

HIST 201: American History to 1877

Spring 2026, ONLINE, 3 credit hours

1. Instructor Information

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2. Course Information

Course Description

HIST 201 is the first of two parts of the American History Survey. We begin our study just before contact between North America, Europe, and Africa, and end in 1877, just after the bloodshed of the American Civil War. But if you thought this part of American history was simply about white Pilgrims, tea, and some signatures on a few old documents, you're in for a huge surprise. Through this learning journey with me we'll learn about the rise and fall of empires, the clash and encounter of different cultures, plagues and disease, slavery, new religious movements, women's rights, political intrigue, and of course, war. Two interrelated themes will guide our study this semester as we inch toward the end of the 19th century: the implications of different cultures colliding and the reciprocal relationship between Europe and America.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Course Objectives

Knowledge Objectives: We will be able to:

1. **identify** and **recognize** the basic events, issues, ideas, and patterns necessary to the study of American history until 1877.
2. **recognize** some of the key interpretations connected with this period of American history.

Skill Objectives: We will be able to:

1. **identify** methods historians use to gather historical evidence.
2. **apply** these methods to **evaluate** historical evidence and use them to support persuasive arguments.
3. **explain** specific historical issues from a variety of perspectives.
4. **apply** historical understanding to contemporary issues and events.
5. **explain** your own ideas and interpretations in American history in an organized, logical, persuasive fashion, both orally and in written form.

Course Modality/Structure

In this course, we will utilize recorded lectures, reading assignments and quizzes, structured live discussions, primary source analysis, and exams. I estimate (using this calculator: <https://cat.wfu.edu/resources/tools/estimator2/>) that you will need 4-6 hours per week to spend on this course.

3. Course Materials

Alan Brinkley, *The Unfinished Nation: A Concise History of the American People, Volume 1*. McGraw Hill: 2025.

For more information about obtaining required course materials, see [Ball State First Day](#).

4. Course Assignments and Assessments

Course Assignments and Percentage of Grade

- **Lectures:** My recorded lectures are available online each week. These lectures highlight specific parts of the reading and focus on themes and learning objectives.
- **Reading and SmartBook (10%):** Every week we read one chapter from the required text (above). SmartBook helps you learn important concepts as you access the reading and work through the assigned material.
- **Homework Assignments (20%):** Each week's module has a theme. The homework assignment focuses on the historical theme for that week that is touched upon in the lecture and the reading.
- **Quizzes (20%):** The weekly quizzes allow for reflection and assessment and should be taken after listening to the lecture, reading and SmartBook, and completing the Homework Assignment.
- **Consider the Source Conversations (30%):** Two times this semester (once before and once after the midterm exam) you will be assigned a primary source to review and analyze. You will then sign up for a 15-minute timeslot with me to have a conversation about this source and its historical significance.
- **Exams (20%):** The midterm exam (covering material in weeks 1-8) will take place during the 8th week of the semester. The final exam (covering material in weeks 9-15) will take place during the 16th week of the semester.

Assignment details, including instructions, relevant readings, due dates, and grading criteria/rubrics will be posted and updated on Canvas. Please check Canvas regularly to stay informed and on track.

Course Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Range
A	100% - 94%
A-	<94% - 90%

B+	<90% - 87%
B	<87% - 84%
B-	<84% - 80%
C+	<80% - 77%
C	<77% - 74%
C-	<74% - 70%
D+	<70% - 67%
D	<67% - 64%
D-	<64% - 61%
F	<61% - 0%

5. University Statements and Attendance Policy

University Statement

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse.

Disability Statement

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's [Disability Services Office](#) coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

Attendance

Absences will be excused for funeral and bereavement leave, jury duty, late course addition, military absences, observance of religious holidays, pregnancy leave, student-athletes participating in University- or department-approved activities, and university advisories. Students may also face other circumstances (e.g., car accidents, job interviews) that lead to absences, but only faculty members can excuse these, and any adjustments are at the instructor's discretion. It is very rare that a student needs to notify me of an illness or unexpected injury requiring an extension, since assignments are open for a full week, but students should contact me if they expect to be absent for more than a week and may need to provide documentation (with confidential information redacted if appropriate). For online courses, student attendance and engagement is documented through Canvas participation such as assignment or quiz submission.

6. Additional Statements, Policies, and Information

Freedom of Expression

In this course, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that values intellectual diversity, encourages free expression, and promotes open inquiry. As members of the Ball State Community, we treat each person in the Ball State community with civility, courtesy, compassion, and dignity and respect and learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions. Please review

Ball State University's [Statement on Freedom of Expression](#), the resources on Ball State's [Freedom of Expression webpage](#), and [Ball State's Beneficence Pledge](#).

Title IX

Ball State University is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment—including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, please know that you are not alone. The University offers support services and resources. For more information or to report an incident, please visit bsu.edu/titleix or contact the Title IX Coordinator at 765-285-1545 or at titleix@bsu.edu

As your instructor, I am a mandatory reporter under the Title IX policy and required to report any information I receive about possible sexual harassment. This includes information shared in class discussions, assignments, or private conversations.

What happens after I report? The Title IX Coordinator will email the person who experienced sexual harassment (complainant) and invite them to schedule a meeting. If the complainant **chooses** to meet with the Title IX Coordinator,

- Title IX Coordinator will offer supportive measures (e.g., counseling, extensions on deadlines, course-related adjustments, changes to work or class schedules, and/or referrals to campus offices), review the policy, and discuss options to move forward.
- If a complaint is filed by the complainant or the University, an investigation will begin following University policy.

University Grade Appeal Policy

If you believe you received a final course grade that does not reflect your performance due to fairness or a procedural issue, you have the right to file an appeal within 5 school days after final grades are posted by the Office of the Registrar. Review the [University Grade Appeal Policy and Process.](#)]

Student Academic Ethics Policy

Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the university community. Academic dishonesty and other forms of academic misconduct threaten the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and will not be tolerated. To maintain its credibility and reputation, and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, Ball State University is committed to maintaining a climate that upholds and values the highest standards of academic integrity. Visit the VPAA's [academic integrity website](#) (Students tab) for resources on understanding academic integrity, citing sources properly, and avoiding inadvertent academic dishonesty. To learn about BSU's academic integrity expectations and students' rights, please read the University [Student Academic Ethics Policy](#).

Academic integrity violations include giving or receiving an unfair academic advantage (cheating), presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own (plagiarism), and falsifying academic records. Unless otherwise indicated, you must work independently by yourself. Check with me if you are unsure whether something constitutes academic dishonesty. Examples of academic integrity violations include but are not limited to:

- Using resources not authorized by the faculty member (including devices, AI tools, hidden notes, and open books)
- Using commercial study websites to find answers to graded assignments (Chegg, Course Hero, StudyPool, OneClass, etc.).
- Without the instructor’s written permission, giving away, buying, or selling graded assignments class notes, exams, study guides, or other course materials to other students or to third-party vendors (Course Hero, Chegg, 24HourAnswers, etc.).
- Working with another person on any assignment other than authorized group projects.
- Sharing or allowing others to access your files, whether done with permission or not.
- Reusing your own work from another semester, course, or section.
- Sharing answers with others during exams (passing notes, texting, whispering, gesturing)
- Discussing exam questions and answers with students who have not taken the exam.
- Soliciting others to complete work for you.

Generative AI Statement

No Generative AI Use

All work conducted and/or submitted in this course should reflect your own ideas and demonstrate your current knowledge, abilities, and skills. Therefore, generative AI should not be used to complete any portion of the assignment(s). Doing so constitutes a violation of Ball State University’s [Student Academic Ethics Policy](#).

The Learning Center

The Learning Center offers free Tutoring and Academic Coaching for many courses at Ball State. Students can make appointments for online (Zoom) or in-person (NQ 350) appointments. To make an appointment, visit myballstate.bsu.edu and click on “Navigate” in the Academic Tools section, or just go directly to bsu.navigate.eab.com.

Testing accommodations for students with disabilities are available for students who have received the appropriate documentation from Disability Services. Tests may be administered in the Learning Center.

Supplemental Instruction is available in select courses. If you have an SI leader for your course, that person will provide students with information the first week of school regarding weekly study sessions. For more information about Learning Center programming, visit bsu.edu/learningcenter or call 765-285-1006. Follow us on Instagram: [BallStateLC](#).

The Writing Center

All writers improve with practice and feedback, so as a student in this course, you are encouraged to use the Writing Center (in Robert Bell 295 during weekdays, Bracken Library First Floor West in the evenings, or online during any of our regularly scheduled hours) to get additional feedback on your writing.

The Writing Center offers free planning, feedback, and accountability sessions (in person and online) to all students composing essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts. To schedule a free appointment to discuss your writing, go to bsu.edu/writingcenter. Online and in-person appointments are available; however, plan ahead because appointments book quickly!

The Basic Needs Hub

If you are having difficulty affording enough food, do not have a safe and reliable place to sleep, and/or experiencing an emergency or crisis, help is available through the [Basic Needs Hub](#). The Basic Needs Hub has information, resources, and provides individualized support to students. To talk with a supportive staff member about your experience, receive one on one assistance, or learn more about resources, you can submit a [Basic Needs Assistance Form](#).

The Counseling Center

The Ball State University Counseling Center offers free and confidential services to all students. The Counseling Center is located in Lucina Hall, Room 320. To schedule an appointment, you can contact us at 765-285-1736. Ball State also offers a 24/7 Crisis Line, which can be reached at 765-285-HOPE (4673). The Crisis Line is a mental health resource for those who are struggling with any mental health concerns, including thoughts of self-harm and/or suicide.

At the Ball State Counseling Center, we see students for a variety of reasons, some of which include homesickness, relationship concerns, anxiety, and depression. At your first appointment, you will work with a therapist to create a plan that will connect you with resources that best fit your needs. We assist students with getting connected to therapy at our Center as well as connecting students to self-help resources, other on-campus resources, and community-based resources. All Ball State students also have access to several on-demand, self-help resources through a variety of different platforms. All of these resources, including a direct link to our website, can be found [here](#).

The Speaking Center

The [Speaking Center](#) is a free resource available to all members of the BSU community wanting to improve their public speaking abilities. We offer personalized coaching designed to help you become a more confident and effective speaker. Our trained coaches provide constructive feedback and support throughout the entire speech preparation process, whether you are in the early stages of brainstorming ideas and organizing your thoughts, or you need to practice your delivery and refine your message.

The Center is in the David Letterman Communication and Media Building, room 302. To schedule an appointment, please access us through your Navigate app or use this [direct link](#) to sign up for a time. Appointments are available both in person and on Zoom. Appointments are available in person, on Zoom, and in virtual reality (VR) for those interested in practicing in an immersive speaking environment.

Canvas Accessibility

Canvas provides a user experience that is easy, simple, and intuitive. Special attention has been paid to making Canvas screen-readable. The Rich Content Editor encourages users to create accessible content pages (i.e. text formatting is accomplished using styles). Canvas is designed to allow limited customization of colors and schemes to be accessible for all users. The National Federation of the Blind granted Canvas the Gold Level Web Certification in 2010. **Find more information by visiting the [Canvas Voluntary Product Accessibility Template \(VPAT\)](#).**

FERPA and Privacy

As a student, your educational records are considered confidential. Under FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), your records are confidential and protected. Under most

circumstances, your records will not be released without your written and signed consent. However, some directory information may be released to third parties without your prior consent unless a written request to restrict this is on file. You can learn more about student rights to privacy by reading [Ball State's FERPA and Privacy and Protection](#).

Video Conferencing Recording

In this class, software may be used to record live class discussions. As a student in this class, your participation in live class discussions may be recorded. These recordings typically will be made available only to students enrolled in the class, to assist those who cannot attend the live session or to serve as a resource for those who would like to review content that was presented. Students who prefer to participate via audio only will be allowed to disable their video camera so only audio will be captured. Students who prefer to listen only must disable their audio capability and visual camera. If you have concerns, please discuss these options with me.

Plagiarism Detection

The campus subscribes to Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention service, through Canvas. You may need to submit written assignments to Turnitin. Student work will be used for plagiarism detection and for no other purpose.

7. Course Expectations and Policies

Course Participation Expectations

- It is recommended that you log into your Canvas course 3 to 4 times a week, check the “Course Announcements” tab, and check your official Ball State email account daily to view announcements and prepare for class.
- Complete all assignments, quizzes, tests, and any other activities by the stated due dates.

Grading and Feedback Policy

- I will respond to email from your official Ball State email address within 24 hours during week days and within 48+/- hours on the weekend.
- I will read every discussion post but I will not always personally comment on posts.
- Contact me directly by email if you have questions or concerns about your performance in class.

Late Assignment Policy

- All assignments are due by 11:59 pm EST/EDT time on the due dates indicated.
- Homework Assignments and Quizzes can be submitted up to one week late, with a 5% deduction for each day they are late. In some instances, turning in something late is better than turning in a rushed and possibly incomplete assignment. After a week has passed, the assignment is considered “missed” and a zero will be issued. **SmartBook, Exams, and Consider the Source Conversations cannot be submitted late and will receive a 0 if missed or not submitted on time.**
- If you experience a medical, legal, family, or another type of emergency and you miss a deadline please notify me by email as soon as possible (see Attendance Policy above).
- Internet connectivity and technical issues may occur and impede you from turning in work on time. To prevent your work from being considered late, turn in work early and often, and set up a back-up plan, such as visiting a local library or borrowing a peer's computer.

- Canvas will not accept assignments for grading after 4:59 pm EST/EDT on the final day of class.

Assignment Submission Policy

- All assignments should be submitted as Word documents with extensions of .doc or .docx or PDFs with extension .pdf unless otherwise indicated in the assignment description.
- Assignments, unless otherwise indicated, should be submitted using the assignment link in the module.

Engagement Expectations

To support a respectful and engaging academic community that encourages the free exchange of ideas and civil discourse, we will follow these ground rules:

- **Respect different perspectives.** Share your ideas and let others share theirs.
- **Challenge ideas, not people.** Disagree respectfully. No personal attacks or put-downs. Focus on exploring ideas critically and constructively.
- **Listen to understand.** Stay curious, ask questions to understand, and give others space to speak.
- **Assume good intentions.** Approach discussions with curiosity and compassion.
- **Keep it private.** What is shared in class stays in class. Do not share others’ words or work without permission.
- **Be respectful.** Avoid hurtful language, stereotypes, or content that may demean others. Keep feedback constructive.

8. Course Schedule

To support a learning experience that is responsive to the needs, interests, and pace of our class community, the course schedule may shift over the semester. The most current version of the schedule will always be available on Canvas (see “Modules”). I encourage you to check Canvas regularly for updates and contact me if you have any questions.

Module/Week	Lectures, readings, and quizzes	Consider the Source Conversations, Homework Assignments, and Exams
1 1/6-1/12	The Collision of Cultures Reading and SmartBook: Chapter 1 Lecture: #1 QUIZ #1	Homework Assignment
2 1/13-1/19	Transplantations and Borderlands Reading and SmartBook: Chapter 2 Lecture #2 QUIZ #2	Homework Assignment
3 1/20-1/26	Society & Culture in Provincial America Reading and SmartBook: Chapter 3 Lecture #3 QUIZ #3	Homework Assignment
4 1/27-2/2	The Empire in Transition Reading and SmartBook: Chapter 4 Lecture #4	Homework Assignment

	QUIZ #4	
5 2/3-2/9	The American Revolution Reading and SmartBook: Chapter 5 Lecture #5 QUIZ #5	Homework Assignment Group A: Consider the Source Conversations
6 2/10-2/16	The Constitution and the New Republic Reading and SmartBook: Chapter 6 Lecture #6 QUIZ #6	Homework Assignment Group B: Consider the Source Conversations
7 2/17-2/23	The Jeffersonian Era Reading and SmartBook: Chapter 7 Lecture #7 QUIZ #7	Homework Assignment
8 2/24-3/2	Expansion and Division, Early Republic Reading and SmartBook: Chapter 8 Lecture #8 QUIZ #8	Midterm Exam
	SPRING BREAK	
9 3/10-3/16	Jacksonian America Reading and SmartBook: Chapter 9 Lecture #9 QUIZ #9	Homework Assignment
10 3/17-3/23	America's Economic Revolution Reading and SmartBook: Chapter 10 Lecture #10 QUIZ #10	Homework Assignment
11 3/24-3/30	Cotton, Slavery, and the Old South Reading and SmartBook: Chapter 11 Lecture #11 QUIZ #11	Homework Assignment Group A: Consider the Source Conversations
12 3/31-4/6	Antebellum Culture and Reform Reading and SmartBook: Chapter 12 Lecture #12 QUIZ #12	Homework Assignment
13 4/7-4/13	The Impending Crisis Reading and SmartBook: Chapter 13 Lecture #13 QUIZ #13	Homework Assignment
14 4/14-4/20	The Civil War Reading and SmartBook: Chapter 14 Lecture #14 QUIZ #14	Homework Assignment Group B: Consider the Source Conversations
15 4/21-4/27	Reconstruction and the New South Reading and SmartBook: Chapter 15	Homework Assignment

	Lecture #15 Quiz #15	
16 4/28-5/1		Final Exam

9. Subject to Change Statement

This syllabus is subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.