



Department of History

HTST 535

Topics in American History: Democracy in the early U.S. Republic, 1790s-1860s.
Winter 2020

Instructor: Dr. Towers

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00-12:30

Class Time: Tuesdays 3:30-6:15

Location: SS 639

Course Description: Description. The United States of America began the 19th century as one of the world's only democratic republics. It ended the 1860s having gone through a destructive civil war that cast doubt on the viability of the democratic republic as a model for the future of modern government. This course studies the early decades of American democracy to better understand how popular government worked and the relationship between the early U.S. model of popular self government and the broader world of public opinion that went beyond the formal institutions of legislatures, courts, and elections.

Course Outcomes:

- * Be able to identify the major terms and themes in the history of U.S. democracy and their change over time.
- * Be able to connect themes in U.S. political history with other historical processes such as slavery and emancipation; industrialization; changing gender norms; and civil and foreign wars.
- * Be able to assess secondary sources to identify argument, structure, evidence, and contribution to their field.
- * Demonstrate improved critical thinking and analytical skills, both in regards to verbal discussion and research-based writing.

Required Text: There is no required textbook for this course.

Recommended Text (optional): Eric Foner, et. al, *Give Me Liberty: An American History*. Vols, 1 and 2. 6th ed. New York: Norton, 2019.

Evaluation:		

Assessment Method	Description	Weight
Class Participation	Each week students are expected to participate in seminar discussions of the assigned reading. Good participation consists of consistent, thoughtful comments and questions that relate to the topics of the course, especially the reading assigned for that meeting. In addition, regular attendance is essential for class participation. As many weeks as possible we will look at primary sources in class that match the assigned reading.	20% Weekly
Weekly reading analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length: 500-750 words, double-spaced and word processed. • These assignments are due at the beginning of the class. • The analysis should explain the main theme of the reading and how the author(s) interpret the topic, including the thesis of the particular text and the evidence used to prove it. 	20%, Weekly, except Jan. 14, Feb. 25, Apr. 7 and Apr. 14.
Research paper, first draft	<p>Length: minimum of 1,200 words, maximum 2,000 (normally comes out to 4-8 word-processed, double spaced pages). The first draft of the research paper should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify a research question • explain its methods for answering that question • discuss the sources that will be used for its research 	20% Feb. 25
Research presentation	<p>On either April 7 or April 14, each student will present the preliminary findings of his or her research paper to the class. The presentation should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last approximately 10 minutes. • Tell the class about your topic, what you found about it, what you think it means, and how your findings relate to main themes of the course. • Be well organized so that the information is conveyed effectively and coherently. 	10%
Research paper, final draft	<p>Length: minimum of 3500 words, maximum 5,000 (normally comes out to 14-20 word-processed, double spaced pages). The final should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify a research question that relates to a major themes in the history of nineteenth-century U.S. democracy, and discusses the relevance of this research for what other scholars have already done. • Advance a clear thesis, or main answer, to that research question • Support that thesis with a sustained investigation of primary and secondary sources. • Be well written, coherent, and effectively organized. 	30

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Class schedule:

Date	Topic & Reading	Assignments/Due Dates
Jan 14	Topic: Defining democracy, historicizing American democracy. Reading: The Declaration of Independence (1776) and selections from the U.S. Constitution (1787)	
Jan 21	Topic: Early elections. Reading: Jeffrey Pasley, "Taking the Electoral College to School," ch. 8 of <i>The First Presidential Contest: 1796 and the Founding of American Democracy</i> (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2013), 307-47.	Reading analysis
Jan 28	Topic: Civil Society. Reading: John L. Brooke, "Consent, Civil Society, and the Public Sphere in the Age of Revolution and the Early Republic," in Jeffrey L. Paisley and Andrew W. Robertson, and David Waldstreicher, eds., <i>Beyond the Founders: New Approaches in American Political History</i> (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 207-250.	Reading analysis
Feb 4	Topic: Politics for the disenfranchised Reading: Susan Zaeske, <i>Signatures of Citizenship: Petitioning, Antislavery, and Women's Political Identity</i> (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), pp. 1-43.	Reading analysis
Feb 11	Topic: Voting Reading: Richard F. Benschel, <i>Structure and Practice of</i>	Reading analysis

	Elections,” ch. 2 of <i>The American Ballot Box in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: Law, Identity and the Polling Place</i> (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 26-85.	
Feb 18	No Class – Reading Week	
Feb 25	Topic Artifacts of democracy. We will examine an assortment of 19 th century ballots, campaign meeting notices, petitions, and other tools for mobilizing voters. No assigned reading.	First draft of research paper due. No reading analysis
Mar 3	Topic: Voters Reading: Matthew T. Pietryka and Donald A. DeBats, “It’s Not Just What You Have, but Who You Know: Networks, Social Proximity to Elites, and Voting in State and Local Elections,” <i>American Political Science Review</i> 111, no. 2 (2017), 360–378.	Reading analysis
Mar 10	Topic: Statesmen and friends, Reading: Rachel Shelden, “Messmates' Union: Friendship, Politics, and Living Arrangements in the Capital City, 1845-1861,” <i>The Journal of the Civil War Era</i> 1, no. 4 (2011): 453-480	Reading analysis
Mar 17	Topic: The politics of the enslaved. Reading: Steven Hahn, “Of Chains and Threads,” ch. 1 of <i>A Nation Under Our Feet; Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration</i> (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 13-61.	Reading analysis
Mar 24	Topic: Law and the courts. Reading: Laura Edwards, “The Legal World of Elizabeth Bagby’s Commonplace Book:	Reading analysis

	Federalism, Women, and Governance,” <i>Journal of the Civil War Era</i> 9, no. 4 (Dec. 2019), 504-523.	
Mar 31	Topic: Institutions: Reading: William J. Novak, “The Myth of the Weak American State,” <i>The American Historical Review</i> , 113, no. 3 (2008), 752-772.	Reading analysis
Apr 7		Research presentations
Apr 14		Research presentations

Final Exam to be scheduled by registrar (optional)

Classroom Policies (optional):

Departmental Grading System:

The following percentage-to-letter grade conversion scheme is used in all Canadian Studies, History, and Latin American Studies courses, except for HTST 200.

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Description
90-100	A+	4.00	Outstanding performance
85-89	A	4.00	Excellent performance
80-84	A-	3.70	Approaching excellent performance
77-79	B+	3.30	Exceeding good performance
73-76	B	3.00	Good performance
70-72	B-	2.70	Approaching good performance
67-69	C+	2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance
63-66	C	2.00	Satisfactory performance
60-62	C-	1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance.
56-59	D+	1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject
50-55	D	1.00	Minimal Pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.

Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Description
0-49	F	0	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.

Program Advising and Student Information Resources:

- For program advising in the Faculty of Arts, contact the Arts Students Centre (ASC) in SS 102, call 403-220-3580, email artsads@ucalgary.ca, or book an appointment with an ASC advisor at <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/current-students/undergraduate>.
- For further information on academic advising and degree planning for arts students, see <https://arts.ucalgary.ca/current-students/undergraduate/academic-advising>.
- For registration issues, paying fees, and assistance with MyUofC, contact Enrolment Services in MacKimmie Tower Room 116, call 403-210-ROCK (7625), or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/>.
- **Attention history majors:** History 300 is a required course for all history majors. You should normally take it in your second year.
- Registration Changes and Exemption Requests: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/appeals>

Writing:

All written assignments and written exam responses are assessed partly on writing skills. Writing skills include surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) and general clarity and organization. Research papers must be properly documented according to the format described in the History Student's Handbook.

D2L: Throughout the course, important material such as lecture outlines and study guides will be regularly posted on D2L. Students are advised to check this regularly.

Red Box Policy:

If your instructor requires paper copies of an essay and/or assignment, and the essay/assignment can be handed in outside of class, you can drop them in the red box located outside of the History Department office (Social Sciences, Room 656). Please include the following information on your assignment: 1) **course name and number**, 2) **instructor**, 3) **your name**, and 4) **your student number**. Assignments received after 4:00 p.m. are date stamped the next business day. We do not time stamp any papers. Please do not bring your paper into the office to be stamped. The box is emptied at 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism occurs when one submits or presents one's work in a course, or ideas and/or passages in a written piece of work, as if it were one's own work done expressly for that particular course, when, in fact, it is not. Please see [The History Student's Handbook](#).

Plagiarism may take several forms:

- Failing to cite sources properly
- Submitting borrowed, purchased, and/or ghostwritten papers

- Submitting one's own work for more than one course without the permission of the instructor(s) involved
- Extensive paraphrasing of one or a few sources, even when referenced properly, unless the essay is a critical analysis of those works

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence, and written work that appears to contain plagiarized passages will not be graded. All such work will be reported to the Faculty of Art's associate deans of students who will apply the penalties specified in the *University of Calgary Calendar*, [Section K](#).

Academic Accommodations:

The student accommodation policy can be found at: ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.

Students needing an accommodation because of a disability or medical condition should contact Student Accessibility Services (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/access/>) in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.

Students needing an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should contact, preferably in writing, the course instructor.

Copyright:

The University of Calgary has opted out of the Access Copyright Interim Tariff proposed by the Copyright Board. Therefore, instructors in all University of Calgary courses will strictly adhere to Copyright Act regulations and the educational exceptions permitted by the Act for both print and digital course material. No copyrighted material may be placed on course D2L or web sites without the prior permission of the copyright holders. In some cases, this may mean that instructors will require you to purchase a print course pack from the University of Calgary bookstore or consult books on reserve at the library. For more information on the University of Calgary's copyright policy, see <http://library.ucalgary.ca/copyright>.

Other Useful Information:

- Department Twitter @ucalgaryhist

Please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information on:

- Wellness and Mental Health
- Student Success
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk

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