

**HISTORY 2111H FALL 2009**  
**SYLLABUS**  
**PROF. HOFFER**

This semester we will focus on people and places in America before 1865. Diversity of both was a hallmark of early American history. This diversity gave impetus to both the development of political democracy and the evolution of capitalism. But neither of these ultimate results was foreseen or even desired by the people who helped bring them about. That is but one of the many ironies of the period of history we will study.

We have no textbook, but we will do a lot of reading. We have six books I have selected to show life in different places. They also allow us to think critically about how histories are constructed and reconstructed over time. The books are Timothy Breen, Imagining the Past, Rhys Isaac, Transformation of Virginia, Alan Taylor, William Cooper's Town, John Mack Faragher, Women and Men on the Overland Trail, and Edward Ayers, In the Presence of Mine Enemies. They are all available in the University Bookstore and off campus bookstores.

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. If we deviate, you'll be informed in advance. 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.* In plain terms, feel free to discuss your work with your classmates, but do your own research, reading, and writing. Do not plagiarize from printed sources. Fully annotate your dependence on any source, in or out of copyright, and use direct quotations with proper citations rather than close paraphrase. Cite everything you use that is not common knowledge.

The History Department recommends the inclusion on all syllabuses of the following two statements:

1. 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. In line with these objectives, students will be expected to read a wide range of primary and secondary sources critically; 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; and 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.

2. The University of Georgia is committed to maintaining a fair and respectful environment for living, work and study. To that end, and in accordance with federal and state law, Board of Regents' policy, and University policy, the University prohibits any member of the faculty, staff, administration, student body, or visitors to campus, whether they be guests, patrons, independent contractors, or clients, from harassing and/or discriminating against any other member of the University community because of that person's race, sex (including sexual harassment), sexual orientation, ethnic or national origin, religion, age, disabled status, or status as a disabled veteran or veteran of the Vietnam era.

Grades are based on short (5-6 page) "think pieces" on each of the books, on the topic we will select together after we have finished with the book.

A very tentative schedule of lecture topics and reading assignments:

Week one: How is history possible. The historian and the audience. Begin Breen, Imagining the Past.

Week two: The New England town. Life course, labor, and family in early New England. Finish Breen.

Week three: Southern places. Begin Isaac, Transformation. First essay due.

Week four: Religion, people, and politics in revolutionary South. Finish Isaac.

Week five: Revolutionary interlude. How places and people remade the landscape. Taylor, William Cooper's Town, Part I. Second essay due.

Week six. Inheriting a nation. The rise and fall of William Cooper. Taylor, Part II.

Week seven. The idea of the west. The frontier thesis and the borderlands. Western land policy. Begin Faragher, Overland Trail. Third essay due.

Week eight: Many Wests. The experience of the emigrants. Finish Faragher.

Week nine: A peculiar place. The African-American antebellum South. Begin Joyner, Down by the Riverside. Fourth essay due.

Week ten. How African was America? Finish Joyner.

Week eleven. Many places, one people? Begin Ayers, Mine Enemies, Part I. Fifth essay due.

Week twelve. And the war came. Ayers, Part II

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Week thirteen: A destructive nation. Ayers, part III

Week fourteen: The terrible swift sword. Finish Ayers.

Week fifteen: People and place revisited. Sixth paper due.