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*Work and Labor in the United States until 1877*  
Fall 2019 Syllabus

Monday and Thursday, 10:55 AM to 12:15 PM, LEC 137

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**DESCRIPTION:** The first 250 years of the English colonies in North America (from their founding to the end of Reconstruction in 1877) witnessed both heroism and cruelty, conflict and creativity. The history of the United States in this era represents a crucial chapter in the invention of modern politics, modern society and the modern economy that constitutes the humanity's relative recent transition from older, patriarchal civilizations, with their various forms of slavery, to newer commercial modes of existence, with their various forms of freedom. The way of life pioneered on the North American eastern seaboard in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries was the model for what became "democracy in America." After the United States became a global super power, it sought to export this model to the rest of the world. Today, there are abundant signs that after a long period of unrivaled superiority, both at home and abroad, the democratic aspiration of *e pluribus unum* (out of many, one) is being replaced by a more authoritarian *super pluribus unum* (over many, one), or America First! Now is thus an excellent time to be taking stock of the United States' formative first quarter millennium: how did these years shape the American democratic ideal; and what failures of principle, policy and practice sowed the seeds of its current crisis of confidence?

**THEMES**

- A. Societies, like individuals, are moved in the first instance by emotions. Reason only comes later, in feelings' wake.
- B. Social institutions exist to contain, channel and control our emotions, the principal of which are fear, anger and love (not necessarily in that order): indeed, one goal of institutions is to ensure their proper ordering across individuals and groups.
- C. This course will explore the history of the United States to 1877 from the perspective of the principal emotions driving its inhabitants' efforts to survive and flourish.
- D. It will distinguish **three general, ideal-type human adaptations to life on Earth: tribal, patriarchal and commercial.**
- E. The tribal coincides with kinship-based, hunting-and-gathering, transhumant and sedentary horticultural societies, all of which are also condescendingly referred to as "primitive."
- F. The patriarchal coincides with the militarized, territorial, agrarian societies formed after the Neolithic Scientific Revolution, also known as traditional, feudal, or monarchial.

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- G. The commercial coincides with modern societies, those created by and after the Early Modern Scientific Revolution, as the imagined products of a supposed “social contract.”
- H. Modern commercial societies differ in fundamental ways from their tribal and patriarchal predecessors. In particular, they seek to control nature rather than be controlled by it.
- I. We do not yet know if the transition from traditional to modern societies will succeed. **No modern society has yet established itself as a sustainable, well-regulated system.**
- J. **Instead, all modern societies are parasitic on the Earth.** Whether a sustainable commercial system can develop that is symbiotic rather than parasitic remains an open question.
- K. The US is the world’s first fully modern nation: the first to be founded on the political principles articulated by the champions of modernity, principally, among English writers, Thomas Hobbes and Adam Smith.
- L. Hobbes’ *Leviathan* argues that modern societies, because they consist of relatively autonomous, competitive, free but insecure individuals, require a dominant central authority to which all citizens will unquestioningly submit.
- M. Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* argues that modern societies, because they have such immense powers at their command, need to respect, to the furthest extent possible, the “natural liberty” that citizens invariably choose for themselves when free to do so.
- N. The history of the US to 1877, as the first nation modern democratic society, is in part the story of a continuing effort to reconcile these incompatible principles.
- O. We will ask, first, how commercial was American society before 1877; and, second, how democratic?
- P. The answer to the first question involves looking at its 19<sup>th</sup>-century transition to “capitalism”—i.e., to a commercial society controlled by or in the interests of capitalists.
- Q. We will note, however, that capitalism was not the only option on offer, nor is it today.
- R. We will also explore the tribalism and patriarchalism that the American democratic project sought to displace (e.g., slavery, institutional racism, sexism and classism, etc.) and note the ways in which they continued to prosper in its commercial setting.
- S. The answer to the second question involves looking closely at what democracy is, and then gauging the extent to which it was realized.
- T. We will look at democracy from two standpoints: inclusion and participation.
- U. A democratic society means including everyone (excepting children or others in its care or custody), and in meaningful ways.
- V. In a democratic society, power is shared with everyone, so that all may live lives of their own choosing, to the extent possible, and participate in making the decisions that affect their ability to do so.
- W. In this context, then, we want to look both at who is included in the body politic, and also at how they are included—i.e., the ways in which power is effected, distributed and used.
- X. And, finally, we want to explore how democratic is American society and whether Americans are in fact free? **What is democracy? What is freedom? Can they be lost?**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Students who successfully complete this course will have met the following objectives:

**Core Curriculum: (SCL, HST, WCr and WCd)**

- Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems and other forms of social organization (Goal M)
- Employ tools of social scientific reasoning to study particular questions or situations, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments. (Goal N)
- Explain the development of some aspect of society or culture over time. (Goal K)
- Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence and arguments. (Goal L)
- Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience, and respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, &/or supervisors through successive drafts & revision. (Goal S)
- Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry; evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly; and analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources. (Goal T)

**School of Management and Labor Relations:**

- Communicate effectively at a level and in modes appropriate to an entry-level professional. (Goal I)
- Demonstrate an understanding of relevant theories and apply them given the background context of a particular work situation. (Goal IV)

**Labor Studies and Employment Relations Department:**

- Demonstrate an understanding of the perspectives, theories and concepts in the field of labor and employment relations. (Goal 1)
- Make an argument using contemporary or historical evidence. (Goal 4)

**DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION:** Rutgers welcomes students with disabilities into all its educational programs. To receive consideration for one or more reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office on the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation to support your request for accommodations. For additional info, go to: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors as early in your courses as possible and discuss the accommodations with them. To begin this process, please complete the form found at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>.

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**PROCESS:** This course has **three components** and **five requirements**. The **first component** is our joint discussion of the broad themes of the class. To document your participation in these discussions, you are required to: **(1)** attend class and **(2)** keep an in-class journal. [You will

receive a blank journal at the beginning of the term, which the instructors will retain between classes until the end of term. In the journal, you are required to: (a) write a short paragraph in class about each class discussion; and (b) write first drafts for review and comment of each aspect (see below) of the two required essays.] The **second component** is our reading of *Who Built America?* To document your completion of this component, you are required: **(3)** to post a response to the assigned chapter on Sakai each week; and, **(4)** to attend the class for which the required chapter has been assigned. The **third component** consists of: **(5)** the two essays, described below. As noted, you will be asked to (a) write drafts of each aspect of these essays in your journals and (b) given opportunities to discuss them in class.

**Your weekly posted responses, revised responses, and in-class journals are very important.**

They are used to measure your *PREPARATION* for class, which is a significant element of your final grade. (The other primary elements are *PARTICIPATION*, *APPLICATION* and *MASTERY*.)

### **REQUIRED TEXT**

Clark, Hewitt, Brown, Jaffee, *Who Built America? Vol. 1* (Third Edition, ISBN 9780312446918)

Copies of each chapter are available as PDF files on Sakai, but used copies are quite inexpensive online, if you desire a tangible version. If you do not already have a copy, you may download Adobe Reader at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>.

**REQUIREMENTS:** Successfully to complete this course, students must:

- (a) Prepare for and participate in class.
- (b) Complete at least 10 in-class journal entries during the term.
- (c) Write drafts of your required essays in your journals, as directed by your instructors.
- (d) Read and post at least 10 summaries of a week's required reading before the start of class.
- (e) Complete two acceptable short papers as described below.

*To document your preparation or engagement with the themes of the course*, you are required to write brief responses to each week's assigned material. ***These responses will only earn points if, and only if, you attend the class for which they are assigned.***

*To document your participation fully in the course* you need to attend class, contribute actively to each of its segment, and turn in an updated journal at the end of each class session.

*To demonstrate your final mastery of the subject matter*, you are required to apply what you have learned to complete two brief essays, as described below, which engage with the themes of the course.

**Class Attendance:** *You must attend class.* Plan to arrive on time and stay for the full class session. Important information is often communicated at the beginning and at the end of the class. I usually set the broader frame for the class discussion at the beginning of class and introduce the topic for the next class at the end.

If you anticipate a problem with attendance or timeliness, you should discuss the matter with me *before* signing up for the class. Irregular or inconsistent attendance will lower your grade since it is based largely on your *presence* in class, the *persistence* of your preparation, the *quality* of your participation, and your *mastery* of the material. If you do have to miss a class, check with one or more of your classmates, or me before or after class, to find out what you missed.

**Class Preparation:** To prepare adequately for a class, you must carefully read the assigned text each week's classes and come prepared to discuss them intelligently.

**Class Participation:** Students are expected to participate actively in class discussion. You should read carefully all the required readings *before* the class meets and be prepared to talk about them in class. You must learn to articulate the main ideas of each text, and to offer your own assessment of their strengths and weaknesses. Please bring an accessible copy of the assigned readings with you to the class in which they are to be discussed.

The quality of your comments is as important as their frequency. The best comments are informed by the week's readings or other relevant evidence and examples. Your personal experiences are important, especially as they shed light on the themes of the class. Active, respectful listening is as important to class participation as is talking. Students will be expected to help raise the level of class discussion by contributing their own informed responses and by interacting with others in ways that help them to help clarify and extend their comments.

Your posted brief summaries of your reading journal entries or completed problem sets (as required) are used to measure your class participation. Each may receive up to 10 points, *but only if you attend the relevant class*. Each class may also consist of one or more small-group activity, during which you will be asked to develop with others a perspective on questions raised by the assigned texts. Your participation in these activities will also be considered.

**Class Notes and Queries:** Each week you are required to post a short response to the week's required reading to Sakai by the morning of the class for which the reading is assigned; and to keep a class journal summarizing the most important things you have learned from each session of the class. **Your post must be a Word attachment to each week's assignment page**, which can be found on the Assignments tab of the course's Sakai page.

## WRITING ASSIGNMENTS, DUE DATES AND WEIGHTS:

1. **Weekly In-Class Journal Response (up to 100 points):** weekly entries in your in-class journal summarizing your principal takeaways, or the most important things you learned, from class lectures and discussion. A few minutes will be allotted for you to write your entries at the end of every class, which will be turned in upon completion. These entries will be evaluated as acceptable (10 points) or unacceptable (0 points) and also used to keep track of your attendance and participation. An acceptable entry is one which asks a relevant question about or summarizes a substantive conclusion that you or the class reached during the discussion. An acceptable entry must consist of complete sentences and be germane to a topic under discussion. Otherwise, anything goes.
2. **Weekly Responses to the Assigned Reading (up to 100 points):** weekly short responses to the assigned readings posted on Sakai before the start of every Thursday class. Complete responses will be evaluated as acceptable (10 points) or unacceptable (0 points) Partial responses will receive proportionally fewer points. *Each response must be double-spaced in 12 pt font with 1-inch margins on all sides of letter stock (8 ½ x 11).* **Each must also be submitted as a Word (doc or docx) attachment on Sakai.** An acceptable response is one which makes a good faith effort to answer the weekly response prompts, which are set forth below. These prompts do not have a right or a wrong answer. They require only your honest opinion.

**Response Format and Instructions:** First, go to the end of the assigned chapter and read the conclusion. After you have absorbed the general shape and purpose of the chapter, then go back to the beginning and read the chapter through to the end closely enough to complete the following tasks:

- a) Write a short one paragraph summary of the main point or argument of the chapter. (Use your own words! Do not just quote from the chapter summary.)
  - b) Identify the story in the chapter that you think is the most interesting or informative: retell the story in your own words and explain why you picked it.
  - c) Identify a person in the chapter who inspired you: write down whom you picked and explain how they inspired you?
  - d) Finally, write down at least one question you have about the material covered. What, if anything, is unclear? What, if anything, do you think is wrong? (And in this case, say why you think it is wrong.) If nothing else, identify something you want to know more about.
3. **Drafts of the Midterm and Final Essay (up to 100 points)** At the direction of your instructor, you are required to write a first draft of each of the five elements of the required essays. You will be given writing time in class. Completed first drafts of each elements of each essay must also be posted three weeks before the finished versions are due. These drafts will be reviewed by the instructors and serve as the basis for in-class discussion with other students. Each completed draft element of the essays earns 10 points. A completed draft of each essays containing all five elements earns 100 points.
4. **Midterm Essay: How democratic was American society before and after the American Revolution? (100 points)**: A short original essay on the above topic. The essay is required to have 5 distinct elements, which are described below and on the Midterm Essay assignment pages on Sakai. Each element will be worth 20 points. Each essay should be about 1,000 words or 3½ double-spaced pages in 12 pt font with 1-inch margins on all sides of letter stock (8 ½ x 11), and must be submitted as a Word (doc or docx) attachment on Sakai:

*The US Declaration of Independence issued in 1776 and the US Constitution ratified in 1787 established a new, independent nation, which presented itself as the world's first modern democracy. In your view, how democratic was it?*

*Write a short essay setting out your views on this question. Your essay needs to include the following elements and answers to the following questions:*

- a) *an opening paragraph that "hooks" the reader's attention and draws them in;*
- b) *a definition of democracy: of what does it consist?*
- c) *a list of the ways you think American society, more generally, and the American political system, more particularly, **was not** democratic either before or after the Revolution. Include at least two contemporary events, trends or witnesses to support your views;*
- d) *a list of the ways in which you think American society and the American political system **was** democratic before or after the Revolution, including at least two contemporary events, trends or witnesses that support your views; and,*
- e) *a closing paragraph (or more, as necessary), which consider(s) the merit of these two contrasting viewpoints and spells out their moral, or the most important lesson.*

5. **Final Essay: How free were American before and after the War Against Slavery (1861-1865) and the Era of Reconstruction (1868-1877) (100 points):** A short original essay on the above topic. The essay is required to have 5 distinct elements, which are described below and on the Final Essay assignment pages on Sakai. Each element will be worth 20 points. Each essay should be about 1,000 words or 3½ double-spaced pages in 12 pt font with 1-inch margins on all sides of letter stock (8 ½ x 11) and must be submitted as a Word (doc or docx) attachment on Sakai.

*The US Civil War has been described as “the Second American Revolution,” which finally abolished slavery and secured “the blessings of liberty” for all Americans. In your view, how accurate is this assessment? Did the Civil War and Reconstruction secure freedom for all Americans? Why or why not?*

*Write a short essay setting out your views on this question. Your essay needs to include the following elements, with answers to the following questions:*

- a) an opening paragraph that “hooks” the reader’s attention and draws them into the essay;*
- b) a definition of freedom: of what does it consist?*
- c) a list of the ways in which you think Americans **were not** free before or after the Civil War, including which Americans were or were not free, in which ways, using at least two contemporary events, trends or witnesses to support your views;*
- d) a list of the ways in which you think American society and Americans **were** free before or after the Civil War, including, again, which Americans were or were not free, and using at least two contemporary events, trends or witnesses that support your views; and,*
- e) a closing paragraph (or more, as necessary), consider(s) the merit of these two contrasting viewpoints and spells out their moral, or the most important lesson.*

**GRADING SCALE:** Grades will be awarded based on the following schedule:

( A+ = 500	A = 499 to 475 points
(475 > B+ > 460	B = 460 to 425 points
(425 > C+ > 410	C = 410 to 375 points
(375 > D+ > 365	D = 365 to 350 points
	F < 350 points

There are fifteen weeks of class September 5 through December 12, for fourteen of which there will be required readings. Points may be earned as follows:

**Summaries (20 percent):** Up to 100 points, 10 points per post, (class attendance required)

**In-Class Journals (20 percent):** Up to 100 points, 10 points per entry (attendance required)

**First Drafts (20 percent):** Up to 100 points, with 10 points for each draft or required elements

**Midterm Essay (20 percent):** Up to 100 points, with 20 points for each of 5 required elements

**Final Essay (20 percent):** Up to 100 points, with 20 points for each of 5 required elements

**Final Grade =  $\sum_{p=(1 \rightarrow 10)}(\text{Posts}_p \times \text{Attendance}_{d1}) + \text{Journals} + \text{Drafts} + \text{Essays}]$**

**N.B.:** *If you miss a class, you will get no points for anything you post on that day.* But as there are fourteen opportunities to post, you can miss up to four posts or journal entries without penalty; and anyone who attends and posts for more than 10 times will earn extra credit.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**JOURNAL ENTRIES DUE EVERY MONDAY IN CLASS FROM THIS WEEK FORWARD**  
**POSTED RESPONSES DUE BY MIDNIGHT EVERY TUESDAY**

**WEEK I:**

**Thursday, September 5:** THE HUMAN SWARM: OUR FIRST 100,000 YEARS  
(Work and Labor; Tribal, Patriarchal, Commercial Societies)

**WEEK II:**

**Monday, September 9:** THE WORLD IN 1500: EMPIRES, TRADE AND CONQUEST  
(ReOrient, the Great Inversion, and America in the World)

**Thursday, September 12:** *Who Built America?* [WBA]: 1. Europe, Africa and American  
Colonization, 1492-1680

**WEEK III:**

**Monday, September 16:** CAPITALISM AND COMMERCE: 1450 TO THE PRESENT  
(Long Swings and Regimes of Accumulation)

**Thursday, September 19 [WBA]:** 2. Servitude, Slavery and the Growth of the Southern  
Colonies, 1620-1760

**WEEK IV:**

**Monday, September 23:** WHAT IS DEMOCRACY? WHAT IS EQUALITY?  
(Majority rule vs. popular sovereignty; identity vs. difference)

**Thursday, September 26 [WBA]:** 3. Family Labor and the Growth of the Northern Colonies,  
1640-1760

**WEEK V: DRAFTS OF ALL FIRST PAPER ELEMENTS ARE DUE**

**Monday, September 30:** DEMOCRACY & SLAVERY AS SYSTEMS OF POWER  
(Tyranny as slavery; social prerequisites of democracy and freedom)

**Thursday, October 3 [WBA]:** 4. Toward Revolution, 1750-1776

**WEEK VI:**

**Monday, October 7:** THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF REVOLUTIONARY AMERICA  
(Gifted Credit, Commercialization and the Transition to Capitalism)

**Thursday, October 10 [WBA]:** 5. Revolution, Constitution and the People, 1776-1815

**WEEK VII:**

**Monday, October 14:** NO PROPERTY IN MAN  
(Slavery and the US Constitution)

**Thursday, October 17 [WBA]:** 6. The Consolidation of Slavery in the South, 1790-1836

**WEEK VIII: FIRST PAPER DUE**

**Monday, October 21:** FREE LABOR, WAGE LABOR & SLAVE LABOR  
(Capitalism, slavery and democracy; interests, rights, duties)

**Thursday, October 24 [WBA]:** 7. Northern Society and the Growth of Wage Labor, 1790-1837

**WEEK IX:**

**Monday, October 28:** TRADE UNIONISM IN ANTEBELLUM AMERICA  
(Commonwealth v. Hunt; Socialism; Agrarianism; Cooperation)

**Thursday, October 31 [WBA]:** 8. Immigration, Urban Life and Social Reform in the Free Labor North, 1838-1860

**WEEK X:**

**Monday, November 4:** FREEDOM AS A THEORY OF JUSTICE  
(Justice as fairness, the original position and the veil of ignorance)

**Thursday, November 7 [WBA]:** 9. The Spread of Slavery and the Crisis of Southern Society, 1836-1848

**WEEK XI:**

**Monday, November 11:** FREEDOM AS A SOCIAL CONDITION  
(Freedom, liberty and popular sovereignty; the freedom line)

**Thursday, November 14: [WBA]:** 10. The Settlement of the West and the Conflict over Slave Labor, 1848-1860

**WEEK XII: DRAFTS OF ALL SECOND PAPER ELEMENTS ARE DUE**

**Monday, November 18:** THE CIVIL WAR AND THE ENGLISH WORKING CLASS  
(King Cotton, the Insurgent South, English aristocrats and Manchester)

**Thursday, November 21 [WBA]:** 11. The Civil War: America's Second Revolution, 1861-1865

**WEEK XIII:**

**Monday, November 25:** STOWE, WHITMAN AND MELVILLE  
(Gossett, Sand, CLR James; *Tom, Leaves and Moby*)

**Thursday, November 28 [No Class]:** HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

**WEEK XIV:**

**Monday, December 2:** THE FAILURES OF RECONSTRUCTION  
(No Compensation; No Votes for Women)

**Thursday, December 5 [WBA]:** 12. Reconstructing the Nation, 1865-1877

**WEEK XV: SECOND PAPER DUE**

**Monday, December 9:** US HISTORY AS LABOR HISTORY  
(Royal Power; Slave Power; Corporate Power; Money Power)

**Thursday, December 12 [WBA]:** 13. Westward Expansion and Industrial Growth, 1865-1877