

HIST 2111 syllabus

Survey of US History I, HIST 2111, Section, 3 credits

Fall 2026

Instructor information

Matthew Hild

matthew.hild@hsoc.gatech.edu

Office, French 226, office hours Wednesday 10:00-11:00 AM, Friday 11:00 AM-12:00 PM, or by appointment

General Course Information

Description

This course will examine the social, political, and economic history of the United States to the post-Civil War period. Topics include, but are not limited to, colonial settlement, the American Revolution and the Constitution, antebellum expansion, slavery and the plantation economy, sectional conflict and the Civil War, and Reconstruction. This course includes study of Georgia history during this period.

Course Learning Outcomes

This is a **Core IMPACTS** course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social or geographic relationships develop, persist or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion

This is a **Core IMPACTS** course that is part of the Political Science and U.S. History (Citizenship) area.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I prepare for my responsibilities as an engaged citizen?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the history of the United States, the history of Georgia, and the provisions and principles of the United States Constitution and the Constitution of Georgia.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Critical Thinking
- Intercultural Competence
- Persuasion

This course fulfills the Georgia Legislative Requirements (GLRs) in US History and Georgia History. See <https://undergradcurriculum.gatech.edu/glr/>.

Required course materials

You will need to purchase (or rent) the following books:

Paul S. Boyer, *American History: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2012), ISBN 978-0-19-538914-2

Theda Perdue, *The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents*, 3rd ed. (Bedford/St Martin's, 2016), ISBN 978-1-319-04902-7

Grading policy

There will be four exams, each of which will constitute 25 percent of the course grade. Students will have the opportunity to earn extra credit on the multiple-choice exams by

writing essays. Details about these opportunities will be announced in class and on Canvas.

Your course grade will be determined according to the following scale, with no exceptions: 89.5 or above=A; 79.5 or above=B; 69.5 or above=C; 59.5 or above=D; below 59.5=F.

According to policy, grades at Georgia Tech are interpreted as follows:

- A Excellent (4 quality points per credit hour)
- B Good (3 quality points per credit hour)
- C Satisfactory (2 quality points per credit hour)
- D Passing (1 quality point per credit hour)
- F Failure (0 quality points per credit hour)

See <http://registrar.gatech.edu/info/grading-system> for more information about the grading system at Georgia Tech.

Description of graded components

Three exams will be multiple choice, and one will be written.

Course policies

Attendance/participation

Given the large size of this class, there will not be policies regarding attendance and participation. However, if you expect to do well in this class, you would be well served by attending on a regular basis.

Academic integrity

The Georgia Tech Honor Code (see <https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-affairs/academic-honor-code>) will be in effect for this course. For students, this means, in this course, that you will not collaborate with anyone while taking exams and while writing essays. Additionally, submitting an essay written by ChatGPT will be considered plagiarism, which violates the Georgia Tech Honor Code. For the instructor's part, a page of sample questions will be provided to students on Canvas for the first multiple-choice exam so that students can have an idea of what kind of questions to expect on the exam.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Accommodations will be made for students with disabilities. These accommodations must be arranged in advance through the Office of Disability Services; see

<https://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>. Please also email the instructor with your accommodations letter and any issues or questions that you wish to discuss.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. See [this catalog page](#) for an articulation of some basic expectation that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while taking this class.

Missed exams

Makeup exams will only be given for illness, approved Institute activities, religious observances, family emergencies, or mandated court appearances, and documentation must be provided as verification.

Schedule of topics, reading assignments, and exam dates

The chapters and page numbers listed below refer to the textbook (*American History: A Very Short Introduction*). You should read *The Cherokee Removal* before the date of the exam on that book (November 13).

This schedule below may be subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. Any such changes will be announced on Canvas.

Week 1 (August 24 & 26) Whose “New World” and Why: Native Americans, Europeans, and Colonial Conquest

Reading assignment: Preface plus pages 1-6 (Stop when you get to “Natives and newcomers: a fateful encounter.”)

Week 2 (August 31 & September 2) Growth and Conflict in the Colonies; British Mercantilism and the Seeds of Colonial Dissent

Reading assignment: pages 6-13 (Stop when you get to the heading “A clash of empires: France versus England.”)

Week 3 (September 9) From the French and Indian War to the American Revolution

Reading assignment: pages 13-20 (Stop when you get to “The war for independence.”)

Week 4 (September 14 & 16) The American Revolution

Reading assignments: pages 20-25 (Stop when you get to “Creating a nation.”) PLUS:

Declaration of Independence,

https://nbhsykibret.weebly.com/uploads/6/0/1/7/60175003/declaration_of_independence.pdf

AND Articles of Confederation,

<https://constitutioncenter.org/the-constitution/historic-document-library/detail/articles-of-confederation>

Week 5 (September 21 & 23) The Creation of a Nation

Reading assignments: pages 25-33 (Stop when you reach the last paragraph.)

PLUS The Constitution, <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution/what-does-it-say>

AND Analysis of Federalist No. 51, <https://teachingamericanhistory.org/resource/analysis-of-federalist-51/>

AND Bill of Rights, <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/primary-sources/bill-of-rights>

Week 6 (September 28 & 30) From the Louisiana Purchase to the War of 1812

EXAM # 1, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 (covers material from weeks one through five)

Reading assignments for Wednesday:

<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1801-1829/louisiana-purchase>

<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1801-1829/war-of-1812>

Week 7 (October 7) The So-Called “Era of Good Feelings”

Reading assignments:

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Era-of-Good-Feelings>

<https://millercenter.org/contested-presidential-elections/corrupt-bargain> (Election of 1824)

Week 8 (October 12-14) The Age of Jackson

Reading assignment: page 33 (beginning with the last paragraph) through page 35 (stop when you get to “A Dynamic Society”)

PLUS <https://tennesseencyclopedia.net/entries/eaton-affair/>

Week 9 (October 19 & 21) Antebellum Agriculture, Industry, and Technology

Reading assignment: pages 35-37

PLUS

<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/antebellum-industrialization/>

AND <https://www.historycentral.com/Ant/Economics/Agriculture.html> (Agriculture in Antebellum America)

AND https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=2&psid=3517 (The Disruption of the Artisan System of Labor)

Week 10 (October 26 and 28) No reading assignment

EXAM # 2 ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28 (covers material from weeks six through nine)

Week 11 (November 2 and 4) The Second Great Awakening, Antebellum Reform Movements, and Manifest Destiny

Reading assignments: pages 38-44

PLUS <https://www.ushistory.org/us/22c.asp> (Religious Transformation and the Second Great Awakening)

Week 12 (November 9 & 11) The Mexican War and the “Slavery Issue”

Reading assignment: pages 45-50

PLUS <https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/the-mexican-american-war-in-a-nutshell>

Week 13 (November 16 & 18) From the Compromise of 1850 to the Election of 1860 (or, the Path to the Civil War)

Reading assignments: pages 51-54 (Stop when you get to “Civil War.”)

EXAM ON *The Cherokee Removal*, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18

Week 14 (November 23) The Civil War (or the War Between the States), 1861-1865

Reading assignments: pages 54-58 (Stop when you get to “Reconstruction’s failed promise.”)

PLUS

<https://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/civil-war-atlanta-home-front/>

AND Emancipation Proclamation, <https://billofrightsinsitute.org/activities/emancipation-proclamation-annotated>

AND Gettysburg Address, <https://www.history.com/articles/gettysburg-address>

Week 15 (November 30 & December 2) Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (We will probably finish covering the Civil War on Monday, given we only have one class period in Week 14.)

Reading assignment: pages 58-66 (Stop when you get to the last paragraph.)

Week 16 (December 7 & 9) Finish covering Reconstruction; documentary in class on Dec. 9.

No reading assignment

FINAL EXAM, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 11:20 AM