

HISTORY 2111 SUMMER 2008

SYLLABUS

PROF. HOFFER

In this course we study the history of the United States from the pre-contact period of Native American life to the Civil War. Some of our subjects will seem quaint and others will be as current as the morning news. In our short time together we will go back and forth in time, pointing out the relevance of the past to the present and the future.

I realize that the short session squeezes everything together—ups the work load, condenses the time for reading and reflection, and increases the pressure on you (and me) to perform. There is an old saying about life itself—that the work is never done, the workers are tired, the supervisor impatient, and the stakes of failure always too high. Here is my advice: take a deep breath, hold it, let it out slowly. Look around. We'll enjoy our time together and learn a lot from one another. There's plenty of time to do what we have to do.

I can be reached at pchoffer@uga.edu; at 542-2519, and after class, in LeConte 317.

You have a lot of reading. There are two textbooks. Please purchase both at the university bookstore. (Off campus bookstores sometimes sell damaged or incomplete copies). The textbook is Roark et al., The American Promise third edition, volume one, hereafter referred to as AP. (Steer clear of earlier editions; or brief or concise editions). The workbook is Hoffer and Stueck, Reading and Writing American History third edition, volume one (hereafter RW). Buy a new copy of the latter, because used books may have pages missing or mutilated, and there will be turn-in assignments from it.

The assigned readings follow the order of topics we will cover. It's a very good idea for you to do the reading before we get to the topic in class. The second part of the period, after the break, we'll discuss the day's work, do exercises from the workbook, and talk about the supplementary readings.

Grades: total points available is 100. Fifty percent (50 points) of your grade is the final exam; thirty percent (30 points) is the midterm. Both are essay exams. Twenty percent (20 points) is based on participation. For every absence you lose 1 point. In-class assignments from the workbook, turn-in homework, and your discussion in class will also count toward participation.

The university requires the following statements on the syllabus: *All academic work must meet the standards contained in A Culture of Honesty. Each student is responsible [for informing himself or herself] ...about those standards before performing any academic work. The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.*

The principal objective of the course is to teach students to think critically for themselves about the relationships between the past and the present, to learn to ask questions of the past that enable them to understand the present and mold the future, and to become attuned to both the limitations and possibilities of change. The course seeks to acquaint students with the ways in which past societies and peoples have defined the relationships between community and individual needs and goals, and between ethical norms and decision-making.

Students will be expected to: 1. read a wide range of primary and secondary sources critically. 2. polish skills in critical thinking, including the ability to recognize the difference between opinion and evidence, and the ability to evaluate--and support or refute--arguments effectively. 3. write stylistically appropriate and mature papers and essays using processes that include discovering ideas and evidence, organizing that material, and revising, editing, and polishing the finished papers.

A tentative schedule of lecture topics and reading assignments:

Week One: The first Americans and the encounter with Europe, AP, Chs, 1 and 2, and RW, pp. 1-44; the colonies. AP Chs 3, 4, and 5 and RW pp. 45-64.

Week Two: The crisis, the Revolutionary War, and the new nation. AP, Chs 6, 7, 8, and 9, and RW, 65-108.

Week Three: Life and politics in the middle period. The sections. Slavery and industry. Culture. AP, chs 10, 11, 12, 13 and RW, pp. 109-188. Midterm exam Monday of this week.

Week Four: The politics of compromise and the blundering generation. The causes of the Civil War and the war itself. AP, chs 14 and 15, and RW, pp. 189-213.

The final is on July 2nd.

Here are some tips for **reading** the books. Please try to stay ahead in the reading--it's a small class and you can't hide.

When you are reading the textbook, you don't need to know every detail, but you do need to know what the arguments are and you have to be able to supply at least one piece of appropriate evidence (one relevant fact, example, or reference) to support what you say about that argument. A good (if somewhat mechanical) way to do this is to underline the topic sentence of each paragraph (note it may not be the first sentence!) and then underline one important fact in the paragraph.

Bring your books to class, especially the worktext (RW). We'll be doing exercises in it almost every day. Make a note to ask about anything you didn't understand in the reading. What you're having trouble getting your classmates are also having trouble getting, and we can discuss those trouble spots together.

Underline, highlight, or use the margins for notes. Don't worry about selling the books

back—it's a ripoff anyhow (they'll give you a tenth of the cost then turn around and sell the used book for seventy five percent of its original cost).

On notetaking: some of you have been taught to listen rather than write in class. Forget that; it's bad advice for college. Write down all you can. Use my outlines as a framework. Abbreviate your notes. Write large and neatly, but there's no need to print. It's too slow. When I am going too fast, stop me with a question or a request that I slow down.

Participation counts for you, so don't hesitate to raise your hand. But participation is a craft. It must be constructive—helping all of us move deeper or ahead in the material. Husband your participation—give others a chance. Try to make your contributions relevant. Please observe the “golden rule of participation”—do not say about others' remarks or ideas what you would not have them say about yours. Respect others and you foster a climate of respect.