
Early United States History

Dr. Seiter | 1301.002 | MW 4:05-5:30pm | Ratliff Building North 3035 | No Prerequisites



Email: TSeiter@UTTyler.edu | **Office:** CAS 130 | **Hours:** Tu 3-6pm and by appointment

This course surveys significant themes and events in United States history beginning with the Big Bang nearly fourteen billion years ago and ending with the Reconstruction period in 1877. Students will explore the development of our nation through pivotal moments such as the arrival of European settlers in North America, the formation of colonial societies, the Revolutionary War, U.S. expansion westward, and the Civil War. At the end of the semester, students will see how events before the twentieth century continue to affect our nation today. Additionally, students will learn how to locate high-quality primary and secondary sources and will also understand how historians produce their scholarship.

Learning Outcomes

- 1) Understand and reflect on how the United States came to be.
- 2) Recognize that history is far less objective than most make it seem.
- 3) Identify where to find accurate sources of information.
- 4) Think critically and creatively about a complex array of subjects and themes, including environmental change, fear mongering, Native dominance, and race.
- 5) Learn that *everything* has a history.
- 6) Become aware of what professional historians do for a living.

Central Question

In 1776, the Founding Fathers justified rebelling against the British by asserting that all people are created equal and are endowed with unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. This course asks a simple but uncomfortable question: has the United States lived up to those ideals?

Assignments

Reading Reports - 30%

- Answer questions about the assigned readings, submit your answers before class, and discuss the readings during class.
- Example: <http://tinyurl.com/rz7tz49m>.

Grading Scale

A: > 89.5
B: 79.5 - 89.4
C: 69.5 - 79.4
D: 59.5 - 69.4
F: 59.4 or below

Special Project Pitch - 10%

- Create a grading rubric for your special project and put together a compelling pitch. This can be written or video recorded.
- Full instructions: <https://tinyurl.com/3dns8h6y>

Special Project - 30%

- Create a project that connects to a subject we learned about this semester and expands upon that topic.
- Full instructions: <https://tinyurl.com/3dns8h6y>

Final Connection Exam - 30%

- Connect the class's major themes in a final essay that you can complete at home.
- Full instructions: <https://tinyurl.com/4f848ysz>

Due dates for every assignment are labeled on the course calendar below.

Extra Credit

Academic Events: Many UT Tyler departments regularly host public lectures and academic events on campus. Students may earn up to 1 point of extra credit by attending one approved event and submitting a reflective essay of at least 300 words describing their experience. Essays must be emailed to me within two weeks of the event to receive credit.

In-Class Extra Credit: Throughout the semester, there will be multiple opportunities to earn extra credit through regular class attendance and in-class activities.

Living History Journal: Take care of the journal you chose at the beginning of the semester, and on the last day of class, add information that will help the next cohort of students. Doing so will earn you 3 points on your final grade.

Class Policies

AI: UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

In rare cases, generative AI may be used in this class with prior instructor permission and appropriate attribution. If permission is not obtained and AI usage is detected, then the assignment will receive a zero, and the student will be reported to the UT Tyler Honor Council. The student who cheated may also receive an immediate "F" for the course.

Attendance: I will keep attendance, but I will not penalize you for missing class. However, the more classes you miss, the more difficult it will be to pass this course. This is especially the case because the Final Connection Exam requires you to use examples taken directly from our lectures.

Late Work: All assignments received late (without an excused absence) will receive a 10-point deduction from the total grade for every 24-hour period they are late, beginning at the due date/time. Assignments received more than five days late (without communication with the professor) will receive a grade of "zero."

Readings & Schedule

All of the required readings are freely available on Canvas.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day of Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Readings/Due Dates</u>
1/12	Monday	Class Introduction:	Subjectivity	

		Expectations & The Historian's Profession		
1/14	Wednesday	Discussion: The Power of History	Subjectivity	
1/16	Friday	<i>Homework Due</i>	Subjectivity	<i>William Arens, The Man-Eating Myth</i>
Week 2				
1/19	Monday	MLK Day	History as a Profession	[No Class]
1/21	Wednesday	Lecture: How to find accurate sources of information and how to cite properly	History as a Profession	
1/23	Friday	<i>Homework Due</i>	History as a Profession	<i>Citation Activity</i>
Week 3				
1/26	Monday	Lecture: First Peoples in the Americas and Cahokia & The Little Ice Age	Environmental History	[Census Day]
1/28	Wednesday	Lecture: Atypical Sources and Oysters	Environmental History	
1/30	Friday	<i>Homework Due</i>	Environmental History	<i>Barr, "There's No Such Thing as Prehistory"</i>
Week 4				
2/2	Monday	Lecture: Crosby's <i>Ecological Imperialism</i> , The Columbian Exchange, <i>Guns, Germs, and Steel</i> , and Tenochtitlan	First Encounters	
2/4	Wednesday	Lecture: First Encounters and the ambiguity of history & Cabeza de Vaca	First Encounters	
2/6	Friday	<i>Homework Due</i>	First Encounters	<i>Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, La Relación</i> <i>Columbian Exchange Extra Credit</i>
Week 5				
2/9	Monday	Lecture: Powhatan and Jamestown	Survival	
2/11	Wednesday	Lecture: Pocahontas, An Accurate History & Matoaka Goes to London	Survival	

				"Does Disney's Pocahontas Do More Harm Than Good?"
				"Why One Cannot Ignore Pocahontas"
				"What Pocahontas Tells Us About Disney, for Better and Worse"
2/13	Friday	Homework Due	Survival	<i>Disney's Pocahontas</i>

Week 6

2/16	Monday	Lecture: French Enter Texas and the La Salle Children	Native Dominance	
2/18	Wednesday	Lecture: Indigeneity & Life in Spanish Texas	Native Dominance	
2/20	Friday	Homework Due	Native Dominance	<i>The Talon Children Interrogation</i>

Week 7

2/23	Monday	Lecture: The White Lion and Enslavement in Early America	Enslavement	
2/25	Wednesday	Lecture and Activity: Metacomet's War and Bacon's Rebellion & The Middle Passage and Envisioning Tight Packing and Legacies of Enslavement	Enslavement	
2/27	Friday	Homework Due	Enslavement	<i>Leslie M. Harris, "I Helped Fact-Check the 1619 Project. The Times Ignored Me."</i>

Week 8

3/2	Monday	Lecture: The Common Cause: The Enslaved and Indians	Common Cause	
3/4	Wednesday	Lecture: George Washington and Surveying and Westward Expansion	Common Cause	
3/6	Friday	<i>Special Project Pitch Due</i>	Common Cause	<i>Special Project Pitch Due (10%)</i>

Week 9

3/9	Monday	[No Class]	Rest & Relaxation	
3/11	Wednesday	[No Class]	Rest & Relaxation	

3/13	Friday	[No Class]	Rest & Relaxation	Spring Break
Week 10				
		Lecture: A Coup or a Legitimate Convention?		
3/16	Monday		Foundations	
3/18	Wednesday	Lecture: A Brilliant Solution & The Electoral College and Gerrymandering	Foundations	
3/20	Friday	<i>Homework Due</i>	Foundations	<i>Evidence that you've been working on the Special Project</i>
Week 11				
		Lecture: The Illuminati, the Whiskey Rebellion, the Revolution of 1800, The Alien Enemies Act, and the Quasi-War.		
3/23	Monday		A New Nation	
3/25	Wednesday	Lecture: King Cotton and why we went to war in 1812	A New Nation	
3/27	Friday	<i>Homework Due</i>	A New Nation	<i>Evidence that you've been working on the Special Project</i>
Week 12				
		Lecture: The Mexican Revolution Comes to Texas		
3/30	Monday		Westward Expansion	
4/1	Wednesday	Lecture: Sister Republics and the Texas Revolution & Why did Texas Revolt	Westward Expansion	
4/3	Friday	<i>Homework Due</i>	Westward Expansion	<i>Evidence that you've been working on the Special Project</i>
Week 13				
		Lecture: The Attempted Annihilation of the Karankawa Peoples		
4/6	Monday		U.S. Aggression	
4/8	Wednesday	Lecture: A Wicked War	U.S. Aggression	
4/10	Friday	<i>Homework Due</i>	U.S. Aggression	<i>Evidence that you've been working on the Special Project</i>

Week 14				
4/13	Monday	Lecture: Seneca Falls Convention, Gold Rush,	Gender, Enslavement, and Westward Expansion	
4/15	Wednesday	Lecture: Compromise of 1850, Uncle Tom's Cabin, and a history of the Republican Party	Gender, Enslavement, and Westward Expansion	
4/17	Friday	<i>Homework Due</i>	Gender, Enslavement, and Westward Expansion	<i>Evidence that you've been working on the Special Project</i>
Week 15				
4/20	Monday	Lecture: Enslavement? States Rights? A Clear Answer.	The Civil War	
4/22	Wednesday	Lecture: Reconstruction, a Missed Opportunity.	The Civil War	
4/24	Friday	In-Class Work: Anti-Procrastination	The Civil War	<i>Special Project Due (30%)</i>
Week 16				
4/29	Wednesday	Final Exam and Final Day (2:45 p.m.- 4:45 p.m)	Finals	<i>Living History Journal (5%)</i> <i>Final Connection Exam Due at Midnight (15%)</i>

The class schedule is subject to change throughout the semester.

Other Syllabus Statements

Academic Honesty (and Dishonesty): Violations of the UT Tyler Honor Code will be acted upon in accordance with the policies and procedures outlined in the Student Handbook. Any act of academic dishonesty (plagiarism or cheating) will result in an immediate grade of zero on the assignment and be reported to the UT Tyler Honor Council. The student who cheated may also receive an immediate "F" for the course.

Disability Accommodations: Students who need academic accommodations for a disability must first register with the UT Tyler Office of Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR). Students can visit <https://www.uttyler.edu/academics/success-services/disability-services/> to begin the process. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, but rather require advance notice in order to implement.

Sexual Harassment: All forms of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking, are violations of UT Tyler's Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and may also violate Texas law. Students who wish to file a complaint or to receive more information about the grievance process may contact Blake Bumbard, UT Tyler's Title IX Coordinator, at bbumbard@uttyler.edu or 903.565.5760. Please note that faculty and staff are mandatory reporters. If students notify faculty or staff of sexual harassment, they must report it to the Title IX Coordinator.

Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence.

Medical-Related Absences: To ensure academic continuity and avoid any course penalties, students should follow procedures described by their instructors in order to be provided with appropriate modifications to assignments, deadlines, and exams.

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities: Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled university extracurricular activity will be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments that were missed as a result of their participation. However, it is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements for make-up work with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examinations or other missed assignments.

Mental Health Resources: On-Call and Ongoing Counseling Services: Throughout the academic year, students may encounter different stressors or go through life experiences that impact their mental health and academic performance. Students who are in distress or have concerns about their mental health can schedule a same-day or next-day appointment to speak with a counselor by calling Counseling Services. Counselors are available at any time, day or night for students in crisis at this number: 903.566.7254.

Additionally, for any kind of crisis, you can reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline/Crisis Text Line by calling or texting 988. You can also reach Trans Lifeline at 877.565.8860.