

University of Western Ontario  
Department of History  
2014-2015

**The United States:  
Colonial Period to the Present**  
2301E

Dr. Jeffery Vacante  
*Email:* jvacant2@uwo.ca  
*Office hours:* Tues. 1:30-3:30pm  
in Lawson Hall 2218

*Lectures:* Tues. & Thurs. 9:30-10:30 am  
in Arts & Humanities Building (AHB) 1R40  
and one tutorial hour

The American experience is often framed as an expression of historical exceptionalism in that it is the story of individual freedom and democratic governance. The idea that the United States stands apart from the rest of the world and that its history is one in which some of its people have struggled to create a “City Upon a Hill” has nourished the American mind for over three centuries. This particular narrative is at the heart of American self-definition, and has shaped the projection of American power from George Washington’s Farewell Address to the Monroe Doctrine to Woodrow Wilson’s internationalism to George W. Bush’s “war on terror.”

Many observers in the United States talk of the American “experiment” in a manner that is meant to imply the precariousness and novelty of democracy and liberty on earth. These observers also point out is that the idea of freedom and equality is just as precarious at home as it is abroad. Indeed, much of American history can be described as a long conversation about the meaning of liberty and equality as well as about the proper exercise of power. The story of American history, then, is the story of power, equality, and the persistent struggle to live up to the lofty expectations of a country that is supposed to stand as a shining example of democracy and liberty. It is this tension that makes American history so interesting as well as so important. This course will explore the tensions at the heart of the American experience by examining the major events in American social, cultural, and political history.

In this course students will, in addition to learning history of the United States, sharpen their ability to read and think critically, develop their analytical skills, learn to organize and present their thoughts in the form of academic essays, and practice the art of expressing their ideas in tutorials in such a manner that demonstrates their respect for the opinions of others as well as their own critical engagement with the course readings and the world around them.

***Texts:***

Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty! An American History*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Norton 2013).

Jill Lepore, *The Name of War* (Vintage 1998).

James T. Kloppenberg, *Reading Obama* (Princeton 2011).

These books, which are available at the university bookstore, will be supplemented by occasional short readings to be made available on the course website.

**Grade Breakdown:**

Review	15%
Research Essay	25%
Midterm Exam	20%
Participation	15%
Final Exam	25%

**Requirements:** Students will write a **review** (8 pages) of Jill Lepore’s *The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Vintage, 1998). A good review is one that does not merely summarize the contents of a book. Rather, it is one that describes the author’s argument, identifies the significance of this argument within the larger historiographical tradition of a particular field, and considers the means by which the author goes about presenting this argument. A review of Lepore’s book should thus provide the reader with a firm understanding of King Philip’s War, explain the manner in which this War has shaped American identity, and consider how this book fits into the larger historiography on the topic. You should treat this essay as a review of an argument rather than a review of a book. What this means is you should grapple with Lepore’s *ideas* (argument) much more than with the physical manifestation of these ideas—*the book* (typos/writing style/your personal views about the book (I liked it/didn’t like it), chapter-by-chapter summaries, etc.). Be sure that the review is well-written and that it follows proper scholarly conventions (including proper citation style; include a cover page). The review is due in tutorial the week of **November 3**. An identical copy of the essay must be submitted to *turnitin* through the course web page. Essays submitted after the due date will be subject to a late penalty of five percent the first day and one percent for every day thereafter (including weekends).

Students will also produce a **research essay** (12-15 pages) on a topic of their choice that will rely heavily, although not exclusively, on primary sources. This essay should follow proper scholarly conventions and citation style (Chicago style footnotes, bibliography, and include a cover page) and *draw upon at least eight sources*. Good papers will rely upon considerably more than eight sources and make use of a good mix of sources, including books, scholarly articles, as well as primary material. The essay is due in your tutorial the week of **March 9**. An identical copy of the essay must be submitted to *turnitin* through the course web page. Essays submitted after the due date will be subject to a late penalty of five percent the first day and one percent for every day thereafter (including weekends). **No papers will be accepted after the last day of class, on April 7.**

**Please note:**

*“All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com ( <http://www.turnitin.com> ).*

Students will also be assessed on their **participation** during weekly tutorials. During these tutorials, students will discuss the assigned readings and will be encouraged to grapple with the larger themes of the course. The textbook readings will serve as the background material that will, it is hoped, provide the necessary base from which to launch into an intense discussion of each week's major themes. Students will be assessed on their attendance throughout the year as well as on the basis of their familiarity with the readings and their ability to discuss the broader themes of the course. It should be noted that the quality of one's remarks are very often more valuable than the quantity of one's interventions in a discussion. A student's ability to consider and respect the ideas and opinions of others will also be recognized. ***Please note: tutorials begin the week of September 15.***

There will also be a **midterm exam** during the exam period in December as well as a **final exam** during the formal exam period in April.

***Lecture Schedule:***

Sept. 4: Introduction

Sept. 9-11: The Chesapeake

Foner, 4-69; 101-108; 134-150.

- Nathaniel Bacon, *Manifesto* (1676).

Sept. 16-18: New England

Foner, 69-84; 108-112.

- John Winthrop, *Speech to the Massachusetts General Court* (1645)

Sept. 23-25: The Road to Revolution

Foner, 84-101; 113-133; 150-194

- Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1776)

Sept. 30-Oct. 2: The Constitution

Foner, 195-291.

- James Madison, *Federalist no. 10* (1787)

Oct. 7-9: The Early Republic

Foner, 292-327.

Oct. 14-16: The Age of Jackson

Foner, 328-409.

Oct. 21-23: The Road to Disunion

Foner, 410-535.

- John O'Sullivan, *Manifest Destiny* (1845)

Oct. 28: The Road to Disunion II

- George Fitzhugh, *Sociology of the South, or the Failure of Free Society* (1854)

- *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857)

Nov. 4-6: The Civil War and Reconstruction

Foner, 536-625

- Abraham Lincoln, *The Gettysburg Address* (1863).
- *The Mississippi Black Code* (1865), selections

Nov. 11-13: The Age of Jim Crow

Foner, 688-703.

- Booker T. Washington, *Atlanta Compromise Speech* (1895)
- W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) ch. 1

Nov. 18-20: The Gilded Age

Foner, 627-675.

- Richard Hofstadter, "William Graham Sumner: Social Darwinist," *New England Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (September 1941): 457-77.

Nov. 25-27: The Gilded Age II

Dec. 3: Conclusion to First Semester

### **Midterm Exam**

Jan. 6-8: The Populist Revolt

Foner, 676-688.

Jan. 13-15: The Progressive Mind

Foner, 722-756.

- Robert Wiebe, *The Search For Order* (1967), 111-132
- Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (1955), 131-148

Jan. 20-22: The Progressive Presidents

Foner, 756-765.

Jan. 27-29: The Great War

Foner, 703-721; 766-811.

- Woodrow Wilson, *A World Safe for Democracy* (1917)

Feb. 3-5: The Twenties

Foner, 813-847.

- Calvin Coolidge, *Government and Business* (1926)
- Alain Locke, *The New Negro* (1925)

Feb. 10-12: The New Deal

Foner, 847-901.

- Barton J. Bernstein, “The New Deal: The Conservative Achievements of Liberal Reform,” in Bernstein, ed., *Towards a New Past: Dissenting Essays in American History* (New York: Vintage, 1967), 263-88.

### **Reading Week: Feb. 16-20**

Feb. 24-26: The Cold War

Foner, 902-983.

- Henry R. Luce, “The American Century,” *Life* (February 17, 1941): 61-65.

Mar. 3-5: The Affluent Society

Foner, 984-1033.

- John Kenneth Galbraith, “The Unseemly Economics of Opulence,” *Harper’s* (January 1952): 58-63.
- Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (1964) selections

Mar. 10-12: The Civil Rights Movement

Foner, 1018-1053.

- Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” (1963)

Mar. 17-19: The Sixties

Foner, 1053-1079.

- David Halberstam, “The Programming of Robert McNamara,” *Harper’s* (February 1971): 37-71.
- James C. Thomson, Jr., “How Could Vietnam Happen?—An Autopsy,” *Atlantic Monthly* (April 1968): 47-53.

Mar. 24-26: Liberalism and its Discontents

Foner, 1080-1101.

- Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), ch. 1
- The Port Huron Statement (1962)

Mar. 31-Apr.2: The Conservative Revolt

Foner, 1101-1209.

- Richard Hofstadter, “The Paranoid Style in American Politics,” *Harper’s* (November 1964): 77-86.
- Kevin Phillips, “Conservative Chic: The Evolving Style of the New Republican Majority,” *Harper’s* (June 1973): 66-70.

Apr. 7: The Meaning of Obama

- Kloppenberg, *Reading Obama*

## ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

### **Prerequisites and Antirequisites:**

Unless you have either the requisites for this course, as described in the Academic Calendar description of the course, or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites. The Academic Calendar description of each course also indicates which classes are considered antirequisites, i.e., to cover such similar material that students are not permitted to receive academic credit for both courses.

### **Academic Offences:**

Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitute a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

### **Plagiarism:**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of Publication and page number. Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In

either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writer's ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source; these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction, your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases, in their suspension from the University.

## **Medical Issues:**

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Please go to [https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical\\_accommodations\\_link\\_for\\_OOR.pdf](https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical_accommodations_link_for_OOR.pdf) to read about the University's policy on medical accommodation. This site provides links to the necessary forms. In the event of illness, you should contact Academic Counselling as soon as possible. The Academic Counsellors will determine, in consultation with the student, whether or not accommodation should be requested. They will subsequently contact the instructors in the relevant courses about the accommodation. Once the instructor has made a decision about whether to grant an accommodation, the student should contact his/her instructors to determine a new due date for tests, assignments, and exams.

### **SUPPORT SERVICES:**

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western, <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

*Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact*

*Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.*

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact, Rebecca Dashford, Undergraduate Program Advisor, Department of History, 519-661-2111 x84962 or [rdashfo@uwo.ca](mailto:rdashfo@uwo.ca)