

HST 101 & 102: American History to 1865 and Since 1865

HST 101 & 102

**American History to 1865 and Since 1865
(6 credits sequence)**

Class Size: 15-25

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Course Catalog Description

HST 101: Founding and development of institutions. The Revolution and the new nation. Problems of growth and sectionalism. Challenge to the union.

HST 102: Reconstruction. Industrialization and its effects. Emergence as a world power. Economic and social problems, reforms. Global war and global responsibilities.

Course Overview

The American History sequence is a full-year college course comprised of History 101: American History to 1865 and History 102: The United States Since 1865. In this course we will study American attitudes and beliefs about political democracy, social justice, economic opportunity, equality, and the environment, and we will trace how those attitudes and beliefs have evolved in the first two-and-a-half centuries of

American history. We will study history as a process through which our society and our country came to be as they are today. It is hoped that, by the end of the course, students will not only know more about the American experience, but will have learned how to read critically, to construct persuasive arguments, to use evidence effectively, and to hone a variety of crucial analytic skills.

HST 101 surveys the first half of United States history (1492-1865), beginning with the European colonization of the Americas, continuing on through the American Revolution, the ratification of the Federal Constitution, the democratization of politics and religion, territorial expansion and commercial development, increasing sectional tensions over slavery, and ending with the Civil War. Four major themes will define our survey:

- Global Convergence. American History began in the midst of a long-duration historical development that we today call “globalization,” which had been well under way before Christopher Columbus, but accelerated considerably after 1492. Exploration, trade, religion, politics, and war had brought European, African, and Asian peoples into increasing contact, and to America. In this class we will devote particular attention to the global dimensions of our national history: how world historical events and processes shaped, and were in turn shaped by, the development of the United States.

- Cosmopolitanism and Enlightenment. The increasing contact between different peoples had many profound cultural, religious, and intellectual consequences. Knowledge of other cultures and societies led some philosophical individuals to cast a critical eye on their own. Exploration, scientific discovery, and technological innovation weakened traditional religious and political beliefs, and democratized access to knowledge. The United States is in many respects a product of the “Enlightenment” of the eighteenth century, and we will examine how the development and diffusion of technology and

education continued to shape its history.

- **Revolutions and Nation-States.** The new spirit of enlightenment, with its invocation to “think for oneself” had important political consequences. In places across the globe, people who had been deemed subjects of a ruler came to think of themselves as citizens of a nation who were endowed with rights and empowered to criticize their rulers. In some places, most famously France and the United States, the result was a political revolution that created a more powerful and “modern” nation-state.

- **Slavery and Free Labor.** The notion that an individual is free to work for an employer of his or her own choosing – what we will call “free labor” – would have been strange and inconceivable in 1492, when most labor was “bound” to a lord, a master, or a family member. In 1865, the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution abolished slavery and enshrined free labor as a national principle. We will examine the complicated mixture of social, economic, cultural, and political conflicts and transformations that allowed for the triumph of free labor – while also assessing the limitations of that new ideal.

The HST 102 course is intended to be an introduction to U.S. history from the end of the Civil War until the present. While such a course cannot be fully comprehensive, it will focus on many of the important developments and major trends that have shaped modern American life. These include: the impact of the end of slavery upon African Americans, the South, and the nation as a whole; the effects of immigration, ethnicity and religious diversity; the rise of modern culture, technology, consumerism and communications; U.S. expansionism and growing involvement in world affairs; struggles for equal rights and justice; protest movements and resistance to change; the upheavals of the 1960s and the impact of Vietnam and Watergate; the “Reagan Revolution”; the end of the Cold War; the presidency of Bill Clinton; the beginnings of the third “American century”; and the consequences of globalism.

Although much of this inevitably will center on public events and persons in national leadership, we also shall explore the lives and experiences, contributions and insights, of ordinary people.

In the various readings—textbook, primary sources, and “coming of age” accounts—as well as through multimedia resources, students will see how others have experienced, written about, and interpreted history. More importantly, through discussions and various types of assignments, students will have a chance to experience history, and not just to read about it. In the process, they will begin to learn something of how historians think about and investigate the past, and will start to develop their own critical, historical perspectives. By the end of the semester, students will not only know more about the American experience, but will have learned how to construct persuasive arguments, to use evidence effectively, and to hone a variety of analytic skills. These skills will be valuable to them during their undergraduate experiences and in the future.

Pre- / Co-requisites

N/A

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will:

- Learn to see history as more than just a body of facts to be memorized (even though some of that will prove necessary). They develop a deeper appreciation of history as a mode of inquiry, or a way of thinking about the past that informs our understanding of the present.
- Learn to examine and interpret historical evidence, and appreciate what that evidence can – and cannot – tell us.
- Learn to form judgments and construct arguments about the

past, and effectively express them in speech and writing.

- Develop a deeper appreciation of the ways in which active citizenship demands historical thinking.

Laboratory

N/A

Required Materials

HST 101

American Horizons: U.S. History in a Global Context; Schaller
ISBN: 9780190659486 (Oxford University Press, www.oup.com)

Reading American Horizons; Schaller ISBN: 9780190698034
(Oxford University Press, www.oup.com)

Shrink-Wrapped Bundle of *American Horizons* + *Reading American Horizons* ISBN: 9780190873110 (Oxford University Press, www.oup.com)

Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England; Cronon ISBN: 0809016346 (Hill and Wang, www.fsgbooks.com)

Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge; Dunbar ISBN: 9781501126413 (Simon & Schuster, www.simonandschuster.com)

The Kingdom of Matthias: A Story of Sex and Salvation in 19th Century America; Johnson and Wilentz ISBN: 9780199892495 (Oxford University Press, www.oup.com)

HST 102

Of the People, Volume 2, James Oakes, Michael McGerr, Jan

Ellen Lewis, et al.,

ISBN: 9780190910211 (Oxford University Press, www.oup.com)

My Antonia; Cather, W.

ISBN: 9780553214185

Manchild in the Promised Land; Brown, C.

ISBN: 9781451631579

Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, in the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation;

Patel, E. ISBN: 9780807006221

I Came a Stranger: The Story of a Hull-House Girl; Polacheck, H.

ISBN: 9780252062186

Coming of Age in Mississippi; Moody, A.

ISBN 9780440314882

Instructor Recommendations

N/A