

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN  
Department of History

Semester II Year: 1979-1980

<u>COURSE NO.</u>	<u>COURSE TITLE</u>	<u>INSTRUCTOR</u>
101 (Lect. 1)	American History to the Civil War Era	Lovejoy

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course deals with the years 1607-1865. How do you cover 250 years of American history (or any history, for that matter) in the fourteen or so weeks of a semester? Well, you don't, really; that is, you don't "cover" it, for that would be impossible. If one tried, the years would whizz by like minutes in a day, too fast to determine from them what was important and what was not. The alternative, of course, is to select significant events, facts, and ideas, develop them, interpret them, in order to probe the essence of this nation's history and make some sort of sense out of it. This is what Lovejoy intends to do in this course. Granted one person's explanation of a historical period is bound to be subjective, ask yourself, could it, or should it, be anything else? A variety of readings, expressing other points of view, some of which disagree with Lovejoy's, can only add grist for discussion and maybe some spice to the course of events from the early settlements to the end of the Civil War.

The course is organized around nine topics chronologically arranged from a look at England's American colonies in the seventeenth century to a study of the causes and consequences of the Civil War. Cutting across these nine topics are several over-riding themes such as Americans' perceptions of themselves in the New World; the meaning of equality; the idea of "manifest destiny"; the American as reformer; and the role of religion in American thought and culture.

LECTURES

Three lectures each week, not so formal that questions cannot be asked, by both students and instructor; discussion encouraged. One discussion section each week under the supervision of a Teaching Assistant. One or two slide lectures, near the end of the course, on early American art and architecture.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS

Six and twelve-weeks examinations plus a final. At the discretion of the Teaching Assistant, there may be on occasional short written exercises as bases for discussion.

GRADING SYSTEM

As equitable weighing as possible of the various parts of a student's performance, including discussions, to which each student is expected to contribute constructively. Lovejoy does not believe that fixing irrevocable percentages to each piece of written work for determining a final grade is conducive to the encouragement of an expanding and deepening interest in history. A poor showing in a six-weeks' exam will not seriously drag down the grade of a student who improves with the twelve-weeks exam and who ends the course "going away" by means of the final exam. However, the reverse is also true. A flashy six-weeks exam will not pull much weight in the final grade of a student who cannot fulfill his or her earlier promise.

REQUIRED READINGS

For required readings, see next page.

Required Readings:

John A. Garraty, The American Nation, vol. 1.

Edmund S. Morgan, The Puritan Family.

Robert A. Gross, The Minutemen and their World.

Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition.

John Blassingame, The Slave Community.

H. H. Quint & M. Cantor, Men, Women, and Issues in American History.

John William Ward, Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age.