

History 101
Summer, 1988
MTWRF 8:50-10:50
1651 Humanities

Charles L. Cohen
4115 Humanities
Office hours: MWF 8:15-8:45
Phone: 263-1956; -1800 (Dept.)

HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES TO 1865

This course is dedicated to the propositions that those who forget the past tend to repeat it, those who have never learned about it do not even know enough to forget it, and those who, through either obliviousness or ignorance do not come to grips with it, will be at history's mercy on the day when it takes them by surprise and smirkingly lays them low. The following readings have been assigned in a desperate effort to remedy their plight:

Available at the University Book Store, 711 State Street:

Mary Beth Norton et al., A People & a Nation, 2d ed., vol. A

Available from Kinko's Copy Service, 620 University Avenue:

"The Murmur of Distant Voices: A Reader for History 101"

This packet contains all of the assignments not found in the textbook.

Assignments

I expect you to have completed the reading assignment for each class, so that you can both better understand the lecture and participate fully in class discussion. You are required to write two 4-page papers and a final exam, which will consist of two essays. The final will take place on July 8; the papers are due at the beginning of class on the day indicated. Please note that you have 3 paper options but need only turn in 2, and that within each option you may choose which of the 2 topics you will treat. Due dates, paper topics, and final exam questions are listed beginning on page 4 below.

Grading

Each of the two papers counts 20% of the final grade; so does class discussion, which is evaluated on both attendance and quality. The final exam counts 40%.

Date

Program and Assignments

I. A NEW SOCIETY

June 13 1. Introduction
 2. A Tale of Two Cultures

Reading: (none, surprisingly)

14 1. A Letter to a Lord
 2. Discussion

Reading: Norton, People & Nation, 1-24; Columbus, "Letter";
John Smith, General History, 3-71

DateProgram and Assignments

- June 15 1. The New American World
 2. Discussion
- Reading: Norton, People & Nation, 25-55; Sarah Kemble Knight, Journal
- 16 1. God's Kingdoms in the Colonies
 2. Discussion
- Reading: Norton, People & Nation, 55-62; Gottlieb Mittelberger, Journey to Pennsylvania, 35-93
- 17 1. Representatives Assembled
 2. Discussion
- Reading: J. Hector St. John Crèvecoeur, Letters from an American Farmer, 48-118
- II. A NEW NATION
- 20 1. Rule Britannia
 2. America the Rebellious
- Reading: Norton, People & Nation, 63-80
- First Paper Option Due
- 21 1. The Dialectic of Rebellion
 2. Discussion
- Reading: Peter Oliver, "Origins & Progress of the American Rebellion"
- 22 1. The Declaration of Independence
 2. Discussion
- Reading: Norton, People & Nation, 81-97, A5-A6; [Grace Barclay], "Personal Recollections of the American Revolution"
- 23 1. The Republic of Virtue
 2. Discussion
- Reading: Norton, People & Nation, 98-108; the Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776
- 24 1. Framing the Constitution
 2. Discussion
- Reading: Norton, People & Nation, 108-16, A7-A17; "Selections from Debates in the Virginia Ratifying Convention," 307-40

DateProgram and Assignments

III. AN AGE OF ENERGY

- June 27 1. The Market Revolution
2. The Birth of the Second American Party System

Reading: Norton, People & Nation, 117-69

Second Paper Option Due

- 28 1. Politics in the 1830s
2. Discussion

Reading: Norton, People & Nation, 170-89, 214-21; Michel Chevalier, Society, Manners and Politics in the United States, letters III, IV, V, XVI, XVII, XXV, XXXIII

- 29 1. The Great Revival
2. Discussion

Reading: Norton, People & Nation, 206-10; Francis Trollope, Domestic Manners of the Americans, chs. 8, 11, 15, 26, 34

- 30 1. Antebellum Reform
2. Discussion

Reading: Norton, People & Nation, 210-14; John Thomas Codman, Brook Farm: Historic and Personal Memoirs, 79-138

IV. ONE NATION, TWO BODIES

- July 1 1. Slavery
2. A House Trembling

Reading: Norton, People & Nation, 190-205, 221-33

4 INDEPENDENCE DAY

Treat a virtuous republican to a cherry vanilla sundae with blueberry sauce

- 5 1. A House Dividing
2. Discussion

Reading: Norton, People & Nation, 233-44; Thomas H. Jones, The Experience of Thomas H. Jones

Third Paper Option Due

- 6 1. The War for Southern Independence
2. Discussion

DateProgram and Assignments

Reading: Norton, People & Nation, 245-64; Mary Chesnut, Mary Chesnut's Civil War, ed. C. Vann Woodward, 3-34

- July 7 1. A House Transforming
2. The Meaning of it All - Review
- 8 FINAL EXAMINATION

Paper Topics

Papers should be typed, double-spaced, and run about four pages. In writing the essays you should respond directly to the questions, using appropriate material from lectures, readings, and discussions. Try to advance a coherent argument, complete with introduction, a body of evidence supporting your contentions, and conclusion. Each major question is followed by subsidiary ones that you should use to help direct your essay. You need not answer all (or any) of the subsidiary questions, but you should think about them in planning your response.

Option 1 - due June 20

1. Describe how Europeans and Euramerican settlers described Amerindians in colonial America.

What were Europeans' preconceptions about the land and people? How did these preconceptions lead them to describe America? What did they think about their own cultural attainments? about those of the Amerindians? What did they think when they confronted life forms they had never seen before?

2. How "open" was eighteenth-century American society?

What kinds of opportunities existed - economic, social, religious, political? Why did such opportunities exist? Who could take advantage of them? How open was America compared to the lands of the immigrants? Were there limits on opportunity? If so, what were they?

Option 2 - due June 27

1. During the 1760s and 1770s Peter Oliver watched imperial authority deteriorate in Boston. What, according to him, caused the colonists to rebel, and how accurate do you think his analysis is?

What reasons does Oliver give for the colonists' discontent. What conclusions does he come to? Why does he reach those particular conclusions? How well does he explain why Americans rebelled? What factors, if any, does he overlook? How well does he describe the imperial relationship? how well do you think he understood Americans' grievances? How much, if at all, did the attitudes of him and other loyalists and imperial officials contribute to Americans' discontent?

2. Some historians consider the Federal constitution of 1787 a repudiation of the democratic sentiments expressed in the Pennsylvania constitution of 1776. Do you agree?

You might first define "democratic?" What kinds of government do the two constitutions set up? where do they locate sovereign power? what role do they allot for the "people" (and how do they define "people")? How do the constitutions seek to balance the protection of liberty with a government's need to exercise power? How does the Federal Constitution cut back the popular voice in government? expand it?

Option 3 - due July 5

1. Using Brook Farm as a particular example, explain why antebellum Americans entered into reform movements so fervently.

Describe the arrangements at Brook Farm. What did the members of the collective hope to accomplish? What did they think of "normal" American society? what did they think most needed repair?

2. Discuss the conduct of popular American politics during the 1820s and 30s.

Who comprised the electorate, and how did politicians appeal to them? What kinds of campaigns did they mount? what kinds of issues did they discuss? What were the strengths of this kind of politicking? what were the weaknesses? Did popular political culture resemble any other activities in which Americans engaged? if so, which ones, and what was the significance of the parallel(s)?

Final Examination

1. By 1830 slavery had become the South's "peculiar institution." How -- if at all -- did it make the antebellum South a "different" part of America?

In what ways did slavery affect the economic, social and moral organization of Southern life? How did it affect the section's political programme? How did Southern institutions and values compare to Northern ones? Were there any similarities at all? You might pay particular attention to Jones's and Chesnut's observations.

2. Many of the writers we have read this summer contrast America to Europe in one way or another. Based on their collective impressions, and any other information you deem important, describe what was "American" about American society in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

How do writers describe European and American society? what according to them were the salient characteristics of each? Does a particularly "American" constellation of traits emerge from their discussions? You might evaluate the importance of such things as representative institutions, a market economy, evangelical Protestantism, and social diversity. Could the notion of American exceptionalism be exaggerated?

A PROCLAMATION

Regarding Late Papers

Whereas it may come to pass that one or more individuals, whether through dilatoriness, dereliction, irresponsibility, or chutzpah, may seek respite and surcease from escrtorial demands through procrastination, delay, and downright evasion;

And whereas this unhappy happenstance contributes mightily to malfeasance on the part of parties of the second part (i.e. students, the instructed, you) and irascibility on the part of us (i.e., me);

Be it therefore known, understood, apprehended, and comprehended:

That all assignments must reach us, or be deposited in such place that we may obtain them easily (i.e. my mailbox, under my office door, or the Department Receptionist) on or by the exact hour announced in class, and that failure to comply with this wholesome and most generous regulation shall result in the assignment forfeiting one half letter grade for each day for which it is tardy (i.e. an "A" shall become an "AB"), "one day" being defined as a 24-hour period commencing at the announced hour on which the assignment is due; and that the aforementioned reduction in grade shall continue for each succeeding day of delay until either the assignment shall be remitted or its value shrunk unto nothingness.

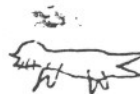
Be it nevertheless affirmed:

That the greater part of justice residing in mercy, it may behoove us, acting entirely through our gracious prerogative, to award an extension in such cases that merit it, extensions being granted only upon consultation with us, in which case a negotiated due date shall be decided on; it being perfectly well understood that failure to observe this new deadline shall result in the immediate and irreversible failure of the assignment (i.e., an "F"), its value being accounted as a null set and less than that of a vile mote. It should be noted that routine disruptions to routine (i.e. lack of sleep occasioned by pink badgers dancing on the ceiling) do not conduce to mercy, but that severe dislocations brought on by Acts of God (exceedingly traumatic events to the body and/or soul, such as having the earth swallow one up on the way to delivering the assignment) perpetrated either on oneself or on one's loving kindred, do.

And we wish to trumpet forth:

That our purpose in declaiming said proclamation, is not essentially to terminate the wanton flouting of didactic intentions, but to encourage our beloved students to consult with us, and apprehend us of their difficulties aforehand (i.e., talk to me, baby), so that the cruel axe of the executioner fall not upon their Grade Point Average and smite it with a vengeance.

To which proclamation, we do affix our seal:



Name:

Use this sheet to set down notes, outlines, quotations, or any other material that will help you write the final exam. You must sign your name and turn this sheet in with the exam.