History 201: Inventing America

T/Th 1:30pm – 2:50pm, Columbia 150
Professor: Brett Rushforth
Office: 275C McKenzie Hall
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10:00 – 12:00 or by appointment
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“The past is never dead. It's not even past.”
~William Faulkner, Requiem for a Nun

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course offers a historical overview of North American history from its settlement by Native Americans through the founding of the United States. The course title—“Inventing America”—refers to four major developments that we will explore together. First, indigenous peoples created thriving societies linked by trade, diplomacy, and technology exchange. Second, Europeans “discovered” America, forcing them and Indigenous Americans to re-evaluate world geography and human history. Third, the invasion and colonization of North America by Europeans created a “new world” for all people living in the Americas, linking Native American, African, and European worlds and transforming them all. Fourth, a powerful group of these colonizers staged a revolt against their king, which ended in the invention of a new nation, the United States of America.

REQUIRED BOOKS:
- All other readings will be posted on Canvas.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING:
Grades will be calculated by averaging four equally-weighted measures (each 25% of your final grade): one short essay (about 5-7 pages), two exams (a midterm and final), and discussion section participation. Students may complete *either* Paper Assignment 1, due Friday, Nov. 1; *or* Paper Assignment 2, due Monday, Dec. 2. (If you submit both papers, your grades will be averaged.) Discussion section participation grades will be based on your overall performance in the weekly discussion section, including attendance and all in-class activities: short writing responses (reading quizzes), class discussion and debates, and media analysis. *Completing all assignments is mandatory. Anyone failing to submit an essay or to take an exam will fail the class, regardless of what their average would be without the missing assignment.*

Grading in the humanities is, by its nature, not a simple math problem, but it may help to have a reminder of what each grade represents. To receive an A, you must do work that you and I agree is exceptionally insightful, thoughtful, original, and interesting. You must be able to say...
to yourself and to me that your work is truly superior. B work goes beyond what is merely required and demonstrates insight and critical thought, but lacks the depth and ingenuity that would warrant an A. Average work that meets all requirements, gets the “facts” right, but goes no further will receive a C. Substandard work will receive a D. Unacceptable or incomplete work will receive a failing grade.

POLICIES AND REMINDERS:
I have a zero tolerance policy for plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Anyone presenting work as their own that was actually done by another, or for which they have received credit in another class, will fail this class and be reported to the university. Details on the university’s Student Conduct Code can be found here: https://policies.uoregon.edu/voluntary-administration-student-affairs/ch-1-conduct/student-conduct-code

Regarding cell phones and laptops: It is unacceptable to use a cell phone for any reason during class. The use of laptops is a privilege that students must respect to retain. It is unacceptable to use the internet, check or send emails or instant messages, or conduct any other non-class related activity. These actions distract those around you and make it impossible for you to engage the intellectual content of the class. Any use of technology that is not *directly required* for class will result in a full letter grade being deducted from your final grade.

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment (sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and gender or sex-based bullying and stalking). If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, know that help and support are available. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware that all UO employees, other than designated confidential resources (see https://safe.uoregon.edu/services) are required to report credible evidence of prohibited discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. This means that if you tell me about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence that may have violated university policy or state or federal law, I have to share the information with my supervisor or the University’s Title IX Coordinator or the Office of Affirmative Action.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO’s 24-hour hotline to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options, as confidential counselors are not required reporters. You can also visit the SAFE website at https://safe.uoregon.edu/services for more information. Each resource is clearly labeled as either “required reporter,” “confidential UO employee,” or “off-campus,” to allow you to select your desired level of confidentiality.
LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE

(Weekly readings from the Schaller textbook must be completed *before* class on Tuesday. The other readings must be completed *before* you attend your discussion section. You *must* print and bring paper copies of all non-textbook readings to discussion section.)

WEEK 1 (Oct. 1, 3): AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM
Required Reading for Discussion Section:
- Karin Wulf, “Vast Early America” (Online)

WEEK 2 (Oct. 8, 10): ANCIENT AMERICA
Required Reading for Tuesday:
- Schaller, American Horizons, chapter 1, pp. 1-12.
Required Reading for Discussion Section:
- Encountering Native North America (Canvas)

WEEK 3 (Oct. 15, 17): THE SPANISH CENTURY
Required Reading for Tuesday:
Required Reading for Discussion Section:
- Conquistadors and their Critics (Canvas)

Required Reading for Tuesday:
- Schaller, American Horizons, chapter 2, pp. 40-75.
Required Reading for Discussion Section:
- A Plan for English Colonization of North America (Canvas)
- A City on a Hill (Canvas)
Required Viewing for Thursday, Oct. 24 (IN PLACE OF CLASS)
- “After the Mayflower,” Episode 1 of We Shall Remain (PBS). View through UO Knight Library (requires you to login with your UO ID, streamed by Kanopy).
- REQUIRED QUIZ (Canvas)

WEEK 5 (Oct. 29, 31): SETTLER COLONIALISM – LABOR, CONQUEST, CONTROL
Required Reading for Tuesday:
- Schaller, American Horizons, chapter 3, pp. 76-113.
Required Reading for Discussion Section:
- William Byrd, Journal (Canvas)
- Slave and Servant Code of 1705 (Canvas)
- Slave Runaway Advertisements (Canvas)

Essay Option #1 Due, Friday, Nov. 1, by 11:59pm – Upload Essay to Canvas
WEEK 6 (Nov. 5, 7): AN ATLANTIC WORLD
Required Reading for Tuesday:
Required Reading for Discussion Section:
  • Thomas Nairne on Indian Slave Raiding (Canvas)

*MIDTERM EXAM*: in class, Thursday, Nov. 7

WEEK 7 (Nov. 12, 14): EMBRACING EMPIRE
Required Reading for Tuesday:
Required Reading for Discussion Section:
  • Trial of Captain Kidd (Canvas)
  • Olaudah Equiano Describes the Middle Passage (Canvas)

WEEK 8 (Nov. 19, 21): RESISTING EMPIRE
Required Reading for Tuesday:
Required Reading for Discussion Section:
  • Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (Canvas)

WEEK 9 (Nov. 26, 28): A REVOLUTIONARY NATION
Required Reading for Tuesday:
Required Reading for Discussion Section:
  • Constitutional Debates (Canvas)
  • Robert Parkinson, “Did Fear of Slave Revolts Drive American Independence?” (Canvas)

**NO CLASS THURSDAY, NOV. 28 for THANKSGIVING BREAK – DISCUSSION SECTIONS WILL BE HELD AS SCHEDULED**

Essay Option #2 Due, Monday, Dec. 2, by 11:59pm – Upload Essay to Canvas

WEEK 10 (Nov. 27, 29): EMPIRE OF LIBERTY
Required Reading for Tuesday:
Required Reading for Discussion Section:
  • Debating the Sedition Acts (Canvas)

*FINAL EXAM: MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 12:30pm-2:30pm*
There will be no early exam options. If you cannot stay on campus and take the exam as scheduled you are encouraged to find another class that meets your scheduling restrictions.