

HIST 4315: Readings in Nineteenth-Century American History



PROFESSOR: DR. WILLIAMSON

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Office Hours:

Location: Lawrence Hall (LH) 211

Mondays	10am-12pm, <i>or by appointment</i>
Tuesdays	12:30-1:45pm
Wednesdays	10am-12pm, <i>or by appointment</i>
Thursdays	12:30-1:45pm
Fridays	<i>Available by appointment</i>

Section I. Introduction

This course examines the major themes and works of American history from the Early Republic through the Populist Movement of the 1890s. Each week in this class, we will read and discuss important books and articles on the evolution of nineteenth-century American life and the major scholarly debates of historians regarding this era. We will highlight the great changes that took place in America during the nineteenth century by focusing on the Market Revolution and the sweeping effects it had on American life. We will also evaluate growing national tensions and sectionalism in American society: one based on slavery, and the other on free labor.

Each week, you will be expected to participate in discussion in detail over the assigned readings for the week. Through this analysis, we will examine the content presented by the authors as well as the evidence upon which they base their arguments. We will also discuss how each work fits within ongoing historical debates about the topic and/or theme of the readings.

Course Content Disclaimer

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. Likewise, if you ever wish to discuss your reactions to course material with the class or with me individually afterwards, I welcome such discussions as an appropriate part of our classwork.

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Section II. Learning Objectives

Student Learning Outcomes

SLO 1—The history student will demonstrate historical research skills in a logically organized, written paper that is mechanically correct and supported by relevant documentation of historical content.

Marketable skills— Students can identify useful resources from a pool of data.
Students can select and organize data in a relevant manner.
Students can make written presentations to various audiences.

SLO 2—The history student will demonstrate the ability to write about topics in historiography and how those topics are interpreted.

Marketable skills— Students can utilize data to persuade various audiences.
Students can utilize data to generate and strengthen ideas.
Students can decipher stances adopted by various individuals.

SLO 3—The history student will demonstrate knowledge of historical events, movements, major turning points and personalities of the past.

Marketable Skills— Students can meet deadlines in a successful manner.
Students can discharge responsibilities in an adequate manner.
Students can manage the absorption of data.

Section III. Required Materials—available as e-books through the SRSU library.

- Hammond, John Craig and Matthew Mason, eds. *Contesting Slavery: The Politics of Bondage and Freedom in the New American Nation*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2011.
 - Larson, John Lauritz. *The Market Revolution in America: Liberty, Ambition, and the Eclipse of the Common Good*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
 - Kohl, Lawrence Frederick. *The Politics of Individualism: Parties and the American Character in the Jacksonian Era*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
 - Rae, Noel. *The Great Stain: Witnessing American Slavery*. New York: Abrams Press, 2020.
 - Roth, Sarah N. *Gender and Race in Antebellum Popular Culture*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
 - Gleeson, David T. *The Civil War as Global Conflict: Transnational Meanings of the American Civil War*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2014.
 - Brown, Thomas J. *Reconstructions: New Perspectives on Postbellum America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
 - Wrobels, David M. *Global West, American Frontier: Travel, Empire, and Exceptionalism from Manifest Destiny to the Great Depression*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2013.
- **Technology**—This is an online course, which means that you **must** have regular, reliable access to a working computer with internet. Students are responsible for checking email and the Blackboard site on a regular basis to access course materials and information.
 - **Accountability**—Think of this course like joining a gym—you get out what you put in. As your professor, it is my responsibility to make sure you know how to use the equipment and

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to assist you when you need a spotter. Meanwhile, it is your responsibility to engage with the course materials, put in the work, and complete the assignments by the designated due dates. The grade you earn is determined by the quality of your effort, not necessarily the time you spend.

THE 5 C'S OF HISTORICAL REASONING

1. **Change and Continuity:** Historians are required to 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.

Section IV. Grades

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

- **Discussion Participation** (30%): Students are expected to read the assigned materials before the start of class and contribute to discussions of course materials on the course Blackboard page. Participation is required of each individual student.
- **Four Book Reviews** (10% each, 40% of the semester grade): Students will write and submit précis, or scholarly reviews, over assigned reading.
 - Précis should be 2-3 full, double-spaced page, in 12-point Times New Roman font, with one-inch margins on all sides. For examples of a scholarly review (otherwise known as a précis), see: www.h-net.org/reviews/
 - A précis should summarize a given book or article's argument, scope, and methodology as clearly and concisely as possible. Some reviews may require students to write a comparative analysis of multiple readings. Your review should evaluate the effectiveness of the book or article(s) as well as its limitations.
 - The purpose of a scholarly review is to both summarize the books or article's contents and, more importantly, to critically evaluate its contribution to knowledge, both factual and historiographical. The reviewer's priority is to critically appraise each book; to analyze it on its own terms, to discuss what it did and did not do, what sort of evidence the author used and how well, what its strengths and weaknesses were. *Be*

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sure to point out the thesis of each book and whether the author presented a supported a persuasive argument. Try to ascertain what kind of historiographical context (if any) the author provided—in other words, how did the author’s work fit into a broader body of historical literature? If the author did not do this, hold them to task. For examples of scholarly book reviews, see: www.h-net.org/reviews

- **Final Paper** (30%): 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 nineteenth-century American history. Each student will utilize 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 individuals engage with regional, national, and/or global communities.
 - You must consult with your professor about potential research topics prior to making your final decision. You may choose *any* subject relevant to the theme and chronology of this course. This essay must have a strong, coherent thesis statement, which will be supported by a minimum 10 scholarly sources, at least 7 of which must be scholarly books. These may include works from the required, supplemental, and/or recommended reading lists.
 - Essays must be typed or word-processed in 12-point fonts (Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri), double-spaced, with one-inch margins all around.
 - All papers should be a minimum 8-12 full pages (not including a cover page and works cited) and will be evaluated on style and content; therefore, they should be well-written and free of grammatical errors. Papers that are not formatted according to guidelines and requirements will be dropped one letter grade automatically.
 - Papers will be evaluated on the following:
 - strength of your historical arguments and content
 - how well you have used historical evidence to support your argument(s)—the 5C’s of Historical Reasoning (see above)
 - composition (i.e., spelling, grammar, sentence structure)
 - form (i.e., correct citation, Chicago Manual of Style or Turabian format)

Section IV. Classroom & Teaching Philosophy

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.

Student Support

I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports various perspectives and

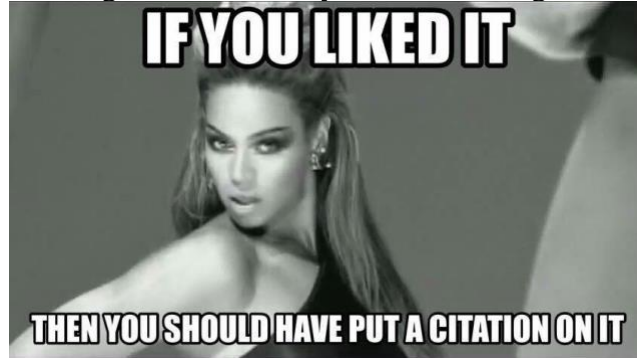
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experiences. I understand that the recent pandemic, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events may impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create an inclusive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

Section V. Policies

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.



Academic Integrity

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students should submit work that is their own and avoid the temptation to engage in behaviors that violate academic integrity, such as turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden. Students should also avoid using open AI sources *unless permission is expressly given* for an assignment or course. Violations of academic integrity can result in failing assignments, failing a class, and/or more serious university consequences. These behaviors also erode the value of college degrees and higher education overall.

Please read the complete policy at

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

Section VI. 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 LoboID and password. Check out materials using your photo ID. Librarians are a tremendous resource for

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your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or by phone (432-837-8123).

- **Academic Success Center:** The 1st Floor of the Wildenthal 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.
- **Academic Center for Excellence (ACE):** 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 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 the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services.

Students seeking accessibility services must contact:

Counseling and Accessibility Services

Location: Ferguson Hall 112

Telephone: 432-837-8691

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

- ***Counseling and Psychological Services:*** Sul Ross has partnered with TimelyCare where all SR students will have access to nine free counseling sessions. You can learn more about this 24/7/356 support by visiting [Timelycare/SRSU](https://www.timelycare.com/srsu). The SR Counseling and Accessibility Services office will continue to offer in-person counseling in Ferguson Hall room 112 (Alpine campus), and telehealth Zoom sessions for remote students and RGC 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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Section VII. Spring 2024 Schedule

Week 1 (Wednesday, January 17th-Sunday, 21st): Introductions, in Blackboard

Week 2 (January 22nd-28th): “Freedom” in the New Nation

Read: Hammond, John Craig and Matthew Mason, eds. *Contesting Slavery: The Politics of Bondage and Freedom in the New American Nation*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2011.

Discussion post due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, January 28th

Week 3 (January 29th-February 4th): Technological Transformations

Read: Larson, *The Market Revolution in America: Liberty, Ambition, and the Eclipse of the Common Good* (2010).

Review due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, February 4th

Week 4 (February 5th-11th): The Peculiar Institution

Read: Rae, Noel. *The Great Stain: Witnessing American Slavery*. New York: Abrams Press, 2020.

Discussion post due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, February 11th

Week 5 (February 12th-18th): The Jacksonian Era

Read: Kohl, Lawrence Frederick. *The Politics of Individualism: Parties and the American Character in the Jacksonian Era*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Review due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, February 18th

Week 6 (February 19th-25th): Social Changes

Read: Osborn, Matthew Warner. “A Detestable Shrine: Alcohol Abuse in Antebellum Philadelphia.” *Journal of the Early Republic* (Spring 2009): 101-132.

Gorn, Elliott J. “‘Gouge and Bite, Pull Hair and Scratch’: The Social Significance of Fighting in the Southern Backcountry.” *The American Historical Review* Vol. 90, No. 1(Feb. 1985): 18-43.

Discussion post due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, February 25th

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Week 7 (February 26th-March 3rd): Gender & Race

Read: Roth, Sarah N. *Gender and Race in Antebellum Popular Culture*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Review due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, March 3rd

Week 8 (March 4th-10th) Final Paper Topic Selection

Your research statement should explain your 1) topic overview, 2) methods (approach, what types of sources will you use), 3) tentative thesis/argument, questions you intend to answer 4) what you think you will find, and 5) a tentative source list.

2-pg research statement/proposal, due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, March 10th

Week 9 (March 11th-17th): Spring Break

Week 10 (March 18th-24th): The Civil War

Read: Gleeson, David T. *The Civil War as Global Conflict: Transnational Meanings of the American Civil War*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2014.

Review due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, March 24th

Week 11 (March 25th-31st): Reconstruction

Read: Brown, Thomas J. *Reconstructions: New Perspectives on Postbellum America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Discussion post due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, March 31st

Week 12 (April 1st-7th): The West

Read: Wrobels, David M. *Global West, American Frontier: Travel, Empire, and Exceptionalism from Manifest Destiny to the Great Depression*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2013.

Discussion post due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, April 7th

Week 13 (April 8th-14th): Research & Writing Days

Week 14 (April 15th-21st): Research & Writing Days

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Week 15 (April 22nd-28th): Research & Writing Days

Week 16 (April 29th-May 5th): **FINAL PAPERS DUE BY 11:59PM Sunday, May 5th**
