American culture both in the past and in the present.
- Expose students to the geography and genealogy of cultural change in America

REQUIRED READINGS:
The following books are available to purchase at the College Bookstore:
Bruce Dorsey and Woody Register, eds., Crosscurrents in American Culture.
Benjamin L. Carp, Rebels Rising: Cities and the American Revolution.
Eric Foner, Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction.

Moodle: The vast majority of the required readings for this course, as well as the supplemental readings for the writing assignments, are available on the course’s Moodle site.

Students are responsible for bringing copies of Crosscurrents in American Culture to every class meeting, since class discussions will focus on the interpretation and discussion of the primary-source documents in that reader.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Class participation & Attendance: Students are required to attend all class meetings, complete all assigned readings, and be prepared to discuss the readings each week. Students are expected to contribute actively to the collective learning experience of the course.

Writing Assignments:
Papers: Two papers (approximately 5-6 double-spaced pages [2,000 words maximum]) will be written throughout the semester. The expectations and requirements for the papers, as well as the choice of topics and supplemental readings, are described under Paper Assignments on Moodle.

Reflection Essays: Several short essays (about two-double-spaced pages) will be written on various “problems to consider” in Crosscurrents in American Culture. Thoughtful reflection and analysis are expected for these brief writing assignments. See Reflection Essays on Moodle.
Final Examination: A comprehensive final examination covering the material for the entire semester will be given on the scheduled exam date.

POLICIES:

Evaluation/Grading:
Class participation: 10%
Papers: 50%
Reflection Essays 20%
Final Examination 20%

Note: Students must complete all writing assignments (including the Final Exam & all Reflection Essays) to pass this course.

Attendance & Communication: The following is the History Department policy on attendance & communication: “Students are required to attend all classes. Unexcused absences will result in a lower grade for the course. If you are having a medical or personal emergency, please contact the Dean’s Office as well as the instructor of the course. It is your responsibility to inform your instructor as soon as possible. It is essential that you check your email on a regular basis since History professors will contact you via email. We also expect you to use email to contact History professors.”

Laptops & Electronic Devices: To facilitate discussion and to avoid distractions, I am going to ask that you do not use a laptop or any other electronic device in class. Please silence and put away your phone during class. (Disability accommodations requiring the use of a computer are not covered by this policy.)

Accommodations for disability: If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Leslie Hempling in the Office of Student Disability Services (Parrish 113) or email lhempli1@swarthmore.edu to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs. As appropriate, she will issue students with documented disabilities a formal Accommodations Letter. Since accommodations require early planning and are not retroactive, please contact her as soon as possible. For details about the accommodations process, visit the Student Disability Service website at http://www.swarthmore.edu/student-life/academic-advising-and-support/student-disability-service.xml. You are also welcome to contact me privately to discuss your academic needs. However, all disability-related accommodations must be arranged through Leslie Hempling in the Office of Student Disability Services.
CLASS SCHEDULE:

WEEK 1:
Aug. 31 – INTRODUCTION

Sept. 2 – COLONIAL DREAMS: IMAGININGS OF EXPLORATION, CONQUEST & RELOCATION
Readings:
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 1-17.

Sept. 4 – SEEING NEW PEOPLES: VISUAL IMAGES OF COLONIZATION
Readings:
Alan Taylor, American Colonies (2001), ch. 1-3.
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 17-35.
Kupperman, Indians and English, ch. 2.

WEEK 2:
Sept. 7 – COSMOLOGY: CREATION STORIES AND LEGENDS OF GOOD AND EVIL IN MULTIPLE CULTURES
Readings:
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 35-40.
Kupperman, Indians and English, ch. 4.

Sept. 9 – NEW WORLDS AND OLD WORLDS: CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS IN THE AMERICAS
Readings:
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 41-54. [RE: p. 50]

Sept. 11 – COVENANTS, JEREMIADS, & WHITE INDIANS: PURITAN CULTURE IN NEW ENGLAND
Readings:
Alan Taylor, American Colonies (2001), ch. 6, 8.
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 54-71.

WEEK 3:
Sept. 14 – ORIGINS OF SLAVERY IN NORTH AMERICA
Readings:
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 72-85.

Sept. 16 – MIDDLE PASSAGE: TALES OF THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE
Readings:
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 86-96.
Sept. 18 – NO CLASS MEETING - WORK ON PAPER #1

WEEK 4:
Sept. 21 – PENNSYLVANIA, THE MIDDLE COLONIES, & SLAVERY
Readings:

Sept. 23 – COCK FIGHTS, HORSE RACES, & REVIVALS: COLONIAL AMUSEMENTS & THE GREAT AWAKENING
Readings:
Alan Taylor, American Colonies (2001), ch. 15.
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 96-107.

Sept. 25 – EMPIRE AND REBELLION IN THE BRITISH COLONIES
Readings:
FIRST PAPER DUE [by 5pm]

WEEK 5:
Sept. 28 – THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
Readings:
Carp, Rebels Rising, 99-224.
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 108-22.

Sept. 30 – MEMORY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION & CONTEMPORARY POLITICS
Readings:

Oct. 2 – LIBERTY’S KEY: COMPETING VISIONS OF FREEDOM IN THE AGE OF REVOLUTION
Readings:
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 122-31. [RE: p. 129]

WEEK 6:
Oct. 5 – CONSTITUTION AND THE RACIAL ORIGINS OF THE NEW NATION
Readings:

Oct. 7 – SIGNS AND LANGUAGES OF A NEW NATIONALISM
Readings:
Dorsey & Register, *Crosscurrents in American Culture*, 131-40.

Oct.  9 – NO CLASS MEETING

**FALL BREAK: OCTOBER 12 THRU 16**

**WEEK 7:**
Oct. 19 – A MARKET REVOLUTION: CREATING CONSUMER DESIRE & DEBATES OVER MANUFACTURING
Readings:
Paul E. Johnson, *The Early American Republic* (2007), 3-53
Dorsey & Register, *Crosscurrents in American Culture*, 141-50.

Oct. 21 – INDUSTRIALIZATION & THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY IN THE NORTH
Readings:
Dorsey & Register, *Crosscurrents in American Culture*, 151-70.

Oct. 23 – SLAVERY IN THE SOUTH: THE ECONOMICS OF SLAVERY
Readings:
Foner, *Forever Free*, ch. 1 (pp. 3-33).

**WEEK 8:**
Oct. 26 – SLAVERY IN THE SOUTH: AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE & SLAVE RESISTANCE
Readings:
Dorsey & Register, *Crosscurrents in American Culture*, 171-85. [RE: p. 179]

Oct. 28 – SLAVERY IN THE SOUTH: SLAVE RESISTANCE (continued)
Video in class: *Nat Turner, A Troublesome Property*
Readings:
*The Confessions of Nat Turner* [“as fully and voluntarily made to T. R. Gray”] (1832).

Oct. 30 – DISCUSSION: SLAVERY

**WEEK 9:**
Nov. 2 – REFORMING AMERICA: RELIGIOUS REVIVALISM & TEMPERANCE TALES
Readings:
Dorsey & Register, *Crosscurrents in American Culture*, 200-22.

Nov. 4 – REFORMING AMERICA: ABOLITIONISM & NATIVISM
Readings:
Bruce Dorsey, Reforming Men and Women (2002), ch. 5.
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 223-31.

Nov. 6 – INDIAN REMOVAL & "CIVILIZATION"
Readings:
Perdue and Green, Cherokee Removal, 1-91.

WEEK 10:
Nov. 9 – INDIAN REMOVAL & "CIVILIZATION" (continued)
Readings:
Perdue and Green, Cherokee Removal, 92-178.

Nov. 11 – NATURE’S VISTAS & VISAGES: CULTURAL MEANINGS OF EXPANSIONISM & THE WESTERN FRONTIER
Readings:
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 232-41.
Davy Crockett Almanacks (1835-41), draft, 2nd ed., Crosscurrents in American Culture.

Nov. 13 – "MANIFEST DESTINY": EXPANSIONISM & CONQUEST
Readings:
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 241-51.

WEEK 11:
Nov. 16 – CULTURE OF DEMOCRACY – COMMERCIAL POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT
Readings:
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 252-66. [RE: p. 255]

Nov. 18 – CULTURE OF DEMOCRACY – PARTISAN POLITICAL CULTURE
Readings:
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 266-71.

Nov. 20 – SECTIONAL CULTURES & CONFLICTS
Readings:
David Blight, Frederick Douglass’ Civil War (1989), ch. 2.
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 272-81.

WEEK 12:
Nov. 23 – SECTIONAL CONFLICT & SECESSION
Readings:
Nov. 25 – JOHN BROWN’S BODY: SYMBOLS & MEANINGS OF THE CIVIL WAR
Readings:
Edward Ayers, What Caused the Civil War (2005), 131-44.
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 281-99.

Nov. 27 – NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING BREAK)

WEEK 13:
Nov. 30 – INTERPRETING THE CIVIL WAR
Readings:
Blight, Frederick Douglass’ Civil War (1989), ch. 4 & 8.
“Jeff Davis in Drag,” draft, 2nd ed., Crosscurrents in American Culture.

Dec. 2 – FREE AT LAST!: AFRICAN AMERICAN FREEDOM & THE CULTURE OF BLACK POLITICS & COMMUNITY
Readings:
Foner, Forever Free, 41-75.
Steven Hahn, A Nation under Our Feet (2007), 216-41; 249-64.
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 300-322.

Dec. 4 – RECONSTRUCTION: REBIRTH OR REMAKING OF A NATION?
Readings:
Heather Cox Richardson, West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War (2007), 39-77.
Foner, Forever Free, xix-xxx, 76-100, 107-49, 159-80.

Week 14:
Dec. 7 – RECONSTRUCTION AND A NEW NATIONALISM (& REVIEW OF THE COURSE)
Readings:
Foner, Forever Free, 189-238.
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 322-335.

SECOND PAPER DUE: Dec. 9.

FINAL EXAMINATION: Day/Time ________________________________