

Classics of American History Syllabus 2011

Professor: Dr, Kerry Irish
 Office: Center Street House
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 Office Hours: T and H 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. M and W 8:00 to 8:30 a.m. And by **appointment.**

This course is a reading seminar featuring some of the great books of American history. It is intended for above average history majors in their junior or senior years. It is easily the most difficult course that I teach. Students will read six works by America's greatest historians. Once every two weeks we will meet in small groups to discuss the assigned book. **The discussions are graded; no reference to books or notes is allowed.** Students will also turn in a 2 1/2 - 3 page book review at the beginning of the discussion. There are six discussions, but you are only required to write four book reviews. Thus you may skip two of them but everyone must write on the first book. Since what is said in discussion relates directly to what might or should be written in a good review, late reviews are accepted, but can only receive a "C." **If I believe you have not read the required book I will ask you to drop the class. Reading is absolutely mandatory and no one may be excused from class.**

Books are listed in the order of reading:

(Note that the books cover American history from the founding to the Cold War.)

Fischer, David H. *Paul Revere's Ride.*

Miller, William L. *The Business of May Next: James Madison and the Founding.*

McPherson, James. *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution.*

Kazin, Michael. *A Godly Hero: The Life of William Jennings Bryan.*

Heinrichs, Waldo. *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Entry into World War II.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Gaddis, John, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

Course Objectives:

1. Enhance critical thinking and comparative skills in regard to American history in both an oral and written medium.

2. Develop skills in writing scholarly book reviews including using the proper technical form.
3. Enhance ability to think thematically about American History.
4. Learn to find book reviews and use them to aid one's analysis of a book.

The proper technical form for a book review cited in a scholarly journal is:

Works Cited Page:

Kirk, James T. Review of *My Heroism on Board the USS Enterprise*, by Theophilus Spock. In *Journal of Federation Studies* 76 (July 2411): 375-377.

Foot or endnote:

James T. Kirk, Review of *My Heroism on Board the USS Enterprise*, by Theophilus Spock, In *Journal of Federation Studies* 76 (July 2411): 375-377.

Your book reviews should also have an unnumbered title page, 2 1/2-3 pages of text, and a works cited page. The first page of text is page one but it is not numbered; the second page of text has a page number (2) in the upper right hand corner and so on. The title page has your title, name and box number. Page one begins with the review. Do not repeat title page info on page one.

Grading:

Each discussion participant may earn up to 30 points. Each book review is also worth up to 30 points.

Discussions:	180 total possible points
Book Reviews (4):	120
Total	300

92% and above	A
90% to 91.99%	A-
88% to 89.9%	B+
82% to 87.99%	B
80% to 81.99%	B-
78% to 79.99%	C+
72% to 77.99%	C
and so on	