

United States History to 1877



DATE/TIME: **TR 11AM-12:15PM**
 PROFESSOR: **DR. WILLIAMSON**

ROOM: **LH 300**
 EMAIL: savannah.williamson@sulross.edu

Where and when to find Dr. Williamson—Office Hours & Locations

Mondays	10am-12pm, <i>or by appointment</i>	UC 212
Tuesdays	12:30-2pm	LH 211
Wednesdays	10am-12pm, <i>or by appointment</i>	UC 212
Thursdays	12:30-2pm	LH 211
Fridays	<i>Available by appointment</i>	

In this course, we are going to disprove the idea that learning history is just: read, regurgitate, repeat. The world of education is changing rapidly, and technology allows us to experiment in ways previously impossible, and therefore to emphasize some additional aspects of an experience doing history.

First: in college level history, the impetus is on you, the student, to be responsible for content. High school should have taught you at least how to read a textbook and memorize information. In college, the idea is that you take this to the next level.

Second: With the first point established, college history courses are designed to take your thinking to the next level. You are supposed to learn about history thematically, and to be able to express change over time. It’s not enough to know that an event happened, or that a person lived and did something; you should be able to explain WHY that event or person was important, or symbolic of an era, and how what that event or person represented or did to shape the world afterwards. What are the legacies? What are the controversies? What are the paradoxes?

Third: An education in history should not only teach you to WRITE but should also teach you how to ASK EFFECTIVE QUESTIONS both of sources from the past and of the arguments made about them. This is called critical thinking and, well, it’s basically why you’re here in college, and why we ground higher education in the liberal arts.

That is why this semester, you will vote for and select one thematic development, based on a contemporary problem, in American history to study.

United States History to 1877**Thematic Choices: TBD**

Unit I

Unit II

Unit III

Unit IV

Part I

In the first part of the semester, we will choose a focus theme for the course by popular vote. We will investigate a historical problem related to the theme inspired by recent events, and then “gut” the textbook to build a body of resources to help us better understand the historical evolution of the theme we will be studying. We will discuss not only the practice and methods necessary for successful historical inquiry, but also the idea of chronology, creating our own collection of knowledge to further our inquiry.

Part II

In the second part of the semester, we will conduct in-depth analysis of selected primary sources related to the theme we choose. These sources will help students hone their historical thinking skills, to ask useful questions and to construct arguments. Students will keep both an individual response journal on the course wiki, as well as complete several group writing projects. After the primary sources, we will then read some secondary sources to examine the different arguments that historians have made about events in the past.

Part III

Students will employ their now-well developed historical skills to write a guided research paper, which will include a peer edit and review.

Course Description:

This class surveys the major social, cultural, and political developments occurring from the exploration of North America to the aftermath of the Civil War. As you will see, the American past is not a simple story of progress. American history is instead populated by both heroes and villains, and often seems to have as many moments of glory as it does instances of injustice. Americans have often disagreed mightily and often violently over an array of important issues tied to the nation’s history. This is what makes the past so fascinating and important to recall. In addition to these sweeping concerns, we will pay special attention to the many ways in which a diverse cast of seemingly ordinary women and men participated in the founding and changing fortunes of the American Republic. As we are covering a vast historical terrain, our coverage of the American past is selective rather than comprehensive. This course satisfies Texas state requirements for all graduates.

Instruction in the Core Objectives (critical thinking, communication, teamwork, and social responsibility) will be given and reinforced throughout the semester.

Student Learning Outcomes:

HIST 1301 is part of the university’s Core Curriculum and as such strives towards both the general goals of the core and the specific objectives for classes designated for inclusion in the American History Foundational Component Area as defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. HIST 1301 includes instruction in the interaction among individuals,

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communities, states, the nation, and the world, considering how these interactions have contributed to the development of the United States and its global role.

In addition to surveying the important themes of American history from roughly 1492 to 1877, this course will introduce you to the practice of history. We will focus on critically interpreting both primary sources (documents from the period being studied) and secondary sources (historians' analyses of a period or event). Above all, you will learn that history is an analytical discipline. While facts and dates are indeed important, alone they do not allow us to understand the past in a meaningful fashion. Among other things, history is the art of mustering evidence to make an argument or arguments about the past in as compelling a manner as possible. This semester you will be joining an ongoing and constantly evolving debate about American history. If you engage the course material in a meaningful way, this class will help you to read more carefully, think more critically, and write more eloquently.

Course Objectives

- The student will think critically, which includes the ability to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information about this period of history.
- The student will communicate effectively by developing and expressing ideas through written and visual communication.
- The student will gain intercultural competence, a knowledge of civic responsibility, and an awareness of how humans in the past have engaged effectively in regional, national, and global communities.
- The student will understand the role that personal responsibility has played throughout history and gain the ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to making ethical decisions.
- The student will improve reading comprehension, argumentative and research writing, and interpersonal communication.

Course Content Note

At times this semester we will be discussing historical events that may be disturbing, even traumatizing, to some students. If you suspect that specific material is likely to be emotionally challenging for you, I'd be happy to discuss any concerns you may have before the subject comes up in class. Likewise, if you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to course material with the class or with me individually afterwards, I welcome such discussions as an appropriate part of our classwork.

If you ever feel the need to step outside during a class discussion you may always do so without academic penalty. You will, however, be responsible for any material you miss. If you do leave the room for a significant time, please arrange to get notes from another student or see me individually to discuss the situation.

Required Course Readings

- Textbook: <http://www.americanyawp.com> (free online)

Course Grading

A 90-100% B 80-89% C 70-79% D 60-69% F 59% or lower

United States History to 1877**Assignments & Requirements**

1. *Attendance*: Students are required to attend class regularly. Attendance does not simply mean occupying a seat but active listening, note-taking, preparation, and participation. If you are not going to attend class, please drop this course as soon as possible.
 - NOTE: If you experience symptoms of covid-19 or have known exposure to the virus, you are required to take personal responsibility and act accordingly. To accommodate students in such a position, a link to lecture recordings and/or live Zoom link to the course will be provided.
2. *Discussion & Participation* (25%): Most weeks, we will spend a portion of a class period working, usually collaboratively, on an exercise or project focused on either “doing history” or “different ways of seeing the past.” Students are expected to read the assigned materials before the start of class and contribute to discussions of course materials.
 - Students will be assigned to official groups for the duration of the semester and will work together to complete group assignments. Individuals who do not contribute equitably to their groups will not receive full credit for assignments and may be required to work alone.
3. *Two Written Responses* (10% each, 20% of the semester grade): Prompts and guidelines will be posted on Bb.
4. *Group Presentation* (10%): *Hamilton: An American Musical* activity. Prompts and guidelines will be posted on Bb.
5. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (10%): Group assignment and guidelines will be posted on Bb.
6. *Midterm Exam* (10%): Students must be prepared to answer short and long essay prompts and questions.
7. *“Doing” History Project* (25%): To measure the success of student acquisition of these mandated skills, one assignment during the semester will require critical analysis of an historical event in United States history from the period before 1877.
 - *Final Essay* (15%): Each student will be provided a selection of primary and/or secondary sources to interpret and evaluate, place in historical context, and utilize to construct an analytical essay. The essay will require that students think critically about the sources, examine how individual choices and decisions influenced the course of history, and consider the ways in which people engage with regional, national, or global communities.
 - *Group Presentation* (10%): In their groups, students must use the information from class and work together to create a short film, 5-7 minutes in length, to link course materials and teach that topic to the course. Completion of this assignment is an important component in the successful completion of this course. Further instructions will be provided at the appropriate time in the semester. Each group must also give feedback on each person’s contributions to the project and each person’s role in the project presentation.

Primary Learning Outcomes:

1. The student will be able to develop an informed, critical, and articulate approach to the study of history.

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2. The student will be able to demonstrate knowledge of historical events, movements, major turning points, and personalities of the past.
3. The student will be able to demonstrate an ability to identify and relate the role that historical interpretation plays in assessments of the past.
4. The student will be able to write effectively, logically, and persuasively about topics in history.
5. The student will improve reading comprehension, argumentative and research writing, and interpersonal communication skills.

THE 5 C'S OF HISTORICAL REASONING

1. **Change and Continuity:** Historians debate what has changed over time and what has remained the same. Change can be a dramatic pivot or a slow shift.
2. **Causation:** Historians debate the causes of historical events. It would be more accurate to say that we often discuss about causality, sometimes passionately. Few events have only one cause (monocausal), so we debate with one another about which cause should be considered the most important.
3. **Context:** Historians insist that the past must be understood on its own terms. Any historical event, person, idea must be placed in the context of its historical era to be interpreted. The historian's goal is to discover how people in the past understood their own lives, which is often quite different from how we may react to their situation.
4. **Contingency and Connections:** Historians are aware that events happen for a variety of reasons, which are often interconnected. Change one factor, and the event might not have happened at all. This idea helps us to remember that historical events are not inevitable.
5. **Complexity:** Historical reasoning is not about memorizing dates and names. It is about making sense of the messiness of the past, in all its complexity. That often means recognizing that different historical groups experienced events in different ways.

Policies

A Climate of Mutual Respect.

Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still, we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

Attendance.

Students must arrive on time and stay for the entire class period. If you must arrive late or leave early for some extraordinary reason (natural disaster, medical emergency, the joyous arrival of a

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child, and so on), let the professor know in advance and be as quiet as possible in entering or exiting the class.

Classroom Demeanor.

- Students should not engage in any behavior that disrupts class: talking during the lectures, passing notes, reading materials unrelated to the course, and the like. Persistent disruptive behavior will result in a failure for the course. The professor also reserves the right to drop disruptive students from the class.
- Be respectful of your classmates and the course instructor. This means that **ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES MUST BE SILENT DURING CLASS**. Do not under any condition text message on your phones and only use your computers for taking notes.
- Watching videos, playing video games, surfing the internet, emailing, Facebooking and similar behaviors disrupt the class and will not be tolerated. Students who violate the computer policy will not be allowed to use their computers in the future.
- Students **are not** allowed to record or distribute lectures, course materials, or use any kind of electronic recording equipment without the professor's permission. This includes audio and video recordings, as well as photographs of slides and visual aids.

Grading.

While I am always happy to discuss ways to improve your writing and performance on exams, I am not in the business of haggling over grades. Grades in this class are the product of careful deliberation and are not negotiable. If you find that the instructor—who is human—made a mathematical error, please bring the matter to my attention during office hours.

Late Work.

All exams and course work will **only** be accepted on the due dates in the class calendar. In the case of extraordinary medical or personal circumstances, you must contact the instructor **before** the due date of the assignment or exam. If you miss a class for extraordinary circumstances, you must submit appropriate paperwork--a doctor's note, obituary, a bill for a tow truck, and the like.

Academic Integrity.

The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of their classroom. The University may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. "Cheating" includes:

1. Copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files, data listings, and/or programs, or allowing another student to copy from same.
2. Using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test.
3. Collaborating, without authorization, with another person during an examination or in preparing academic work.

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4. Knowingly, and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying, or possessing, in whole or in part, the contents of a non-administered test.
5. Substituting for another student; permitting any other person, or otherwise assisting any other person to substitute for oneself or for another student in the taking of an examination or test or the preparation of academic work to be submitted for academic credit.
6. Bribing another person to obtain a non-administered test or information about a non-administered test.
7. Purchasing, or otherwise acquiring and submitting as one's own work any research paper or other writing assignment prepared by an individual or firm. This section does not apply to the typing of a rough and/or final version of an assignment by a professional typist.
8. "Plagiarism" means the appropriation and the unacknowledged incorporation of another's work or idea in one's own written work offered for credit.
9. "Collusion" means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit.
10. "Abuse of resource materials" means the mutilation, destruction, concealment, theft or alteration of materials provided to assist students in the mastery of course materials.
11. "Academic work" means the preparation of an essay, dissertation, thesis, report, problem, assignment, or other project that the student submits as a course requirement or for a grade.
12. "Falsification of Data" means the representation, claim, or use of research, data, statistics, records, files, results, or information that is falsified, fabricated, fraudulently altered, or otherwise misappropriated or misrepresented.



Please read the complete policy at

http://www.sulross.edu/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/users/docs/stulife/student_conduct_discipline.pdf

Children in the Classroom

The policy described here is thus, a reflection of my own beliefs and commitments to student, staff, and faculty parents.

1. All exclusively nursing/breastfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as is necessary to support the nursing/breastfeeding relationship. Because not all nursing parents can pump

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sufficient milk, and not all babies will take a bottle reliably, I never want students to feel like they have to choose between feeding their baby and continuing their education. You and your nursing baby are welcome in class anytime.

2. For older children and babies, I understand that minor illnesses and unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of having to choose between missing class to stay home with a child and leaving him or her with someone you or the child does not feel comfortable with. While this is not meant to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable.
3. I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting status.
4. In all cases where babies and children come to class, I ask that you sit close to the door so that if your little one needs special attention and is disrupting learning for other students, you may step outside until their need has been met. Non-parents in the class, please reserve seats near the door for your parenting classmates.
5. Finally, I understand that often the largest barrier to completing your coursework once you become a parent is the tiredness many parents feel in the evening once children have *finally* gone to sleep. The struggles of balancing school, childcare and often another job are exhausting! I hope that you will feel comfortable disclosing your student-parent status to me. This is the first step in my being able to accommodate any special needs that arise. While I maintain the same high expectations for all student in my classes regardless of parenting status, I am happy to problem solve with you in a way that makes you feel supported as you strive for school-parenting balance.
6. Don't forget to check out the SRSU Lactation Room in Room 205 of Lawrence Hall!

Thank you for the diversity you bring to our classroom!

University Programs and Services

SRSU Library Services

The Sul Ross Library offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu. Off-campus access requires your Lobo ID and password. Check out materials using your photo ID. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or phone (432-837-8123).

Learning Strategies, Styles, and Centers

- **Academic Success Center.** 1st Floor Library, offers tutoring for many subjects, holds numerous workshops on developing better notetaking, reading, and study skills as well as assisting students with writing and test taking strategies.
- **Tutoring.** The University offers tutoring for many subjects, holds numerous workshops on developing better notetaking, reading, and study skills as well as assisting students with writing and test taking strategies through the **Academic Center for Excellence (ACE)**. Location: FH 214. Web: <http://www.sulross.edu/academic-center-excellence>

Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA). Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide

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reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services each semester for each class. *Students seeking accessibility services must contact:*

Mary Schwartz Grisham, M.Ed., LPC
SRSU Accessibility Services Coordinator

Telephone: 432-837-8203

Location: Ferguson Hall 112

Mailing Address: P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832

Counseling and Psychological Services. Provides counseling services and offers other services to students.

Location: Ferguson Hall 112

Hours: M-F 8am-12pm and 1pm-5pm

Phone: (432) 837-8203

Web: <http://www.sulross.edu/section/2408/counseling-accessibility-services>

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Connecting with Students for Success

As a part of a research study, I am committed in this course to the following:

I will know your name	I will provide user-friendly, timely feedback on your assignments	I will hold high standards and support you to achieve them	I will hold an individual meeting with each student during the semester
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Tentative Course Schedule

1) Readings and assignments must be **completed** before you come to class on the date of the assignment. 2) Discussion readings need to be carefully read before class. 3) If you do not come to class prepared for and ready to participate in the discussion, you may be asked to leave the class and will receive neither attendance nor participation credit for the day.

Week 1 (August 23, 25): *Introductions*

Course Introductions: What IS history? How do we frame and determine that history?

Week 2 (August 30, September 01): *Pre-Columbian History and the Columbian Exchange*

Week 3 (September 06, 08):

Week 4 (September 13, 15):

Week 5 (September 20, 22):

Week 6: (September 27, 29):

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Week 7 (October 04, 06):

Week 8 (October 11, 13):

Thursday: MIDTERM EXAM

Week 9 (October 18, 20):

Week 10 (October 25, 27):

Week 11 November (01, 03):

Week 12 (November 08, 10):

Week 13 (November 15, 17):

Week 14 (November 22, 24): *Research & Writing Days—NO CLASS, HAPPY THANKSGIVING!*

Week 15 (November 29, December 01): *“Doing History” research, writing, & group work—NO CLASS*

Week 16: FINAL EXAM Monday, December 5th, 10:15am-12:15pm

United States History to 1877**TEXAS Domain Competency 020 History:**

The teacher understands and applies knowledge of significant historical events and developments. These actions will be assessed through multiple historical interpretations and ideas and relationships between the past, the present and the future as defined by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The beginning teacher:

- A. Demonstrates an understanding of historical points of reference in the history of Texas, the United States, and the world.
- B. Analyzes how individuals, events, and issues shaped the history of Texas, the United States, and the world.
- C. Demonstrates an understanding of similarities and differences among Native American groups in Texas, the United States, and the Western hemisphere before European colonization.
- D. Demonstrates an understanding of the causes and effects of European exploration and colonization of Texas, the United States, and the Western Hemisphere.
- E. Analyzes the influence of various factors (e.g., geographic contexts, processes of spatial exchange, science, and technology) on the development of societies.
- F. Demonstrates an understanding of basic concepts of culture and the processes of cultural adaptation, diffusion, and exchange.
- G. Applies knowledge and analyzes the effects of scientific, mathematical, and technological innovations on political, economic, social, and environmental developments as they relate to daily life in Texas, the United States, and the world.

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- H. Demonstrates an understanding of historical information and ideas in relation to other disciplines.
- I. Demonstrates an understanding of how to formulate historical research questions and use appropriate procedures to reach supportable judgments and conclusion in the social sciences.
- J. Demonstrates an understanding of historical research and knows how historians locate, gather, organize, analyze, and report information by using standard research methodologies.
- K. Knows the characteristics and uses of primary and secondary sources used for historical research (e.g., databases, maps, photographs, media services, the Internet, biographies, interviews, questionnaires, artifacts), analyzes historical information from primary and secondary sources and understands and evaluates information in relation to bias, propaganda, point of view and frame of reference.
- L. Applies and evaluates the use of problem-solving processes, gathering of information, listing, and considering options, considering advantages and disadvantages, choosing and implementing solutions and assessing the effectiveness of solutions.
- M. Applies and evaluates the use of decision-making processes to identify situations that require decisions by gathering information, identifying options, predicting consequences, and taking action to implement the decisions.
- N. Communicates and interprets historical information in written, oral and visual forms and translates information from one medium to another (e.g., written to visual, statistical to written or visual).
- O. Analyzes historical information by categorizing, comparing and contrasting, making generalizations, and predictions and drawing inferences and conclusions (e.g., regarding population statistics, patterns of migration, voting trends and patterns).
- P. Applies knowledge of the concept of chronology and its use in understanding history and historical events.
- Q. Applies different methods of interpreting the past to understand, evaluate and support multiple points of view, frames of reference and the historical context of events and issues.
- R. Demonstrates an understanding of the foundations of representative government in the United States, significant issues of the Revolutionary era and challenges confronting the U.S. government in the early years of the Republic.
- S. Demonstrates an understanding of westward expansion and analyzes its effects on the political, economic, and social development of the United States.

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- T. Analyzes ways that political and social factors led to the growth of sectionalism and the Civil War.
- U. Understands individuals, issues and events involved in the Civil War and analyzes the effects of reconstruction on the political, economic, and social life of the United States.
- V. Demonstrates an understanding of major U.S. reform movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (e.g., abolitionism, women's suffrage, temperance).
- W. Demonstrates an understanding of important individuals, issues, and events of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in Texas, the United States, and the world.
- X. Analyzes ways that particular contemporary societies reflect historical events (e.g., invasion, conquests, colonization, and immigration).

These competency variables will be assessed through written responses, essay questions, short answers, and assigned readings.