

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In 1783, the War for American Independence was formally ended and the last British troops left for home. Flushed with victory—a victory that many thought improbable if not impossible—Americans turned to themselves and wondered how best to govern this country they had created. It wasn't easy. Recent events had made Americans deeply suspicious of government in general, and the continent seemed too large and diverse to form a stable and lasting union. Over the next hundred years that union would fracture in civil war and come together again after more than half a million lives had been lost. We shall explore several of the challenges faced by Americans in building their new nation. Rather than cover every event like a survey, we will look closely at particular themes: politics, gender relations, religion, slavery, and self-determination. We shall also use the life of Sam Houston (1793-1863) as a case study to illustrate the tremendous changes that occurred during the relatively short period covered in this course. Along the way, we will encounter other famous faces. However, we will also look closely at the ways in which ordinary Americans experienced events and made an impact on society. By studying our past, we will understand more clearly how we became who we are today.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Most people I meet say that they don't like history. "Too dry," they say. "Too many dates and facts." This course will cover a great deal of information, but along the way I hope you will develop a greater interest in learning about the past. Indeed, my personal goal is to change your opinion of the study of history—for the better. You probably have goals of your own in taking this course. Most of you need to fulfill the legislative requirement, some of you may need an elective, and others may simply be curious about the story of our nation. Whatever your reasons for taking the class, I hope that you will view it as something more than a hurdle you have to jump on the way to graduation. This course will help you hone a number of concrete skills, which you will find important as a worker and as a citizen. Over the semester you should:

Build a sound literacy in the history of the United States from the end of the Revolution through Reconstruction.

Improve your ability to read closely and analytically.

Improve your written and verbal communication.

Sharpen your critical thinking.

Learn how to interpret and analyze primary historical documents.

Learn how to interpret and analyze secondary sources.

Learn how to detect arguments as well as how to craft and support your own.

Work collaboratively.

Appreciate the importance of perspective.

Let's start with the required books, as they are the foundation for most of the work in this course.

You will cultivate these important skills through readings, discussions, in-class exercises, outside assignments, and exams.

REQUIRED BOOKS AND OTHER READINGS

You would be surprised to learn how much time I spend in selecting books to assign. Contrary to what some of you may think, I do not purposely seek out readings that are overly long and dull. Instead, I pick books that are relatively short and written for a broad audience. I also realize that, for many of you, the purchase of books poses a financial challenge, so most of the titles chosen cost under \$20 (buy them used for a cheaper price). While you will undoubtedly find some more enjoyable than others, you will be learning something new and interesting about American history in each one.

REQUIRED BOOK CHECKLIST

- *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation* – Joseph J. Ellis (ISBN-10: 0375705244; \$14.95)

- *Parlor Politics: In Which the Ladies of Washington Help Build a City and a Government* –

Catherine Allgor (ISBN-10: 081392118X; \$16.95)

- *The Shawnee Prophet* -R. David Edmunds (ISBN-10: 0803267118; \$18.95)

- *The Kingdom of Matthias: A Story of Sex and Salvation in 19th Century America* Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz (ISBN-10: 0-19-509835-8; \$16.95)

○ ***Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave & Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl -Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs (ISBN-10: 0345478231; \$6.95)***

○ **Sam Houston -James L. Haley (ISBN-10: 0806136448; \$24.95)**

In addition to the six books listed above, you may be assigned various primary documents and scholarly articles over the course of the semester. These supplemental readings will be announced at least one class period before they are due.

Professors and students often play a cat and mouse game when it comes to assigned readings. While some students read every word the professor assigns, many skim through the pages and some skip the assignment altogether. As much as humanly possible, strive to be the student who reads everything at least once. Even if you don't enjoy the chapter or book, you need to read the assignment in order to complete coursework and participate in discussions. Quizzes are a common way of encouraging students to read and "getting" those who don't. Though I find them unpleasant to write, read, and grade, I will give them if there appears to be an epidemic of non-reading. **Please note:** It is the responsibility of the student to obtain required books and complete all reading assignments on time. Make sure you buy them as soon as possible, as the bookstores will be sending back their stock to make way for the next semester.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

You must also purchase some kind of spiral notebook to use as a "Reading Journal" and "Participation Log" (more on this later) as well as a packet of 3x5 index cards. And you'll need to check your University email address (whatever is linked to Blackboard) at least once a day throughout the semester.

READING AND LECTURE SCHEDULE

Below is a list of weekly reading assignments (M stands for Monday, W for Wednesday, and F for Friday). Lectures will be short and will generally pertain to the topic covered in the book. In general, readings are due on the day they appear. For example, the first reading assignment is from *Founding Brothers* and due the day it appears in the schedule: Wednesday, 1/23). **Please note:** The Sam Houston book will be treated a little differently. The first chapter has a due date, but apart from that you will be reading at your own pace; however, the book will need to be completed by Monday, April 7 when we visit the Sam Houston Memorial Museum. One more thing, the schedule below is subject to change, depending on how slow or fast we're moving in class.

WEEK 1 W (1/16): Introduction to Course and Historical Methods F (1/18): *Founding Brothers*, Preface-Ch. 1

WEEK 2 M(1/21): *NO CLASS -MLK Day*** W (1/23): *Founding Brothers*, Ch. 2; *Sam Houston*, through Ch. 1 F (1/25): *Founding Brothers*, Ch. 3**

WEEK 3 M (1/28): *Founding Brothers*, Ch. 4 W (1/30): *Founding Brothers*, Ch. 5 F (2/1): *Founding Brothers*, Ch. 6

WEEK 4 M (2/4): *Parlor Politics*, Introduction-Ch. 1 W (2/6): *Parlor Politics*, Ch. 2 F (2/8): *Parlor Politics*, Ch. 3

WEEK 5 M (2/11): *Parlor Politics*, Ch. 4 W (2/13): *Parlor Politics*, Ch. 5-Conclusion F (2/15): ROUGH DRAFT OF ESSAY 1 DUE

WEEK 6 M (2/18): ESSAY 1 DUE W (2/20): *Shawnee Prophet*, Preface-Ch. 1 F (2/22): *Shawnee Prophet*, Ch. 2

WEEK 7 M (2/25): *Shawnee Prophet*, Ch. 3 W (2/27): *Shawnee Prophet*, Ch. 4 F (2/29): *Shawnee Prophet*, Ch. 5

WEEK 8 M (3/3): *Shawnee Prophet*, Ch. 6 W (3/5): *Shawnee Prophet*, Ch. 7 F (3/7): *Shawnee Prophet*, Ch. 8-9

*****NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK (3/10-14)*****

WEEK 9 M (3/17): *Kingdom of Matthias*, Prologue-Ch. 1 W (3/19): *Kingdom of Matthias*, Ch. 2 F (3/21): ***NO CLASS – Good Friday***

WEEK 10 M (3/24): *Kingdom of Matthias*, Ch. 3 W (3/26): *Kingdom of Matthias*, Ch. 4-Epilogue

F: (3/28): ROUGH DRAFT OF ESSAY 2 DUE

WEEK 11 M (3/31): ESSAY 2 DUE W (4/2): *Frederick Douglass*, through Ch. II F (4/4): *Frederick Douglass*, Ch. III-VI

WEEK 12 M (4/7): ***NO CLASS – MEET AT SAM HOUSTON MEMORIAL MUSEUM IN AFTERNOON*** W (4/9): *Frederick Douglass*, Ch. VII-IX F (4/11): *Frederick Douglass*, Ch. X-end

WEEK 13 M (4/14): *Incidents*, Ch. I-VI W (4/16): *Incidents*, Ch. VII-XI F (4/18): *Incidents*, Ch. XII-XVI

WEEK 14 M (4/21): *Incidents*, Ch. XVII-XXI W (4/23): *Incidents*, Ch. XXII-XXVI F (4/25): *Incidents*, Ch. XXVII-XXXI

WEEK 15 M (4/28): *Incidents*, Ch. XXXII-XXXVI W (4/30): *Incidents*, Ch. XXXVII-end F (5/2): ROUGH DRAFT OF ESSAY 3 DUE

WEEK 16 M (5/5): (Presentations / Course Wrap-Up) ESSAY 3 DUE W (5/7): (Presentations / Course Wrap-Up) READING JOURNAL / PARTICIPATION LOG DUE

SAM HOUSTON PROJECT DUE BY M (5/12) 12:00 NOON

COURSEWORK

Essays, in-class exercises, and participation in discussions and group work will help you achieve the objectives I outlined above. Your final course grade will comprise the following:

**Essay 1 20% Monday, February 18 Essay 2 20 Monday, March 31
Essay 3 20 Monday, May 5 Journal/Participation 20 Wednesday,
May 7 Sam Houston Project 20 Monday, May 12 by 12:00 noon
TOTAL 100%**

**A = 90-100 points
B = 80-89 C =
70-79 D = 60-69 F
= 59 and below**

Essays: You will write three essays that compare and contrast assigned books. The class day before the essay is due you will be required to bring a rough draft for an in-class peer review. You will also have the opportunity to revise and resubmit the essay that received the lowest grade. More information about the essay assignments will be given in a handout.

Reading Journal/Participation Log: To help you read more thoughtfully and analytically, you will keep a Reading Journal. Every time I assign a portion of the text or outside document, I will give you a question to think about as you read. Some are factual while others ask you to engage critically with the text/document. You will need to write an entry as many times as there are reading assignments for a given week—usually three—but you are allowed to take one week off (choose your week off wisely). Though I do not require a particular length, you usually need at least half a page to develop a complete thought. Responses must be “complete” to obtain full credit—in other words, you must fully address the question(s) and demonstrate thoughtful consideration of the piece. Periodically, you will be assigned in-class responses, such as to readings due that day. Therefore, Reading Journals must be brought to class every day. From time to time I shall pick them up to see how you’re doing and to give you feedback. This semester-long assignment will help you become a better reader, writer, and thinker. It should also help you form a stronger class community.

With respect to participation, you'll get much more out of lectures and readings—and, thus, the course—if you contribute to discussions and engage in group work during class. Not only will you learn more about the material, you will come to find valuable study partners and proofreaders among your fellow students. Though I will be evaluating your participation throughout the semester, the final grade will also depend on your own assessment. Therefore, at the end of every week, you should jot down notes as part of an ongoing "Participation Log" in your Reading Journal about how you contributed to the class, including whenever you seek outside help, contact classmates, or do anything else that demonstrates participation. I also strongly encourage you to take advantage of educational University events and opportunities to learn about history outside of the classroom. I will make announcements about such events and make frequent recommendations about films, History Channel programs, etc. **Please note:** Outside participation opportunities are especially helpful for those who are too shy to speak up in class. At the end of the semester, full credit will be given to those students who make informed comments, ask thoughtful questions, demonstrate preparedness, and actively involve themselves throughout the semester. Full credit also depends on consistent civility—please see "Classroom Rules of Conduct" below.

Sam Houston Project: Sam Houston lived many lives during his long life. You will explore his remarkable history in assigned biography, which you will read at your own pace. The first part of this project will involve reading the biography and taking ongoing notes on index cards. The next part of this project involves trips to the Sam Houston Memorial Museum located across from the main campus. One visit will be on your own, and the other will be conducted as a class on Monday, April 7 (the book must be completed by this date and index card book notes handed in). In addition to a written component, the project asks you to select an artifact or group of artifacts to analyze and incorporate in some creative interpretation of Sam Houston's life and times. More information about the project will appear in a handout

STUDY TIPS

Consider finding one or more study partners in class at the beginning of the semester. Study buddies can be a valuable resource in preparing for exams. In addition to drawing on your classmates and seeking help from the instructor, you may wish to take advantage of other resources available to you on campus. The SAM Center (located in AB4 210) provides academic advising and mentoring to students of all levels. In addition, the Reading Center (located in Farrington 109) can help you master skills necessary for working through the assigned texts.

CLASSROOM RULES OF CONDUCT

Students must to adhere to the SHSU Code of Student Conduct, which can be found at <https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>. And within this classroom, students must also demonstrate **civility** at all times. In other words, do not come in late, leave early, text message, sleep, whisper, do Sudoku, or anything else that disrupts the class or distracts me. Civility must also be maintained in all communications with me and with other classmates whether online or in person. Keep in mind that this class is a community, and the community cannot function if we don't all show basic courtesy and respect and devote our full attention to each other during the time we're together. Students who commit acts of incivility may be asked to complete additional assignments and/or leave the classroom.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action.

5.31 The University and its official representatives, acting in accordance with Subsection 5.32, may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. "Cheating" includes the following and similar actions:

- (1) Copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files, data listings, and/or programs.
- (2) Using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test.
- (3) Collaborating, without authorization, with another student during an examination or in preparing academic work.
- (4) Knowingly, and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying, or possessing, in whole or in part, the contents of an unadministered test.
- (5) Substituting for another student, permitting any other person, or otherwise assisting any other person to substitute for oneself or for another student in the taking of an examination or test or the preparation of academic work to be submitted for academic credit.
- (6) Bribing another person to obtain an unadministered test or information about an unadministered test.
- (7) Purchasing, or otherwise acquiring and submitting as one's own work any research paper or other writing assignment prepared by an individual or firm. This section does not apply to the typing of the rough and/or final versions of an assignment by a professional typist.

5.32 "Plagiarism" means the appropriation and the unacknowledged incorporation of another's work or idea into one's own work offered for credit.

5.33 "Collusion" means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit.

5.34 "Abuse of resource materials" means the mutilation, destruction, concealment, theft or alteration of materials provided to assist students in the mastery of course materials.

5.35 "Academic work" means the preparation of an essay, dissertation, thesis, report, problem, assignment, or other project that the student submits as a course requirement or for a grade.

2. PROCEDURES IN CASES OF ALLEGED ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

2.01 Procedures for discipline due to academic dishonesty shall be the same as in disciplinary actions specified in The Texas State University System *Rules and Regulations* and Sam Houston State University *Student Guidelines* except that all academic dishonesty actions shall be first considered and reviewed by the faculty member teaching the class. The faculty member may impose failure or reduction of a grade in a test or the course, and/or performing additional academic work not required of other students in the course. If the faculty member believes that additional disciplinary action is necessary, as in the case of flagrant or repeated violations, the case may be referred to the Dean of Student Life or a designated appointee for further action. If the student involved does not accept the decision of the faculty member, the student may appeal to the chair of the appropriate academic department/school, seeking reversal of the faculty member's decision.

2.02 If the student does not accept the decision of the chair of the academic department/school, he/she may appeal to the appropriate academic dean. The chair of the academic department/school may also refer the case directly to the academic dean if the case so warrants.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Either you or some kind third-party is paying a lot of money for you to be enrolled in this course. Divide the amount paid for the course by the total number of times we meet, and write that amount down every time you miss class. That was money spent for no return benefit. And the class loses out, too, by not having your contributions that day. Make the course a success and make the most of your investment by coming to every class. Attendance is required and will be taken at the start of class—anyone arriving after attendance has been taken will be counted absent. Of course, there are times when you won't be able to come because of illness or other matters. If you have to miss class for any reason, please send me an email as soon as possible letting me know of your situation. **Please note:** Students who miss more than three classes may receive a grade reduction at the end of the term. Students who miss more than six classes will be recommended to drop the course altogether.

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. SHSU policy 861001 provides the procedure to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to the instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). This request must be made in the first fifteen days of the semester in which the absence(s) will occur. The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with the instructor in order that accommodations can be made to assure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired. SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. **Please note:** No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center and provide me with proper documentation.

VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted to the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

INSTRUCTOR EVALUATIONS

At the end of the semester, students will be asked to complete an evaluation of the course, but I welcome feedback about readings, assignments, and my instruction throughout the semester. Let's work together to make this a successful and rewarding learning experience.

CHANGES TO THIS SYLLABUS

This syllabus is your contract for the course. I will not change the nature of the course, the number of assignments, or the grading system. However, I reserve the right to update the course schedule and reading assignments throughout the term.