

Virginia Western Community College

HIS 121

United States History I

Prerequisites

None

Course Description

Surveys United States history from its beginning to the present. Part I of II.

This course introduces students to American history from pre-history through the Civil War era. Topics include: the migrations to the Americas, the colonial and revolutionary periods, the development of the Republic and the Civil War. Students will analyze significant political, socioeconomic, and cultural developments in early American history. Native Americans, minorities, and women are studied in detail.

Students will be introduced to useful skills for historical analysis and interpretation. Students will strengthen skills in interdisciplinary studies.

Semester Credits: 3

Lecture Hours: 3

Required Materials

1. Textbook
2. Internet access
3. Blackboard

Textbook:

Foner, Eric. Give Me Liberty!: An American History (Brief Fifth Edition). New York: W.W. Norton, 2012.
ISBN: 978-0-393-61414-5

Other Required Materials:

Other reading requirements vary by instructor.

Course Outcomes

At the completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Explore history as an academic discipline.
- Discuss the migration and civilization of the Native American people who first inhabited the Western Hemisphere.
- Examine the economic, political, and religious forces leading to European exploration and colonization of the Americas.
- Examine the social, political, economic, and religious evolution of the thirteen English colonies.
- Analyze the events leading up to the American Revolution and the reasons why the colonists sought independence.
- Compare and contrast the economic and political principles of the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution.
- Examine the social, political, and economic characteristics of the New Republic.
- Discuss the development of American foreign policy.
- Describe western expansion and what this meant to America's diverse people.
- Evaluate the American Industrial Revolution.
- Describe the role of women, the family, and social reforms in antebellum America.
- Analyze the slave system in antebellum America.

- Discuss the economic, social, political and military causes, events, and ramifications of the Civil War, leading to Reconstruction.

Topical Description

1	Pre-History: Native American culture.
2	Age of Exploration – 15th and 16th centuries: European contact with the Americas, and motives and methods for colonization.
3	The rise of Colonial America – 17th century: the Chesapeake, New England and the middle colonies.
4	Emerging American culture and society – 1600-1776: British colonial rule, colonial society (planters, merchants, yeomen, immigrants, indentured servants, and slaves).
5	The road to the American Revolution – 1756-1776: causes, events, outcomes.
6	Creating and establishing a nation – 1789-1800: developing a new republic, political institutions, states, confederation, and constitution. The place for women, Native Americans and slaves in the new nation.
7	A Republican America – 1815 – 1824: War of 1812, Louisiana Purchase, role of the Supreme Court, Monroe Doctrine, and the Missouri Compromise.
8	A Market Revolution – 1815 – 1840: westward expansion, agricultural boom, transportation revolution, industrialization, and social consequences of wealth and new societal relationships.
9	Politics, religion, and reform – responses to the Market Revolution – 1824 - 1848: Jacksonian Democracy, evangelism, “benevolent” society and the “women’s sphere” (search for equality and identity in the Republic.
10	An American Culture (Homegrown) – 1840-1860: America’s quest for progress (technology and innovativeness), quality of life (housing, water, public health and food), and popular pastimes and American art and literature.
11	A Southern nation – 1800-1860: the cotton economy, the plantation system, white society (planters and yeomen), and black southerners (family, culture, and community without freedom).
12	Immigration, sectional antagonism, territorial acquisitions 1840-1848: immigration and nativism, manifest destiny, Mexican War, and political feuds.

13	The failure of compromise – 1850-1861: Compromise of 1850, <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> , the Fugitive Slave Act, Kansas and Nebraska (popular sovereignty, Lecompton, John Brown) and Dred Scott.
14	Civil War – 1861-1865: mobilization, federal versus states rights, emancipation for black Americans, and total war.
15	The Crises of Reconstruction – 1865-1877: presidential versus congressional power, role of black Americans, and election of 1877.

Notes to Instructors

None