

**HSTAA201 (Findlay): Autumn Quarter 1998**  
*Survey of the History of the United States*  
Section AA 9:30-10:20 (LOW 222)  
Section AH 8:30-9:20 (MEB 248)

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### **Expectations and Goals:**

Although this class focuses on a topic familiar to many of you—American history—it is not an easy course. It will require a great deal of work. The readings are substantial, the writing requirements are extensive, and the analytical standards are demanding. In short, this is a challenging course. But your reward, academically and intellectually, is directly proportional to your effort. My job is to help you succeed on both fronts.

**I expect you to come to section every Friday, with your reading done, prepared to discuss the lectures and assignments for the week.** Bring your notes and readings, which you should refer to during class. You should prepare a short written answer to one of these questions before section each week. While I will not grade these answers, they will prove useful for sparking class discussion, studying for exams, and writing your papers. There may be additional exercises in section not covered in the course syllabus, including short writing assignments, debates or other activities.

You need to participate in section in order to do well in this course. Remember: attendance is part of your section grade, and I will take roll each meeting. This grade will be determined by class participation, performance on quizzes and written assignments, and attendance. Two absences will result in a drop of one full grade point from your section grade (e.g., from A to B or from B to C). You cannot pass the class if you do not attend section. If you cannot come to section, please notify me in advance. Since participation is part of your grade in this course, I reserve the right to raise your final mark by 1/3 for extraordinary involvement. Participation includes visiting me during office hours, turning in rough drafts of your assigned papers, and speaking out in discussion. As part of your participation grade, I will require that all students see me, during office hours or by appointment, by the end of Week Four (23 October) so I can meet you all personally and provide individual instruction.

Due dates are vigorously enforced, but if you need an extension, please see me beforehand. I'm more likely to smile on explanations offered early than excuses made after the fact. See the course syllabus for due dates. I *strongly* encourage you to submit your short paper, which you may rewrite up to three times, as early as possible. I also urge you to submit rough drafts of your family papers. Please give them to me no later than *one week* before the due date.

### **On thinking and writing about history:**

Thinking historically is difficult work. Simply put, history is change over time. It does not come naturally to many of us, even after years of training. Context, sequence, and complexity are key to the past. Above all, historians make arguments—they interpret the past using various analytical tools and devices. I expect you to learn to make historical arguments. This means taking intellectual risks. State your opinion. Offer your interpretation. Engage with the material in this course by trying to think historically.

This is a writing course, and I take writing seriously. I expect you to write well, which means paying attention to proper composition, mechanics, and style. I strongly encourage you to submit rough drafts for your two term papers (see course syllabus for details). You should also visit the History Writing Center (210 Smith Hall, [hwc@u.washington.edu](mailto:hwc@u.washington.edu)) for help on your assignment as well. Good writing usually reflects good thinking. Work on your writing and you will improve your historical thinking.

In addition to the required texts for the course, I encourage you to purchase the following books:

William Strunk and E.B. White, The Elements of Style

Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers

The first title is the best short primer on writing well in American English; the second is an invaluable guide for crafting bibliographies, footnotes, and research papers. You will use these books frequently during your studies at the UW.

### **On civility and responsibility:**

I treat this class as a partnership. I hope to learn as much from you as you will, I hope, learn from me. Ask questions. Challenge me. Challenge the readings and lectures. Challenge your peers. Take positions and defend them. But remember to treat everyone with respect and integrity. Conversations about the past can often become quite passionate. I look forward to such moments; this is often where real learning begins. But remember to act appropriately and listen carefully. This is your class—our class—and I hope you consider it an important investment.