

Course Syllabus

Course: U.S. History I, 3 credits

Days and Times: Online, Distance Learning

Semester: Fall 2014

Department: Social Science

Instructor: Dr. Victor A. Triay

On-campus Office: Snow Hall, 508

Telephone Number: (860) 343-5746

WELCOME

I would like to welcome all of you to HIS 201. My name is Dr. Victor A. Triay, and it is my pleasure to be your professor for this course.

As I have always done in my courses, I will begin by giving you a brief glimpse into my background and experience. As some of you may know, I was born and raised in Miami, Florida. I graduated from Christopher Columbus High School in 1984, and subsequently attended Miami-Dade Community College. From there, I went on to the University of Florida, where I received my B.A. in History in 1988. During my undergraduate years I also spent a good amount of time abroad, studying in Italy and Spain, and backpacking across Europe on several occasions. Upon receiving my bachelor's degree I taught high school history with the Dade County Public Schools for one year. I then began working on my graduate degrees at Florida State University in Tallahassee, from where I eventually received both my M.A. (1991) and Ph.D. (1995) in History. During my time in Tallahassee, I also taught (History and Spanish) and coached football at a local private academy.

I joined the faculty at MxCC in 1992, a few years before completing my Ph.D. Even though I was far from home, receiving a job at Middlesex was "a dream come true" for me, since it was my ambition to become a community college professor ever since I was a student at Miami-Dade. After completing my Ph.D. in 1995, in addition to teaching at Middlesex and starting a family, I devoted a great deal of time to research and writing. As a result, I have published five books and a handful of essays, all dealing with Cuban and Cuban exile history.

After twenty-two years at Middlesex, I am as happy and enthusiastic as I was on my first day. Every year, every semester, and every class, is a new and rewarding experience for me. Therefore, I look forward to working with each and every one of you during the present semester. I know this is going to be a fantastic course.

I sincerely hope you come away from this course a better informed and more enlightened student. Whether you are a recent high school graduate or a returning student, I applaud your decision to enroll in college since the monumental shift we are experiencing in our economy has made a sound educational base an indispensable asset.

But in addition to the practical reasons for receiving an education, there are others. Allowing ourselves to become educated is one of the most exciting opportunities

available, for it opens our minds and allows us to experience and enjoy so much of the world that would otherwise be closed to us. At one time, the chance to become educated was limited to very few people. Our society, however, has created mechanisms such as the community college system so that every person could have such an opportunity. So, now that you have the chance, use it to the fullest.

COURSE STRUCTURE

As in all courses, it is imperative that the professor and the students are clear on the requirements and expectations. Please read the following carefully.

1) Weekly readings

On the schedule, you will see the readings you are expected to complete on a week-by-week basis. You are expected to read the assigned chapters thoroughly and to understand them fully.

You are encouraged to take advantage of the power-point presentations provided for each chapter. These will strengthen your grasp of the material. You can find a link to them on the homepage.

2) Weekly discussion questions

a. Every Sunday at 11:59 PM, you will be given discussion questions. You will have until 11:59 PM the following Sunday--exactly one week--to complete and post it.

b. It is expected that you will provide answers that are complete and thoughtful. If you include any outside information, make sure it is clearly cited.

c. The discussion questions will be graded on scale of 0 (the lowest) to 10 (the highest).

d. If a response is late, the final score will be penalized one point per day. After three days (Wednesday at 11:59 PM), you will receive a zero. Please notify me immediately if you have technological or other issues that prevent you from completing the assignment on time. These situations, which should be very rare (given that you have an entire week to complete the assignment), will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

e. And, please, use proper English spelling and grammar in your responses, not codes, abbreviations, or language used in instant messaging!

3) Tests

a. The tests will be posted on the dates indicated on the schedule.

b. You may sign on to take the test anytime during the week it is posted, but once you open the test, you will have FIVE HOURS to complete it. When the time is up, or after you have submitted the test, you will not be able to go back to it.

c. The tests will be made up of multiple choice questions.

d. You may use class materials on the test, but you are strongly advised to study, read, and outline the chapters during the weeks assigned to ensure success, for the test questions are not easy despite the format. You will also notice the chapters are quite intricate and require careful reading.

d. Tests must be completed individually, i.e., no collaboration.

e. If a test is late, the final grade will be penalized ten points each day it is late. You must contact me right away, since I must go in and reopen the test for you. After three days, the test will not be accepted and you will receive a zero. Please notify me immediately if you have technological or other issues that prevent you from completing the test on time. These situations, which should be rare (given that you have a full week) will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

f. Please try to make arrangements to have a back-up computer in case you experience problems. Late test submissions are a great burden on me and the staff at the Distance Learning office. Although computer and internet problems happen, you can avoid causing the staff a great deal of extra work by having a back-up and by submitting ALL WORK ON TIME!

f. You are required to save each answer as you take the test, as well as keep a written record of your answers. Doing so prevents the problems presented by “losing” answers either because of errors at submission or Blackboard failures.

5) Final evaluation

The tests will count as 80 percent of your grade; the average of your discussions will account for the remaining 20 percent.

6) Setting the boundaries/Professor availability

Because this is an online course, it is important to establish boundaries and parameters with reference to when I will answer your emails and communications. As you may know, I also teach on-ground courses, usually with a large number of students in each section. Therefore, it will be impossible for me always to respond to your emails instantly.

I check my email frequently during the work week (but not normally on weekends), and I will commit to responding to your emails by Tuesday and/or Thursday afternoons at 5pm. So, any email sent after Thursday afternoon, I will respond to by the following Tuesday at 5pm. Any email sent after Tuesday afternoon, I will respond to by Thursday at 5pm. This arrangement has been useful in the past, since these days fall during the middle of the week, at around the time you should be in the heart of working on your tests and/or discussion questions.

The above should also serve as a reminder to manage your time wisely and not to leave the completion of tests and discussion questions for the last minute. You should at least review the questions and the material before Thursday afternoon so that you may contact me for any clarifications you may need before the Sunday deadlines.

Of course, if you have a personal or pressing matter, you may telephone me directly at my on-campus office. You are also more than welcome to make an appointment to come see me personally during my on-campus office hours.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will study the development of British North America from the establishment of the first colonies to the founding of the United States with an emphasis on the nature of immigration, slavery, and overall themes of colonialism. Likewise, students will explore United States development from the early days of the republic through the Civil War with a focus on regional development and Western migration.

COURSE RATIONALE-WHY WE TAKE THIS COURSE

In general, we study history for many reasons. Most importantly, studying history satisfies our natural human desire to establish a link with our past. On a more pragmatic level, a sound understanding of how our institutions, beliefs, and society originated and grew gives us an accurate perspective on the present and helps our decision making for the future. Although history does not literally "repeat itself," there are certain patterns in every human society that, with our knowledge of them, makes the present more comprehensible.

COURSE GOALS

You shall be expected to demonstrate a working knowledge of the patterns, trends, individuals, and various facts concerning United States History to 1865.

REQUIRED TEXT

Brinkley, Alan, The Unfinished Nation: A Concise History of the American People, Seventh Edition, volume 1.

DIVERSITY COMPONENT

Students will study the development of British North America from the establishment of the first colonies to the founding of the United States with an emphasis on the nature of immigration, slavery, and overall themes of colonialism. Likewise, students will explore United States development from the early days of the republic through the Civil War with a focus on regional development and Westward migration.

ADA Accommodations Statement: Students with physical or learning disabilities who may require accommodations are encouraged to contact the Counseling Office. After disclosing the nature of the disability, students are urged to discuss their needs with individual instructors. This should be done at the beginning of each semester. Instructors, in conjunction with appropriate college officials, will provide assistance and/or accommodations only to those students who have completed this process.

Academic Ethics and Classroom Behavior: At Middlesex Community College we expect the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in accordance with the Board of Trustees' Proscribed Conduct Policy in Section 5.2.1 of the Board's policy manual. This policy prohibits cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration on assignments, unauthorized access to examinations or course materials, plagiarism, and other proscribed activities. Plagiarism is defined as the use of another's idea(s) or phrase(s) and representing that/those idea(s) as your own, either intentionally or unintentionally. (Board of Trustees' Policy 5.2.1)