

Frederic Edwin Church, *Twilight in the Wilderness* (1860)

HIST2111 Syllabus

Survey of United States History I, 3 Credits

Spring 2027

Instructor Information

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General Course Information

Description

This is a course about an early America bathed not in the hazy soft light of folklore and imagined memory, but confronted head-on in its ambitious, boisterous, complex, contentious, messy, noisy, violent, fully human and full-bodied act of becoming. It is a course about arguments and uprisings, rebellions and revolutions, stunning successes and heartbreaking failures.

This semester we will explore the collisions and chaos of colonial settlement, multiple struggles for independence, and the improbable rise of a new nation founded on the

proposition, radical for its time, that "all men are created equal." Together we will try to understand the American past through examinations of art, class, culture, gender, geography, politics, race, and technology. We will also investigate how the grand ideals but unequal outcomes of the first American Revolution set the stage for a second in the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the major social, political, economic, and cultural events in American history from the start of colonial settlement to the end of the Civil War.
- Analyze and explain multiple causes of complex events using conflicting sources.
- Generate substantive, open-ended questions about the past and develop research strategies to answer them.
- Develop and apply historical methods for collecting, sifting, organizing, questioning, synthesizing, interpreting, and contextualizing a diverse array of complex material.

Required Course Materials

This course will be online and asynchronous. Lecture videos and project instructions can be accessed through the "modules" tab in Canvas, while required readings can be accessed through our course Canvas Reading List. Please see the "graded components" section of this syllabus and our course calendar for additional details.

Content for each module will unlock following the schedule outlined by the course calendar. To succeed, you will need to watch all videos, take careful notes, participate in group discussions, and complete the research projects. In short, you will need to spend ample time engaging with the content of this course.

Readings for group discussions are as follows. Please see the course calendar and assignment instructions for additional details.

For group discussion #1:

- (excerpts from) John Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia* (1624)
- John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity" (1630)
- Nathaniel Bacon, *Declaration of the People of Virginia* (1676)

For group discussion #2:

- (excerpts from) Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1776)
- Thomas Jefferson et al., *Declaration of Independence* (1776)
- *The Constitution of Georgia* (1777)

For group discussion #3:

- *Constitution of the United States of America* (1787) and *Bill of Rights* (1791)
- James Madison, *Federalist 51* (1788)
- (excerpts from) President George Washington, "Farewell Address" (1796)

For group discussion #4:

- (excerpts from) Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature* (1836)
- Thomas Cole, "Essay on American Scenery" (1836)

For group discussion #5:

- Elizabeth Cady Stanton, et. al., *Declaration of Sentiments* (1848)
- (excerpts from) Henry David Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience" (1849)
- (excerpt from) William Lloyd Garrison, "Speech . . . Relating to the Execution of John Brown" (1859)

For group discussion #6:

- (excerpt from) Walt Whitman, "I Celebrate Myself," *Leaves of Grass* (1855)

Additional, shorter texts (excerpts from legislation, poems, proclamations, publications, sermons, speeches, and treatises, etc.) will be available on the slides for our course. You should be prepared to answer questions about <u>all</u> this material on exams.

Grading Policy

Students can earn up to 405 points this semester. Final grades are based on the number of points earned divided by 305 [A: 90%+, B: 80-90%, C:70-80%, D:60-70%]. Points may be earned as follows.

Exams [= 225 pts]

- Exam #1: 45pts
- Exam #2: 45pts
- Exam #3: 45pts
- Final Exam: 90pts (45pts exam #4 + 45pts cumulative essay)

Group Discussions [= 90 pts]

- 20-minute video of group discussion #1: 15pts
- 20-minute video of group discussion #2: 15pts
- 20-minute video of group discussion #3: 15pts
- 20-minute video of group discussion #4: 15pts
- 20-minute video of group discussion #5: 15pts
- 20-minute video of group discussion #6: 15pts
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Projects [= 90 pts]

- Georgia Newspapers Project, 1763-1787: 30pts

- Georgia Newspapers Project, 1820-1860: 30pts
- Museum/Monument/Site Project: 30 pts

Description of Graded Components

Exams

There will be four exams. Each exam will consist of multiple-choice questions drawn from lectures/readings/slides since the last exam. Exam #4 will take place during the scheduled final exam period. After completing the multiple-choice section of exam #4, you will then have the remainder of the final exam period to answer a cumulative essay question. Details will follow.

Exams will be taken in Canvas using Honorlock **using two cameras,** which will record you from two different directions, your screen, and your surroundings. Please see Honorlock for instructions on how to use a QR code to set up your cellphone as your second camera. I CANNOT ACCEPT ANY EXAM in which I cannot see your entire surrounding area. (You don't want a zero for an exam and I don't want to give you one, so please make sure I that can see that you are taking the test using only your own amazing brain and a single, handwritten, paper study sheet this course.)

All exams will be closed notes, but you are welcome to make and use a handwritten, single-sided, 8.5x11" paper study sheet for each exam. Details will follow. You must show this entire sheet on camera at the start of the exam. You may not use anything else. To be clear, this means no technology other than the laptop you use to take the test and the cellphone that is recording you as your second camera. You may not have any windows, documents, or tabs open other than Canvas and Honorlock through Chrome. You may not have near you any other devices, speakers, headphones, papers, notebooks, etc. You may not use AI.

Please remember that it is a violation of the Georgia Tech Honor Code (see below) to submit work that is not your own.

Group Discussions

Thoughtful and precise analysis of the past requires that we give past generations the space and time to speak for themselves. You need space and time to speak for yourself, too. This semester, we will do this by engaging in group discussions and debates (20+ minutes each) of assigned readings. Please take notes on all assigned readings and be prepared to discuss them on exams.

Groups will be assigned alphabetically at the start of the semester. You *must* work with your group members to plan how you will discuss the readings, when you will meet online to do so, and which member will record and submit the discussion on behalf of your group. Specific instructions will be forthcoming.

In advance of each discussion, please:

- Plan adequate time to read, make notes about, and thoughtfully consider the material and how you would like your group to analyze it;
- Write a clear and concise 250-word argument in response to the prompt, focusing on what you think are the most interesting/important *specific* points in the text and why;
- And write a thoughtful sentence-long question that can lead your group into a deep and serious conversation. Each group member will read their statement and their question at the start of the video as a way of opening the discussion.

Projects

Over the course of this semester, you will work on three small projects that ask you to investigate and respond to primary or secondary source materials. Instructions for each will be posted in modules, as well as on the "assignments" tab. Please remember that it is a violation of the Georgia Tech Honor Code (see below) to submit work that is not your own.

Course Policies

Attendance and/or Participation

This online asynchronous course will allow you to work through each module at your own pace as long as you meet all due dates for discussion videos, projects, and exams. Please familiarize yourself with and rigorously adhere to the details listed on the course calendar.

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. Review Georgia Tech's Honor Code and the student Code of Conduct.

Please keep in mind that we are bound by and agree to uphold the Georgia Tech Honor Code at all times. No exceptions. This means that you:

- must take exams entirely on your own,
- will not communicate with anyone at all during the open exam window, and will not make images of or in any way record or share exam questions,
- may not possess, verbally share information about, or use anyone else's tests, research projects, written responses, or other graded coursework,
- may not include in any assignment anything that was not written directly by you without proper citation.

All individual work you submit should be your own. You may not include in any assignment anything that was not written directly by you without proper citation. This means you are prohibited from using AI in any and all work that you submit, as AI pulls together the writings and research of others without credit or citation.

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Core IMPACTS

Core IMPACTS is the University System of Georgia's General Education curriculum.

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 Citizenship 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 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

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

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. The Student-Faculty Expectations articulate some basic expectations 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 in this class.