

**California State University, Long Beach**  
**History 172, Section 04** (Number 10700)  
**Early United States History**  
**Dr. Brett Mizelle**

Fall 2004  
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11:00am-12:15pm  
Room LA3-110

Office: Room FO2-109  
Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30-10:30am & 12:30-1:30pm, Wednesdays 4:00-6:00pm and  
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"History does not refer merely, or even principally, to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do." James Baldwin

"The past is never dead. It is not even past." William Faulkner

"Among the biggest difficulties in making a historical film is presenting the idea that there may be more than one reasonable version of events. Understanding that is a very, very difficult thing for most Americans, who have been trained by popular entertainment to want an answer in half an hour, an hour, or two hours, depending on whether it's television or the movies. And they want an unambiguous answer." John Sayles

**History 172: The Key Questions:**

- What is the story of American history?
- When historians make their stories, how do they know what they say they know?
- Why would I want to think like a historian?

Everything we do in this course is designed to address one or more of these questions.

### **What You Can Expect to Learn in this Class:**

Knowledge: This course aims to broaden and deepen your knowledge of some of the most important events, people, developments, and issues in U.S. history from the eve of European contact to the aftermath of the Civil War.

Ways of Thinking: This course will help you develop fundamental skills of critical and historical thinking, such as reading for the main point, asking good questions, drawing connections, assessing the reliability of sources, constructing sound arguments, assessing change over time, and determining the limits of what can be known. Equipped with such skills, you will learn to exercise discernment when confronting historical claims people make about the past. In addition to learning how to "think like a historian," you'll also learn why it makes sense to want to do so.

A Point of View on American History: As we examine some of the major issues in early American history you will take steps toward developing your own perspective on the nation's past. You will also learn to recognize and critique other perspectives. You will also develop a more sophisticated understanding of the cultural work of historical memory in contemporary American culture.

Communication Skills: This course will help you improve your ability to listen, talk, write, and assume responsibility for your own education. Because curiosity is fundamental to learning, the skill that will be valued above all others in this course is the ability to ask good questions.

### **Required Course Texts:**

Victoria Bissell Brown and Timothy J. Shannon, Going to the Source: The Bedford Reader in American History, Volume 1: To 1877 (2004).

Paul Johnson, A History of the American People (1999).

Howard Zinn, A People's History of the United States, 1492-Present (2003).

The Narrative of the Life of Henry Box Brown (2002).

These texts may be purchased at the University Bookstore. Additional readings and materials may be distributed in class or via BeachBoard. You should also possess a style manual and a quality dictionary to look up the unfamiliar words you will inevitably find in our readings.

### **Course Assignments & Grading:**

Your final grade will be determined by your performance on the following:

Critical Thinking Papers (3)	30%
Reading Quizzes	20%
Paper on Henry Box Brown	20%
Final Essay	20%
Attendance & Participation	10%

### **Course Design:**

Topics: In fifteen weeks it is impossible to cover everything of importance in U.S. history for this period. Emphasizing major historical issues and their treatment by historians, I have selected the following topics for our primary consideration: the collision of European and Native American cultures, the colonization of North America, the development of a slave society, the meaning of the American Revolution, the debate over the Constitution, the competing political visions of the new nation, westward expansion and

Indian response, social and economic changes in America, life under slavery, religious revival and social reform, westward expansion and the Mexican War, and the Civil War and emancipation.

Time Allocation: This class meets twice per week. If you are unable to participate in class as scheduled you may wish to seek out another offering. Class time will be used for film screenings, in-class writing and quizzes, brief lectures on key topics, and both small group and full class discussion.

BeachBoard: This class is using the web as a primary means of information sharing and communication. To that end, all students enrolled in the class are simultaneously enrolled in BeachBoard. To contact me with questions, participate in discussion groups, and access assignments and grades you'll need to log-in to [www.beachboard.csulb.edu](http://www.beachboard.csulb.edu).

Film Screenings: Our study of historical topics will often begin with the screening of a historical film of some sort: usually a documentary or Hollywood movie. We begin our study of history this way because, growing up in a media culture, most of us find it easier to apprehend the past when we can see visual representations of it. Unfortunately, little in our culture equips us to be critical, discerning viewers of moving images. Therefore I will teach you some basic skills of visual literacy that will sharpen your habits of critical thinking when it comes to watching historical films. As a means to this end, we will analyze these films through in-class & web-based writing and discussion.

Reading Historical Sources: Historians do a lot of reading, both of primary documents (which are the raw materials of history) and secondary sources (the interpretations made by historians of those documents). Our major primary sources, upon which you will develop your own analytical skills in our critical thinking papers, are included in the reader *Going to the Source*. We will also be reading and writing about a slave narrative, which is another example of a primary source.

We will also examine many of the stories that historians have told about the past. To that end, we will read recent accounts of U.S. history by two historians with very different approaches to the past and its relevance to contemporary American life. Throughout the semester we will be comparing Howard Zinn's and Paul Johnson's analyses of early U.S. history, a process that will culminate in your final essay for this course.

As you read the materials for this course:

- note what questions the primary documents seem to be useful for answering
- note similarities or differences of opinion among the primary documents and between Zinn and Johnson
- underline quotations you find particularly interesting or significant
- identify the differing interpretations of the secondary sources and the evidence they use in making their arguments
- make connections between the ideas in our readings and other things you know
- list questions you want to know more about

While these analytical strategies are generally useful (after all, those who don't learn to discern risk being deceived), they are also essential to developing your knowledge, ways of thinking, and points of view on American history.

Practicing Historical Skills through Writing: Although we will discuss various historical issues and stories during the semester, history is fundamentally a written discipline. Accordingly, each student will write three short (3-4 page) critical thinking papers, one 5-7 page paper on a slave narrative, and one final 5-7 page essay. In order to make sure that we have sufficient critical thinking papers for the topics on this

syllabus, we will divide into three groups—the Madisons, the Hamiltons, and the Jays—at our first class meeting. Each group will assume primary responsibility for four weeks of class sessions by preparing and submitting critical thinking papers and helping to facilitate our classroom discussion. You may have noticed that you will only be graded on three critical thinking papers—you can either complete all four, taking only the three highest grades, or you can write just three. All students need to complete papers for the first cycle through the groups, but after that, the choice of how to proceed is up to you. If your group is not responsible for a given class, you are still expected to have completed the day's readings prior to coming to class and to be prepared to participate in discussions.

The critical thinking papers should articulate and defend a point of some kind you wish to make about the documents and essays you've read. Do not use your papers to merely summarize the readings. Instead, your papers should demonstrate that you thought about the readings and took the trouble to wrestle your musings and insights into coherent, defensible arguments. On occasion, I may suggest questions for you to write on; otherwise, you can find ideas for what to think about in the introductions to the documents in *Going to the Source*. Please note: At the end of your papers, triple space and write down the question your paper addresses. These questions will become the basis for our discussion in class.

Students in History 172 will write two other significant papers. Your paper on *The Narrative of the Life of Henry Box Brown* will be due on November 9th. The topic for that paper will be distributed at the end of October. Your final essay is due during our regularly scheduled exam period (Dec 16).

All work written outside the classroom, must be word-processed in a standard 10 or 12 point font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. All papers should have your name, the course title and number, the due date, and an appropriate title or label for the assignment at the top. I strongly recommend that you keep copies of all your work, either on paper or electronically, for your protection.

Grading: Your papers and in-class writings will be evaluated for earnest effort and thoughtful, coherent content on a twelve point scale, as follows: A+ (12), A (11), A- (10), B+ (09), B (08), B- (07), C+ (06), C (05), C- (04), D+ (3), D (2), D- (1), F (0). Usage and grammar are not major concerns of grading, but a minimum mechanical competence to insure the "readability" of these papers is expected. I expect that you will proofread your papers and exams before handing them in. All papers are due in class on the day assigned. If you know you are going to miss class on dates assignments are due you must be proactive and turn the assignment in early or request an extension in advance. Late assignments will lose one-third of a letter grade for each calendar day they are late and will not be accepted more than one week past their due date without a previously agreed to extension.

Reading Quizzes: Occasionally class will begin with a quiz on the assigned readings. The quizzes will be distributed as class begins and will be collected within the first five minutes. If you are late for class, you will miss the quiz and receive a zero. There will be no make-up quizzes for any reason. However, you may take a quiz ahead of time if you know in advance that you will miss class.

Attendance: Attendance is not mandatory, but this is not the sort of class you can miss and expect to earn a good grade. Your active and engaged participation at all class meetings, not just on those days when your group is leading discussion, is essential. Note the consequences of non-attendance: By skipping a class you will not only fail to complete any in-class writing but will also receive a zero on the reading quizzes. You will also miss the discussions and lectures that will contextualize specific assignments and contribute to the skills and understandings of American history that will prove central to your overall success in the course. These consequences may be waived only if 1) I receive an explanation for your absence from a medical or mortuary professional, the Dean, or the Athletic Director, or 2) you inform me in advance of your absence so we can work out alternative ways for you to complete your course work.

### Other Course Policies:

**Classroom Environment:** Please ask questions and express opinions in this course, approaching readings and ideas actively and critically. As you do so, however, please strive to be courteous to your fellow students. To create a respectful and productive environment please avoid unnecessary distractions (such as ringing cell phones, beeping pagers, and conspicuous food consumption) during class meetings. Because students seem increasingly incapable of turning off their cell phones, I will make a substantial deduction from your participation grade if your phone rings during class.

**Disability Accommodation:** Any student who feels that he or she may need an accommodation for any sort of disability should make an appointment to see me during my office hours so we can make arrangements for you to complete the requirements of the class.

**Plagiarism & Academic Integrity:** Students in this class will be held to a high standard of academic integrity, which is defined as "the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception." Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. If you have any questions about academic integrity, please talk with me. I can and will fail a student for major infractions.

**Student Services:** If you need help with written assignments or require guidance on note-taking and critical reading, please take advantage of the Writer's Resource Lab (LAB-312; 985-4329) or the Learning Assistance Center (Library East 12; 985-5350). The CSULB Technology Help Desk is also available for students. Help is available on a wide range of computer issues including: BeachBoard, Windows and Mac OS, CSULB Internet Accounts, Remote Connectivity, Microsoft Desktop Applications, Anti-Virus, Internet and Web related topics. Visit them on the web at <http://helpdesk.csulb.edu> or contact the THD by phone at 562-985-4959 or e-mail: [helpdesk@csulb.edu](mailto:helpdesk@csulb.edu).

### Course Schedule:

This course schedule is arranged by week. At our Tuesday meetings, we'll introduce the topic for the week via films, lectures, in-class exercises, etc. Accordingly, you should make sure you read the relevant sections of Johnson and/or Zinn prior to Tuesday meetings. You might do well to assume that our reading quizzes are more likely on Tuesdays (hint, hint). Thursdays will be dedicated to working with the primary documents in *Going to the Source*. This is when you will practice your historical skills through the critical thinking essays and both small-group and full-class discussions. Accordingly, your critical thinking papers are due on Thursdays.

Week 1 (Aug 31-Sep 2) Reading:	Introduction GTS Introduction for Students
Week 2 (Sep 7-Sep 9) Reading:	European and Native American Cultures in Collision Zinn-01, Johnson 1-28, GTS-01: Archaeological Data Madisons paper Due (Th)
Week 3 (Sep 14-Sep 16) Reading:	Colonizing North America Johnson, 28-117, GTS-02: Passenger Lists Hamiltons paper Due (Th)
Week 4 (Sep 21-Sep 23)	The Development of American Slavery

Reading:	Zinn-02, Johnson, 72-79, GTS-03: Runaway Advertisements Jays Paper Due (Th)
Week 5 (Sep 28-Sep 30) Reading:	Interpreting the American Revolution Zinn-03 & 04, Johnson, 121-177, GTS-05: Songs and Toasts Madisons paper due (Th)
Week 6 (Oct 5-Oct 7) Reading:	Constituting American Government Zinn-05, Johnson, 177-211, GTS-07: Ratification Speeches Hamiltons paper due (Th)
Week 7 (Oct 12-Oct 14) Reading:	Competing Visions of Post-Revolutionary America Johnson, 211-267; 325-359, GTS-06: Court Records <u>No Class Meeting on Thursday, Oct 14</u> Jays paper due (Tu, 10/19)
Week 8 (Oct 19-21) Reading:	American Expansion and Indian Response Zinn-07, Johnson, 267-279, GTS-10: Catlin's Paintings Madisons paper due (Th)
Week 9 (Oct 26-Oct 28) Reading:	The Urbanizing North Zinn-06 & 10, 211-233, Johnson, 283-296; 359-370, GTS-08: Advice Lit Hamiltons paper due (Th)
Week 10 (Nov 2-Nov 4) Reading:	Life Under Slavery Zinn-09, 171-187, Johnson, 307-325, GTS-09: Economic Data Jays paper due (Th)
Week 11 (Nov 9-Nov 11) Reading:	Life Under Slavery <i>Narrative of the Life of Henry Box Brown</i> <u>No Class Meeting on Thursday, Nov 11</u> Slave Narrative paper due (Tu)
Week 12 (Nov 16-Nov 18) Reading:	Religious Revival and Social Reform Johnson, 296-307, 388-396, 400-419, GTS-11: Autobiographies Madisons paper due (Th)
Week 13 (Nov 23-Nov 25)	Utopianism & Other Extreme Reform Movements <u>No Class Meeting on Thursday, Nov 25</u>
Week 14 (Nov 30-Dec 2) Reading:	Westward Expansion Zinn-08, Johnson, 370-387, GTS-12: Diplomatic Correspondence Hamiltons paper due (Th)
Week 15 (Dec 7-Dec 9) Reading:	The Civil War Zinn-09, 187-210 & 10, 233-251, Johnson, 396-400; 424-507, GTS-13: Battlefield Photos Jays paper due (Th)
Dec 16:	<b>Final Essay due, 10:15 - 12:15</b>