

**J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College  
Course Content Summary**

**Course Prefix and Number:** HIS 121    **Credits:** 3

**Course Title:** United States History to 1877

**Course Description:**

Introduces the history of the United States from its origins to 1877. Includes the European exploration, development of the American colonies and their institutions, the Revolution, major political, social and economic developments, geographical expansion, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. This is a Passport and UCGS transfer course. Lecture 3 hours. Total 3 hours per week. 3 credits

**General Course Purpose:**

HIS 121 surveys the general history of the United States from the pre-Columbian period through 1877. This course allows students to reach a basic understanding of the early historical development of the United States through a combination of educational methods including lecture, document analysis, and historical methodology. Students will learn about the important political, economic, social, intellectual, cultural and religious changes that shaped the development of the United States. These changes will be considered from the perspectives of the multiple and diverse historical groups of people driving them and affected by them.

**Course Prerequisites/Corequisites:**

None

**Course Objectives:**

Upon completing the course, the student will be able to:

Written/Oral Communication

- Explain the changing social, cultural, economic, and political structures and development of the United States from pre-Columbian times through Reconstruction through written activities and/or oral presentations/discussion.
- Describe the key events, developments, and people from pre-Columbian times through the Reconstruction through written activities and/or oral presentations/discussion.

Critical Thinking

- Analyze and evaluate primary and secondary sources dealing with American history through Reconstruction and draw conclusions regarding their impact on the history of that time.
- Differentiate between fact, inference, and opinion as pertaining to American history through 1877.

Quantitative/Graphic Analysis

- Analyze numerical data, graphs, and maps as they pertain to understanding the development of events and trends throughout American history through Reconstruction.

Before First Contact: Suggested Context Native American Societies, European Culture, West African Culture

- Describe and discuss basic structures of Native American societies that developed in North America before 1500.
- Identify key changes to those structures due to the arrival of West Africans and Europeans.
- Analyze the cultural and social structures of European nations and what impact they had on exploration and colonization.
- Discuss the social, cultural, and political similarities and differences between the Native American, European, Asian, and African societies before first contact.

First Contact: Suggested Context - Fifteenth and Sixteenth-century contacts between the Americas and Europe, Early British Settlements in the Chesapeake and New England, Atlantic Slave Trade

- Identify, compare, and contrast the patterns of interaction between different groups of European colonizers and different indigenous cultural groups.
- Compare and contrast the first British settlements in Virginia and New England.
- Explain how distinct systems of unfree labor evolved in the context of British North America and the broader transatlantic economic context.
- Identify, compare, and contrast gender differences between Native American, European, and African cultures.

British North American Colonies Mature: Suggested Context- The Growth of Settlement in British North America, The Seven Years War and the Events Leading to the American Revolution, Introduction of Indentured Servitude and Slavery to British North America

- Identify the demographic changes to British North America in the first seventy-five years of the eighteenth century
- Discuss the impact of the intellectual and cultural changes stemming from the Enlightenment and the Great Awakening
- Identify major political, cultural, economic, and intellectual changes taking place in the British North American colonies during the eighteenth century.
- Explain how the Seven Years War affected British North American colonies and how conflicts between British policy and American colonists led to the Revolution.

The American Revolution and the Early National Period: Suggested Context - The American Revolution, Early governments and the creation of the United States Constitution, The Early National Period and the Era of Good Feelings

- Identify major political, cultural, social, and economic transformations taking place from the era of the American Revolution to the 1820s.
- Identify the major political, social, and military events of the American Revolution.
- Explain the reasons for drafting the new Constitution and the different proposals and compromises made during its creation including the different arguments for and against ratification.
- Describe the emergence of the two-party system in American politics.
- Explain the impact of the war on slavery, non-elite white people and the growing divide between the two after the Revolution.
- Explain the impact of the War of 1812 on the United States.
- Examine the Missouri Compromise and its role in sectional politics.

The Market and Communication Revolution: Suggested Context: Pre-Market (Moral), Economy, Introduction of the Factory System, Changes in Transportation and Communication, Changing Gender Roles, Growth of Cities, Diversity of Antebellum Labor

- Summarize the pre-market economy and the emergence of the market economy and the reasons for economic change.

- Discuss the rise of the factory system (particularly the textile industry) and the impact on production and workers' lives in America.
- Analyze the technological changes in antebellum society and the ways they altered life in the United States.
- Explain and assess how industrialization and urbanization brought about changing gender roles in parts of the antebellum United States.
- Evaluate the actions women took in shaping their new roles in society and their efforts to gain a voice in American society during the antebellum period.
- Describe the rapid urbanization of the United States and life in the growing cities during the antebellum period.

The Jacksonian Era: Suggested Context - Jacksonian Republicanism, Nullification Controversy, The Second Great Awakening, Antebellum Reform Movements

- Outline the major political parties and political realignments of the early national and antebellum periods.
- Identify the different elements of Jacksonian republicanism.
- Analyze the Nullification Controversy of 1832 and its impact on the debate over slavery.
- Discuss the Second Great Awakening and its impact on the reform movements that arose in the early to mid-nineteenth century, including (but not limited to) abolitionism and temperance.
- Describe the emergence of the early women's rights movement as a product of women's efforts to participate more publicly in reform and politics.

Westward Expansion: Suggested Context - Politics of the 1820s, Manifest Destiny and Westward Expansion, The Mexican War

- Describe and discuss the experiences and motivations of Americans from the United States who participated in westward expansion.
- Explain how racial and cultural biases against Native Americans and Mexican Americans undergirded U.S. rationalizations for westward expansion in the era of Manifest Destiny.
- Describe the causes of the Mexican War and their impact of the American victory.

The Slave South: Suggested Context - Planter Hegemony, Work and Living Conditions of African-American Slaves, Control of Slaves, Slave Culture and Resistance

- Analyze how the planter class controlled the different elements of white society in the antebellum South.
- Describe the material conditions, legal restrictions, and cultural norms of Southern slave culture, and divergent responses to slavery and unfreedom by free and enslaved black people.
- Discuss the major slave rebellions in the nineteenth-century United States.
- Analyze the expansion of the internal Slave Market and new slave codes.

The Secession Crisis: Suggested Context - The Expansion of Slavery Westward, Compromises, Strife from Bleeding Kansas to Harper's Ferry

- Explore the ways in which the westward expansion of slavery created conflict between different sections of the nation and led to political realignment.
- Describe the compromises in Congress designed to handle national conflicts over the expansion of slavery.
- Recognize how violence affected American politics during the 1850s.

Civil War: Suggested Context - Secession, The Military Aspects of the Civil War, The Home Front and Politics, The War's End

- Analyze the causes of secession in Southern states and the creation of the Confederate States of America.

- Explain how CSA committed treason against the United States.
- Identify the key military actions of the Civil War and their effect.
- Discuss the impact of political activities and the home front on the outcome of the Civil War.
- Discuss how minorities, women, American Blacks, native Americans, aided in the Civil War on both sides.
- Explain the events that brought an end to the Civil War.

Reconstruction: Suggested Context - Emancipation, Presidential Reconstruction, Congressional (Radical) Reconstruction, The Unofficial and Official Ends of Reconstruction

- Analyze the diverse meanings of freedom between African Americans and Anglo Americans and how each group sought to shape the emancipation experience.
- Explain the need for the Freedmen's Bureau.
- Articulate what the black codes meant for freed people.
- Describe the actions of the national and Southern state governments during Presidential Reconstruction.
- Explain the changes Congressional (Radical) Reconstruction brought to the South.
- Discuss the ways in which Reconstruction ended (both unofficially and officially).

### Major Topics to be Included:

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- **British North American Colonies Mature:** The Growth of Settlement in British North America, The Seven Years War and the Events Leading to the American Revolution, Introduction of Indentured Servitude and Slavery to British North America
- **The American Revolution and the Early National Period:** The American Revolution, Early governments and the creation of the United States Constitution, The Early National Period and the Era of Good Feelings
- **The Market and Communication Revolution:** Pre-Market (Moral) Economy, Introduction of the Factory System, Changes in Transportation and Communication, Changing Gender Roles. Growth of Cities, Diversity of Antebellum Labor
- **The Jacksonian Era:** Jacksonian Republicanism, Nullification Controversy, The Second Great Awakening, Antebellum Reform Movements
- **Westward Expansion:** Politics of the 1820s, Manifest Destiny and Westward Expansion, The Mexican War
- **The Slave South:** Planter Hegemony, Work and Living Conditions of African-American Slaves. Control of Slaves, Slave Culture and Resistance
- **The Secession Crisis:** The Expansion of Slavery Westward, Compromises, Strife from Bleeding Kansas to Harper's Ferry
- **Civil War:** Secession, The Military Aspects of the Civil War, The Home Front and Politics. The War's End
- **Reconstruction:** Emancipation, Presidential Reconstruction, Congressional (Radical) Reconstruction, The Unofficial and Official Ends of Reconstruction

**Effective Date/Updated:** January 1, 2022