

HIST 1301-900: United States History I

Tuesdays, Spring 2026

Professor Contact

Dr. Alexandria Castillo

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Office Hours: CAB 318A, (in person) Tues/Thurs 10:40am-12:00pm
(via Zoom) by appointment

Course Description

This course examines the history of the United States from its inception as English colonies through the Civil War. It will study the social, political, and economic dynamics that influenced the lives of contemporary Americans, and how these experiences changed over time, as well as the factors that sparked this evolution. It will also place North America within a broader global context by incorporating relevant histories of other areas and peoples connected through the Atlantic exchange during this formative period of U.S. history.

Course Objectives

History is a dialogue that continues to evolve through those who study it. Therefore, you, with your unique perspective and life experiences, can contribute immensely to this dialogue! The main objectives of this course are for you to participate in this dialogue and practice skills that are key to historical research: **critical thinking, analytical reading, writing, effective communication, and collaboration**. Open discussions and provided readings are meant to encourage your development of **critical thinking, analytical reading, and communication skills**. Short reading responses and formal papers will help you improve your **writing skills**, while in-class group activities will allow you to practice **effective collaboration** as you work with your peers.

Required Texts

All assigned weekly readings will be provided on the Blackboard course page.

(Optional) Joseph L. Locke and Ben Wright. *The American Yawp: A Massively Collaborative Open U.S. History Textbook, Vol. 1: To 1877*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2019. (full eBook available through the TAMU-SA Library)

Grades

Attendance and Class Participation	20%
Primary Source Paper Topic Post	10%
Primary Source Paper Abstract	10%
Primary Source Paper Outline	20%
Primary Source Document Share	10%
Primary Source Paper	30%

Course Assignments

Attendance and Class Participation are required in this course. As this is a “hybrid” course, the class meets in-person once per week, and attendance is required at this weekly meeting. Some class time will be devoted to lecture, but one of the benefits of smaller classes is the opportunity for more one-on-one interactions between instructor and student and between students; therefore, time will be set aside each class for discussions of the material. The aim is to facilitate a collaborative learning environment where concepts and events can be openly discussed and placed within broader contexts. Discussions will focus on the week’s lecture material and assigned readings.

Each student must post a research topic for their future Primary Source Paper, aka the *Primary Source Paper Topic Post*, on the related Blackboard Discussion Board **by Friday, Feb. 13**. No two students can write papers on the same topic, so post early to reserve your chosen topic! (For more details, see the related section of the Primary Source Paper Writing Guide posted in Blackboard.)

The *Primary Source Paper Abstract* is a short (200-300 word) summation of your chosen research topic for the future Primary Source Paper. It should include the name, time period, and location of the chosen topic, as well as some key points you plan to cover in your paper. You must also include the full Chicago Style citation of at least one primary source document related to your chosen topic. The abstract is **due Friday, Feb. 27**. (For more details, see the related section of Primary Source Paper Writing Guide posted in Blackboard.)

The *Primary Source Paper Outline* is a formal outline that uses bullet points to convey the content and progression of the future Primary Source Paper (at least 2 pages single-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman, standard margins). It should include key contextual material about your chosen topic, a preliminary thesis statement, and at least a general idea of the progression/method of your analysis for the future paper. It should also include how you plan to utilize your chosen primary source document(s) via footnote citations. The outline is **due Friday, March 20**. (For more details, see related section of Primary Source Paper Writing Guide and the Sample PSP Outline posted in Blackboard.)

The *Primary Source Document Share* assignment is not only an opportunity to share your PSP research with your peers (and receive valuable feedback), but a chance to illustrate your mastery of one of the important document analysis techniques introduced throughout the semester. This assignment has both an online submission and an in-class component; you must complete both to

receive credit for this assignment. First, post the full Chicago Style citation and your original analysis of one primary source document to the Discussion Board in Blackboard prior to the **Week 13 class meeting**. Second, share your document, and related analysis, in class during our **Week 13 class meeting**. (For more details, see Instructions in the Week 13 module in Blackboard.)

The *Primary Source Paper* is the final project/assignment for this course. In this paper, or essay, you are required to work with your chosen primary source document(s), which will serve as the evidence to support the paper's argument, or thesis. The paper is 4-6 pages, double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman, standard margins. The paper is **due Friday, May 1**. (For more details, see Primary Source Paper Writing Guide posted in Blackboard.)

Late Submission Policy

This policy governs the submission of all assignments, projects, and papers for this course. Please read it carefully.

All assignments are due on the date and time specified in the course syllabus and/or on the learning management system (Blackboard). Timely submission is a fundamental professional expectation and a critical component of success in this course. To maintain fairness and ensure the timely progression of the course and grading, you are expected to plan your time accordingly and submit all work by the designated deadline.

Late assignment submissions will not be accepted.

A late submission will **only** be considered in **rare/exceptional circumstances** that are beyond the student's control. (Example: documented medical emergencies, bereavement, etc.)

Technical issues (e.g., a computer crash, internet failure, or poor time management) are **not** considered rare or exceptional circumstances and will not warrant an extension.

Blackboard

Students access Blackboard through the [**JagWire Portal**](#). You will then use your Student User ID and network password to login. Once logged in, click on the Blackboard link. The course card will appear on your Dashboard. Blackboard is where you will access the syllabus, course readings, other relevant course materials, and course grades, so make sure to login to Blackboard early and often!

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory and will be taken each in-person class meeting. You are expected to arrive on-time. Documentation (doctor's notes, coaches' notes for athletic events, instructors' notes for school-related events, etc.) will be required for an absence to be considered an "excused absence." Mental attendance is also required. You cannot effectively participate if you

are asleep, texting, listening to music, etc. Also, you must come to class prepared, specifically regarding the assigned readings. Assigned readings must be completed prior to class time (see the weekly reading schedule included below). If this becomes an issue, you will be marked absent and be ineligible for any class participation/attendance points for the day. The “Attendance and Class Participation” grade is the easiest way to get points in this course, do not waste this opportunity!

Academic Misconduct & Plagiarism

The written assignments will require you to work with primary and secondary sources, and you will need to specify where you’re getting your information. **When in doubt, cite!** Turning in someone else’s work/ideas as your own will not be tolerated and will **result in a zero** on that particular assignment, as well as a report to the Department Chair, Dean of the College, and the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. We will go over how to properly cite sources early in the course, but if you have any questions about how to cite your sources, please ask me! If you are unsure if your behavior is academically dishonest, ask! If you have any questions concerning the definition of “academic misconduct” at TAMU-SA, please review the Student Handbook: <https://www.tamusa.edu/studentengagementsuccess/documents/studenthandbook2021-2022.pdf>.

Also, as stated on Page 1 of the syllabus, writing and critical thinking are key learning outcomes of this course, therefore all written assignments should be prepared and created by you!

Developing these skills is an important step in your professional development and vital for an increasingly competitive workplace. HIST 1301 assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups. Students should not have another person/entity do the writing of any portion of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments and/or using artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT. **Use of any AI-generated content is not allowed in this course.**

Important Student Services

- The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: The WLDCC offers a variety of free appointment-based support sessions to help you with your writing such as real-time online sessions, assignment reviews, and in-person tutoring. In-person sessions will be held in either CAB 208 or Classroom Hall 304. Make appointments either by email (WLDCC@tamusa.edu) or online via the Student Services tab in JagWire.
- The Office of Disability Support Services (DSS): If you have a documented disability or chronic illness that could impact your participation in this course, you are strongly encouraged to contact DSS to ensure you are provided the necessary accommodations. You can contact DSS by phone (210-784-1335), email (dss@tamusa.edu), or in-person (CAB Suite 210) to schedule an appointment.
- Student Counseling Center (SCC): This center provides free, confidential counseling services to enrolled students by trained and licensed staff. This includes individual therapy, group therapy, and/or utilization of the Virtual Relaxation Room, or a referral to a community provider. Walk-in appointments are accepted any time Monday – Friday,

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM (Modular C, Room 166). Call (210-784-1331) or email (stucounseling@tamusa.edu) to schedule an initial appointment.

WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1: Course Introduction & Requirements

Introductions, Syllabus, & Assignments

Reading(s): no readings

Week 2: “Colonial Struggles”: The English in the Chesapeake

Early Modern England and New World Colonization Attempts

The Struggles of Jamestown, VA

Reading(s): Richard Frethorne’s Letters to His Mother and Father, 1623

Week 3: “Religious States”: The English in New England

Puritan Settlements in New England

Religious Rifts and Political Pressures

Reading(s): The Trial of Anne Hutchinson, 1637

Week 4: “Labor Issues”: Expansion, Cash Crops, and Colonial Society

Early Colonial Competitions in North American Territory

The Origins of British American Slavery

Reading(s): Testimony from Virginia Court Records, 1681

****Primary Source Paper Topic Post due in Discussion Board by Friday, Feb. 13****

Week 5: “Growing Pains”: North America in the Eighteenth Century

Economic Growth and Demographic Changes

“Enlightened” Ideas and Religious Revival

Reading(s): Jonathan Edwards’s *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* excerpt, 1741 & Gilbert Tennent Sermon excerpt, 1740

Week 6: “Evolving Identities”: Competing for North America

European Expansion in North America

The French and Indian War and its Consequences

Reading(s): The Trial of Captain Thomas Preston, 1770

****Primary Source Paper Abstract due Friday, Feb. 27****

Week 7: “Radical Ideas”: The American Revolution

Questioning the King and Colonial Ties

The Fight for Independence

Reading(s): Diary of a Revolutionary Army Physician, 1776

Week 8: SPRING BREAK (MARCH 9-14)

Week 9: “Principles v. Practices”: The Limits of the American Revolution

Constitutional Debates and Dilemmas

Defining the United States and its Citizens

Reading(s): Boston King’s Memoir, 1798

****Primary Source Paper Outline due Friday, March 20****

Week 10: “Domestic v. International”: America under Thomas Jefferson

Jeffersonian Republicanism

The War of 1812

Reading(s): Thomas Jefferson’s Private and Public Indian Policy, 1803 & Excerpt from

The Indian Prophet and His Doctrine, 1812

Week 11: “New Generations”: America under Andrew Jackson

The Many Results of the Election of 1824

Jacksonian America

Reading(s): The Removal of the Cherokees, 1808-1836

Week 12: “The Slavery Question”: The Atlantic Slave Trade

African Experiences in the Atlantic Slave Trade

Slave Life in North America

Reading(s): Slaves Tell Their Own Story, 1800s

Week 13: “Modern Innovations”: The Consequences of the Market Revolution

Changing Economies and New Social Questions

The Second Great Awakening and the Quest for Social Reform

Reading(s): no assigned readings

****Primary Source Document Share, due online and in-class****

Week 14: “Manifest Destiny”: Westward Expansion and its Consequences

New Territories, Old Problems, and the Slavery Debate

Prelude to the American Civil War

Reading(s): no assigned readings, in-class writing groups

Week 15: A Union in Peril: The American Civil War

A Nation Divided: The South Secedes

Union Advantages vs. Confederate Strategies

Reading(s): no assigned readings, in-class writing group

****Primary Source Paper due Friday, May 1****

Tuesday, May 5: “Study Day”—NO CLASSES

Final Exams Week (May 6-12): NO FINAL EXAM