HIST 2610: U.S. History to 1865

University of North Texas | Fall 2026



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Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:00am-1:00pm, Wooten Hall 252 or by appointment

Course Description & Learning Objectives

This course will be a survey of the important developments of American history from the 17th-century until 1865. These will include key political, economic, societal, cultural, and technological changes. Specific topics will include European colonization of the North American continent, the origins and ramifications of the American Revolution, slavery in the United States, westward expansion, sectional conflict, and the Civil War.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Define key historical terms, individuals, ideas, events, and the significance of each in American history.
- Draw direct connections between historical events and the consequential impact.
- Analyze historical primary sources.
- Apply the foundational knowledge of history to understanding present circumstances.
- Identify the significance of why we study history.

Required Materials

The American Yawp, Edited by Joseph Locke and Ben Wright: Stanford University Press.
(THIS IS A FREE ONLINE TEXTBOOK)
Link: https://www.americanyawp.com/

Containing Multitudes: A Documentary Reader of the American Past Volume 1: To 1877, Edited by Wesley G. Phelps and Jennifer Jensen Wallach. Arkansas: University of Arkansas Press, 2022.
(This is available for purchase at UNT Barnes & Noble. It is also available in ebook form through UNT's library)

Policies

Attendance/Sickness Policy

Regular attendance is crucial to success in this class. As such, attendance will be taken at the end of every session. However, if you are feeling sick **STAY HOME.** Just reach out to let the instructor know. If an illness or emergency prevents you from completing an exam, essay or assignment on time, please reach out so we can discuss an extension.

Devices

Generally the use of cellphones in class is prohibited, but if you need to take a phone call, you may exit class to do so. Additionally, you may make **AUDIO RECORDINGS** of class lectures. Video recordings of lectures are prohibited.

Artificial Intelligence

I choose to view generative AI as a tool. The use of it is not mandated, but I do acknowledge that it can be useful in the learning process. The use of generative AI is allowed, as long as the student discloses the manner in which it is used. Examples of how to use AI in a constructive way are asking for feedback, or as a tool for brainstorming. I believe my job as an educator is to help students understand the importance of academic integrity, as well as how to use AI responsibly.

With that being said, students should be aware that AI is fallible. AI is only as good as the data set that was used to train it, and as such will be imperfect due to those limitations and biases. If a student chooses to use AI in the learning process, they should be sure to verify the content it

generates using reputable sources. Students should also be sure they understand the terms of service of whatever AI they use to aid them in the learning process. Links to a few are below:

OpenAI: https://openai.com/policies/row-terms-of-use/
Google Gemini: https://ai.google.dev/gemini-api/terms
Claude: https://privacy.claude.com/en/collections/10663362-consumers
Notebook LM: https://notebook-lm.com/terms

Additionally, the use of generative AI must be disclosed on every assignment and exam. Failure to do so will result in an automatic loss of 20-points on the assignment or exam. Disclosure of AI usage should take the form of a brief sentence or paragraph at the beginning of your assignment/exam detailing how AI was used (i.e. if it was used for research, feedback, structure, etc.).

Assignments

Exams: There are three non-cumulative exams for this class (one mid-term and one final). Each exam will be worth 10% percent of every student's grade, meaning altogether exams will be 30% of a student's final grade. All exams will have two parts: 20 multiple-choice questions worth a total of 40 points, and a 500-700 word essay, with both sections administered on Canvas.

Chapter Quizzes: Five quizzes of ten questions will be assigned throughout the semester on materials students read for a specific chapter (for example a quiz on chapter 3 in week 4). Students will be allowed to retry the quizzes an unlimited number of times up until the due date of each quiz. The five quizzes will be worth 25% of students' final grade.

Discussion Posts: Five discussion posts will be assigned throughout the semester wherein students will be writing to a prompt. Prompts will pertain to reading materials from throughout the semester. Answers should be 250-350 words in length, and will be written in a less formal "blog style." More info on formatting will be available on Canvas. The discussion posts will be worth 25% of students' final grade.

Note: Failure to include citations will result in an automatic loss of 15 points

Primary Source Analysis: Students will write a 600–700 word essay analyzing one document from volume 1 of *Containing Multitudes*. In the essay the students will be asked to exam who the writer/creator of the document was, what is the historical context of the document, and how that context may have influenced the creation of the chosen document. This will be worth 10% of students' final grade.

Signature Assignment: Students will complete a 750-word essay analyzing at least one document from volume 1 of *Containing Multitudes*. In addition to examining who the writer/creator(s) of the document are and what motivated/informed them, students will be asked to explore how the document(s) is reflective of its time, and any present-day parallels that may be present. The Signature Assignment will be worth 10% of students' final grade

Grading Breakdown

Exams: 30%
Chapter Quizzes: 25%
Discussion Posts: 25%
Primary Source Analysis: 10%
Signature Assignment: 10%

Course Outline

Note: The schedule of the course is subject to change. I will notify you if anything changes.

Week 1 (8/17-21): Introductions

- Introduction to the syllabus, class schedule, and policies.
- Due **Friday at 11:59pm**: Introduction assignment

Unit 1: *American Yawp* ch. 1-5

Week 2 (8/24-28): American Origins

- Reading: *American Yawp* chapter 1: "Indigenous America"
- Due **Friday (8/28) at 11:59pm:** Chapter 1 Quiz

Week 3 (8/31-9/4): Making an Atlantic World

- Reading: *American Yawp* chapter 2: "Making and Atlantic World"
- Due **Friday (9/4) at 11:59pm:** Discussion Post #1

Recommended Further Reading: *A Land So Strange* by Andrés Reséndez

Week 4 (9/8-11): Colliding Cultures *(NO CLASS 9/7)*

- Reading: *American Yawp* chapter 3: "Colliding Cultures"

- Due **Friday (9/11) at 11:59pm**: Chapter 3 Quiz

Week 5 (9/14-18): British North America

- Reading: *American Yawp* chapter 4: "British North America"
- Due **Friday (9/18) at 11:59pm**: Discussion Post #2

Week 6 (9/21-25): Colonial Society

- Reading: *American Yawp* chapter 5: "Colonial Society"
- Due **Friday (9/25) at 11:59pm**: Unit 1 Exam

Unit 2: *American Yawp* ch. 6-10

Week 7 (9/28-10/2): The American Revolution

- Reading: *American Yawp* chapter 6: "The American Revolution"
- Due **Friday (10/2) at 11:59pm:** Chapter 6 Quiz

Recommended Further Reading: *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804* by Alan Taylor

Week 8 (10/5-9): A New Nation

- Reading: *American Yawp* chapter 7: "A New Nation"
- Due **Friday (10/9) at 11:59pm**: Discussion Post #3

Week 9 (10/12-16): The Early Republic

- Reading: *American Yawp* chapter 8: "The Early Republic"
- Due **Friday (10/16) at 11:59pm**: Chapter 8 Quiz

Week 10 (10/19-23): Getting Forward

- Reading: *American Yawp* chapter 9: "Getting Forward"
- Due **Friday (10/23) at 11:59pm**: Discussion Post #4

Week 11 (10/26-30): American Democracy

- Reading: *American Yawp* chapter 10: "American Democracy"

- Due **Friday (10/30) at 11:59pm**: Unit 2 Exam

Unit 3: *American Yawp* ch. 11-14

Week 12 (11/2-6): Growth and Conflict

- Reading: *American Yawp* chapter 11: "Growth and Conflict"
- Due **Friday (11/6) at 11:59pm**: Primary Source Analysis

Week 13 (11/9-13): National Crisis

- Reading: *American Yawp* chapter 12: "The National Crisis"
- Due **Friday (11/13) at 11:59pm**: Discussion #5

Week 14 (11/16-20): Civil War

- Reading: *American Yawp* chapter 13: "The Civil War"
- Due **Friday (11/20 at 11:59pm**: Signature Assignment

Recommended Further Reading: *Battle Cry of Freedom* by James M. McPherson

11/23-11/29: Thanksgiving Break ***(NO CLASS THIS WEEK)***

Week 15 (11/30-12/4): Reconstruction & Review ***(NO CLASS ON 12/4)***

- Reading: *American Yawp* chapter 14: "Reconstruction"
- **Final Exam Opens Friday 12/4**

Week 16 (12/7-12/11): Finals Week (*NO CLASS THIS WEEK)*

- **FINAL EXAMS MUST BE SUBMITTED NO LATER THAN 12/10 AT 11:59PM**