

# HIST 2111-A (Second Summer Session 2017)

Gordon State College

**I. Course Title:** HIST 2111 American History to 1865

**II. Instructor:** Dr. J. Franklin Williamson

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*Office Hours:* MW 7:30am-8:30am (online)

### III. Description:

In this course, we will explore the history of major events, people, ideas, concepts, beliefs and practices that have together defined the history of the United States of America, from the time before 1492, to the end of the Civil War. Taking this course will provide you with a variety of benefits, the most immediate of which will be the satisfaction of three credit hours of your Area E requirements. However, beyond checking boxes for graduation, this course will also introduce you to some of the basic tools of the historical profession, as well as help you hone skills that will be essential in your professional careers after college, no matter what major field of study you pursue.

Everything has a history. Every aspect of American life in 2017 is somehow connected to the past, whether recent or more distant. Contemporary American political-, social-, and even cultural leaders commonly argue that one or another facet of our lives in 2017 are (or are not) in tune with the longer tradition of “American History.” Indeed, many in American government today express their desire to “make American great again,” which is an implied historical argument – that somewhere, at some time in the past, America was somehow better than it is today. Of course it is easy to overstate similarities or differences between the present and the past but the job of historians is to analyze such claims, evaluate their evidence, think critically about their assumptions, and conclude whether such an interpretation of the past is convincing or not (and why).

In general, we could think of the history of “American History” as a *history of ideas* (such as “equality” and “freedom”) that help explain the U.S. as it is today. Conversely, we could also understand this history as a *story of choices made and actions taken*, sometimes harmoniously with these ideals but sometimes in clear contradiction of them, that similarly explains the way the country and its people appear at present. As we move through the semester, we will try to find examples of both of these characterizations and figure out which ideas or actions were most decisive in explaining the present day.

Besides learning lots of “stuff” about history, this class will also help you to practice thinking historically. Thinking historically means learning to approach a problem or event in the past (or the present day!) from a variety of perspectives, with attention to the “five C’s:” Change (or Continuity), Context, Causality, Contingency, and Complexity. We will pay attention to each of these factors when trying to understand how events unfolded and people made choices, and we will see that establishing *what* happened is usually much more straightforward than sorting

out the *why*. The bottom line is that thinking historically means looking for evidence and analyzing that evidence into an interpretation that explains the past events in question.

Finally this class will help you improve your ability to think critically and write clearly and effectively. You will have the opportunity to read, evaluate and then discuss a variety of primary sources from different historical eras. Additionally you will hone your critical thinking skills through writing a major essay, in which you will practice identifying and interpreting historical evidence, eventually deploying that evidence to mount an argument in favor of your interpretation of a discrete historical question.

These separate dimensions of the course all reinforce each other and, by building up your skills in one area, you will be able to improve other areas more easily. Ultimately, I hope that, by the end of the course, you will be able to say that you *know* some facts, that you *understand* those facts' relationship to each other, and that you can *think* of a way to make an argument using these elements together.

#### IV. Readings:

There are two textbooks for this course, BOTH are required.

- **Required:** Eric Foner, *Voices of Freedom: A Documentary History*, Fourth Edition. VOLUME I (2014). ISBN: [978-0-393-92291](#).
- **Required:** Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty: An American History*, Brief Fourth Edition. VOLUME I (2014). ISBN: [978-0-393-92032](#).

When you go to purchase the textbooks, you may have better luck looking on Amazon.com or other online outlets rather than the College bookstore. In any case, make sure to get the volumes that cover the early history of the United States. And be sure to get your books quickly – we are only together for a short few weeks so you will fall behind quickly if you cannot keep up with the readings. In addition to the required textbooks above, I will also assign additional readings and multimedia items that will be posted on our course's D2L webpage. These will also be required reading/viewing.

Although not assigned, I highly encourage you to also keep up with current events and national and international news. While you may only have time to watch a few minutes of *CNN* or *Fox News* over your breakfast cereal, you should also try to expose yourself to more sophisticated, elite sources of information such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal*, since you are on your way to becoming a member of the educated class of professionals and leaders. If you are stuck in traffic much of the day, try listening to NPR or BBC programming (over the airwaves or via podcast). Again, current events knowledge is not a requirement to be successful in this course but it may help you make sense of the “big picture” and why our subject matter is important.

#### V. Assignments:

*Primary Document Analysis Paper Project:* You will write one major paper (1000-1250 words), interpreting primary and secondary documents to write a thesis-driven essay in response to an assigned prompt. This paper will be completed in several stages, with each stage earning a separate grade:

- Topic and first document = 5%

- Thesis and second document = 5%
- Revised thesis, outline, and third document = 5%
- Final draft = 15%

I will give you much more information in the actual assignment but this project will encompass a total of thirty percent (30%) of your grade. Papers submitted late will face deductions and plagiarism will not be tolerated.

*Quizzes:* You will complete three (3) preparation quizzes (covering the mechanics and methods of the class), followed by five (5) reading quizzes over the content of the assigned readings, administered via the course D2L webpage. Each of the quizzes will count as five per cent (5%) of your course grade, with this category making up a total of forty per cent (40%) of your course grade. Please note that there will be no make-ups in the event you do not complete one of the quizzes (except if you have valid third-party documentation of your absence on the day the quiz was due).

*Online discussion:* Since this is an online class, we will substitute more extensive online discussions for the physical classroom that we are missing. Over the course to the semester, you will complete one (1) introductory discussion and five (5) online discussions, where you will talk about your reactions to and interpretations of the readings we have completed. There will be specific questions from me that you must answer but you will also be responding to your classmates' answers, too. Please remember to keep the discussion civil and the tone respectful, and remember that we are here to make arguments using evidence, not simple opinions. Each discussion will count for five per cent (5%) of your course grade. This category will count for a total of thirty per cent (30%) of your course grade. Please note that there will be no make-ups in the event you do not complete one of the discussions (except if you have valid third-party documentation of your absence on the day the discussion was due).

## VI. Key Dates:

*Wednesday, July 12, 2017* is the last day you can drop this class without receiving an automatic WF. If you decide that you have missed too many classes and therefore too much material to make up, it is your responsibility to follow the [College's official drop policy](#).

*Thursday, July 27, 2017* is the date your final paper is due. This paper is the largest, most comprehensive single graded item and will thus substitute for a face-to-face final exam.

## VII. E-mail Policy:

E-mail is, by far, the best way to get in touch with me for any reason. This is because I am not in my office every day during summer term and we are not meeting face-to-face (which would make casual Q&A more convenient). Although we are using D2L for this class, **please do NOT use the "E-mail" feature embedded in D2L.** I will not respond to this e-mail address! And I do not expect you to, either!

Instead, always use [fwilliamson@gordonstate.edu](mailto:fwilliamson@gordonstate.edu) to contact me, as I check it multiple times across the day. Having said that, please allow me 24 hours to respond to you before sending me your question again. You are also expected to regularly check your @gordonstate.edu e-mail address, since this is the only way I have of sending you important information and announcements.

When you have a question you want to ask via e-mail, always check the syllabus for the answer before you click “send.” This is because most of the administrative or organizational questions students ask are already answered by the material in the syllabus. In fact, I may respond to your question about when is the midterm by saying, “check the syllabus.”

When you have a question that the syllabus does not answer, or a more specific, individual question, please take the time to observe the proper conventions of professional correspondence. That is, address your subject (“Hello Dr. Williamson”), identify yourself and which class you are in (“this is John Doe from your Monday 8:00am HIST 2111 class”), then proceed to ask your question (“I am having trouble with the paper. Could we set up an appointment to go over some things?”). Finally, always end with a proper valediction and your name (“Thanks, John”). This may sound silly but, I guarantee, when you are writing a memo or professional e-mail to your supervisor one day, you will appreciate knowing how to make it sound more sophisticated than a text message. (And your boss will appreciate it, too!)

### **VIII. Grades policy:**

I am happy to consult with you individually about your grades after I have released grades to the gradebook, and I encourage you to e-mail me if you have questions. However, after any grades are returned to you, I ask that you wait 24 hours before contacting me with questions or concerns. Furthermore, I also need you to understand that grading is a painstakingly careful and methodical process for me, one that takes time but also ensures all students’ work is evaluated fairly. Therefore, I will not entertain requests to re-grade individual assignments – once I return them to you, grades are final.

In order to more discerningly and precisely evaluate students’ work, I rely on a “plus/minus” system of grading assignments submitted for this class. You will see a breakdown of the numeric equivalents of each grade I use below. Please note, however, that Gordon State College only recognizes whole letter grades (i.e. no plusses or minuses) as records of students’ final course grades. For example, if one essay is graded as an 81 and another graded as an 84, these two essays would receive different letter grades in this class. However, if one student’s final course grade is an 81 and another’s is an 84, both students would receive a grade of “B” for the class.

My in-class Grading Scale:	A	≥ 93
	A-	≥ 90
	B+	≥ 87
	B	≥ 83
	B-	≥ 80
	C+	≥ 77
	C	≥ 73
	C-	≥ 70
	D+	≥ 67
	D	≥ 60
	F	≥ 60

Gordon State College’s Grading Scale (for final course grades):

A	≥90
B	≥80
C	≥70
D	≥60

## F ≤59

Any assignments not turned in on time will be subject to a penalty of 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are late. For example, a “B” quality paper turned in two days late would receive a grade of “C+.” *You should not read this as permission to wantonly submit your work late.* These penalties accrue into significant losses in points very quickly, meaning that it is in your best interest to turn papers in on time. Having said that, some points are always better than no points, so a late paper is usually better than no paper. In any event, if you know you will have to turn in an assignment late, please [contact me](#) as far in advance of the deadline as possible, so that I will know you are still working and planning to submit the assignment.

While we are on the subject of graded work, I should point out that I expect all students to abide by the Gordon State College policy on Academic Honesty, [found on Page 87 of the Academic Catalog](#). Officially, academic dishonesty “includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole, or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such act.” In a nutshell, this means that all assignments completed and submitted by a student **must consist solely of that individual student’s own, original work**. This means you are **not permitted to plagiarize material** in papers you write for this class, you are **not permitted to assist others in answering questions on quizzes or exams** administered in this class, and you are **not permitted to use unauthorized or otherwise prohibited notes or aids** when completing such quizzes or exams yourself.

By taking this course, you agree that all required papers may be subject to submission of textual similarity review to Turnitin.com. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in other papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Use posted on the Turnitin.com site [http://turnitin.com/en\\_us/about-us/privacy](http://turnitin.com/en_us/about-us/privacy). According to the Family Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education, your papers are education records within the meaning of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) (<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>). Education records may not be disclosed to third parties in a form that identifies you without your consent. Since Turnitin.com is a third party, you must choose one of the two ways below (not both) to submit papers to Turnitin.com in order to comply with FERPA:

## a. YOU CONSENT TO DISCLOSE PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION

TURNITIN.COM: You may consent to release your personal identification to Turnitin.com by simply uploading your paper to the D2L Dropbox for this course, which will automatically submit your paper to TII’s plagiarism checker.

OR

b. YOU DO NOT CONSENT TO DISCLOSE PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION TO TRUNITIN.COM: If you choose not to consent to release your personal identification to Turnitin.com, you must send your paper to your instructor by email as an electronic attachment that can be opened by Microsoft Word, by the deadline given on the syllabus. Your identifying information will be removed and the paper uploaded to Turnitin.com for you.

Your paper will be processed by Turnitin.com whichever option you choose. The different options simply determine how the paper is submitted to Turnitin.com and whether the paper has your name on it. Please note that in Turnitin.com there is a “test upload” assignment area for your paper. Because test uploads are not required or graded, and need not be a sample of your own work, they are not “education records.” Also note that, if you upload an early draft of

your paper to the test upload assignment, and then upload the final assignment, the final originality report will show that a substantial part of your paper is identical to your draft. That is expected.

You can read more about Turnitin.com here: <http://www.turnitin.com>

As you can tell by now, I take academic honesty very seriously. Yet I also want to help you develop your skills at analysis, critical thinking, and writing. So when you are working on your papers, if you are not sure what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, [here is an excellent tutorial](#) from the UNC-Chapel Hill Writing Center, as well as [another very helpful guide](#) from the Perdue University Online Writing Lab. Also please note that [Gordon State College's Writing Center](#) also offers a variety of services in helping students develop their own work, so do take advantage of these resources, too. Of course, if you encounter a problem or question while preparing your papers, you can also [contact me](#) and I will help you find an answer.

By the way, any student found to have committed academic dishonesty will face one of the four possible sanctions outlined in the Academic Catalog, as best warrants each individual case:

- 1.) "a grade of F for the assignment and/or require remedial action by the student"
- 2.) "a grade of 0 for the assignment and/or require remedial action by the student"
- 3.) "a failing grade in the course"
- 4.) "refer the matter to the Dean of the Faculty"

Once again, if at any time you are unsure of what is permitted or not permitted, please don't hesitate to ask me!

### **IX. Title IX:**

Gordon State College is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these incidents, know that you are not alone. All faculty members at Gordon State College are mandated reporters. Any student reporting any type of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence or stalking must be made aware that any report made to a faculty member under the provisions of Title IX will be reported to the Title IX Coordinator or a Title IX Deputy Coordinator. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, you must contact the Counseling and Accessibility Services office, Room 212, Student Life Center. The licensed counselors in the Counseling Office are able to provide confidential support.

Gordon State College does not discriminate against any student on the basis of pregnancy, parenting or related conditions. Students seeking accommodations on the basis of pregnancy, parenting or related conditions should contact Counseling and Accessibility Services regarding the process of documenting pregnancy related issues and being approved for accommodations, including pregnancy related absences as defined under Title IX.

### **X. ADA and 504:**

If you have a documented disability as described by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, you may be eligible to receive accommodations to assist in programmatic and/or physical accessibility. The Counseling and Accessibility Services office located in the Student Center, Room 212 can assist you in

formulating a reasonable accommodation plan and in providing support in developing appropriate accommodations to ensure equal access to all GSC programs and facilities. Course requirements will not be waived, but accommodations may assist you in meeting the requirements. For documentation requirements and for additional information, contact Counseling and Accessibility Services at 678-359-5585.

## **XII. Schedule (Subject to change):**

WEEK 1	<u>Wed 6/28:</u>	Read the Syllabus, <b>Complete Syllabus Quiz,</b> Review materials in Orientation Module, <b>Complete Orientation Quiz</b>
	<u>Thur 6/29:</u>	<b>Complete Introductory Discussion,</b> Review materials in Historical Methods Module, <b>Complete Sources Quiz</b>
WEEK 2	<u>Mon 7/3:</u>	<i>Independence Day Holiday</i>
	<u>Tues 7/4:</u>	<i>Independence Day Holiday</i>
	<u>Wed 7/5:</u>	Complete Lessons 1, 2, and 3, <b>Reading Quiz #1 due by 11:59pm EDT</b>
	<u>Thur 7/6:</u>	<b>Discussion #1 due by 11:59pm EDT</b>
WEEK 3	<u>Mon 7/10:</u>	<b>Paper Topic, Document 1 assignment due by 11:59pm</b>
	<u>Tues 7/11:</u>	Complete Lessons 4, 5, 6, and 7, <b>Reading Quiz #2 due by 11:59pm EDT</b>
	<u>Wed 7/12:</u>	<i>Midpoint of semester</i> <b>Discussion #2 due by 11:59pm EDT</b>
	<u>Thur 7/13:</u>	<b>Draft thesis statement, Document 2 assignment due by 11:59pm</b>
WEEK 4	<u>Mon 7/17:</u>	Complete Lessons 8, 9, and 10, <b>Reading Quiz #3 due by 11:59pm EDT</b>
	<u>Tues 7/18:</u>	<b>Discussion #3 due by 11:59pm EDT</b>
	<u>Wed 7/19:</u>	Complete Lessons 11, 12, 13, and 14, <b>Reading Quiz #4 due by 11:59pm EDT</b>

Thur 7/20: **Revised thesis statement, outline of complete paper, and Document 3 assignment due by 11:59pm**

WEEK 5 Mon 7/24: **Discussion #4 due by 11:59pm EDT**

Tues 7/25: Complete Lessons 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19,  
**Reading Quiz #5 due by 11:59pm EDT**

Wed 7/26: **Discussion #5 due by 11:59pm EDT**

Thur 7/27: **Final Draft Primary Document Analysis Paper due by 5:00pm EDT**