

Prof. David Henkin
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Office Hours: Mon. 3-4:30 and by appt.

Fall 2020
History 122 AC
M/W: 5—6:30 pm, Zoom

ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

THE ADVENT OF MASS SOCIETY

The Civil War is commonly regarded as the second American Revolution – the grand rupture after which a new modern nation came into being. But many of the institutions, ideologies, and practices that make up modern society and culture in the United States emerged more gradually during the period that preceded the War. To understand the origins of such contemporary phenomena as the mass media, corporate capitalism, wage labor, the two-party system, family values, and racism, we need to trace their evolution in the nineteenth century. This course examines a little over half a century of life in the United States (roughly from 1800 until the secession of the South), focusing on everyday life, popular culture, race relations, democratic politics, westward expansion, urbanization, class formation, religious experience, gender roles, sexuality, print communication, and competing claims to wealth, power, and the good life. Assigned readings will consist largely of first-person narratives in which women and men of varied descent backgrounds and cultural identities try to make sense of their own experiences against the backdrop of major social change. Lectures will explore both the narratives and the social changes.

Class lectures will be delivered at the scheduled class time over Zoom and recorded for those who wish to attend or consult them later. Zoom classes will be designed to be interactive, within the constraints of the medium.

Course requirements include four short (250-350 word) analyses of assigned primary sources, one midterm exam, and a cumulative exam during finals week. All examinations will be completed and submitted electronically.

Grades will be determined according to the following formula: 10% for each of the short analyses, 20% for the midterm, and 40% for the final. Students taking the course on a pass-fail basis must pass each of the three components of the course in order to receive credit. Any cheating or plagiarism, as clearly defined on the bCourses site for each assignment, will be grounds for failing the course.

NOTE: THIS COURSE FULFILLS THE AMERICAN CULTURES REQUIREMENT AS WELL AS BOTH THE TIME AND THE PRE-1900 REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AMERICAN STUDIES MAJOR.

Required texts:

The following have been ordered at campus bookstores:

- * Main textbook: D. Henkin and R. McLennan, *Becoming America*, Volume 1, Chapters 8-14 (a custom electronic edition, including only the chapters assigned for this course. is available at www.mcgrawhillcreate.com/shop : search for ISBN 9781307586541)
- * D. Cohen (ed.), *The Female Marine and Other Stories*
- * D. Crockett, *A Narrative of the Life of David Crockett*
- * H. Bibb, *Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb*
- * H. L. Horowitz, *Attitudes Toward Sex in Antebellum America*
[note that the Crockett and Bibb can be accessed free on line]

Other required readings (shorter excerpts of longer texts) listed below will be made available through a digital Course Reader produced by Copy Central or linked/distributed directly through bCourses.

Course Reader

- *Life of Black Hawk, or Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak: Dictated by Himself* (144-154)
- G. Foster, *New York by Gaslight* (pp. 69-76, 92-103, 140-149)
- F. Zeh, *Immigrant Soldier in the Mexican War* (pp. 4-11, 45-59)
- J.R. Ridge, *Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta* (pp. 7-29)
- Clappe, *The Shirley Letters* (Letters 1, 4, 5, 11, 13, 17, 18)
- “The Hop of Fashion” (From *Inside the Minstrel Mask*, 126-134)

bCourses

- W. Otter, *History of My Own Times* (pp. 5, 25-53, 74-88, 123-126, 142-148, 173-178)
- J. Lee, *Religious Experience and Journal* (pp. 3-13)
- W. Apess, *A Son of the Forest* (pp. 8-55)
- H.R. Howard, *The Lives of Helen Jewett And Richard P. Robinson* (Chapters 1, 33, 34)
- M. Monk, *Awful Disclosures of the Hôtel Dieu Nunnery* (Preface, Chapters 1, 6, 19, 20)
- Atlantic & Great Western Railroad timetable
- W. Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

Schedule of Lectures and Assignments

[Key document readings should be completed by the first lecture of the week; main textbook reading, in brackets, should be completed by week's end.]

All lectures will be presented over Zoom during class time (and also recorded), except where a pre-recorded lecture is indicated.

Week 1 -- Introduction

[*BECOMING AMERICA*, Chapters 7 and 8]

August 26 **Time Passages**

Week 2 -- Imagining a Nation

Key Document: D. Cohen (ed.), *The Female Marine and Other Stories*, pp. 61-97; 153-163

[*BECOMING AMERICA*, Chapter 9]

August 31 **Cross-Dressing Sailors and a Nation at War**

September 2 **Playing Indian, Removing Indians**

Week 3 -- Labor and Leisure

Key Document: W. Otter, *History of My Own Times* (bCourses)

September 7 **Masters and Men**

September 9 **Industry and Class**

First Document Analysis due on September 11, 10 PM

Week 4 -- Mass Politics, Mass Media

Key Documents: D. Crockett, *A Narrative of the Life of David Crockett*, Preface, Chapters I, II, VII, X; *Life of Black Hawk* (bCourses)

[*BECOMING AMERICA*, CHAPTER 10]

September 14 **Andrew Jackson and the Party System**

September 16 **Self-Made Men and Market Society**

Week 5 -- Worlds of Strangers

Key Documents: Foster, *New York by Gaslight* (Reader); Howard, *The Lives of Helen Jewett and Richard P. Robinson* (bCourses)

September 21 **The Rise of the Big American City**

September 23 **Theater, News, and Mass Media**

Week 6 --

Mass Religion

Key Documents: Lee, *Religious Experience and Journal* (bCourses);
Apress, *A Son of the Forest* (bCourses)

September 28 **Revivals and Evangelicals [pre-recorded lecture]**

September 30 **Millennialism**

Week 7 --

Plantations and White Supremacy

Key Document: H. Bibb, *Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb*
[*BECOMING AMERICA*, CHAPTER 11]

October 5 **Masters and Slaves in the Cotton Kingdom**

October 7 **Guest Lecture: Revolutionaries and Liberators**

Second Document Analysis due on October 5, 10 PM

Week 8 --

Conspiracy Theory

Key Document: M. Monk, *Awful Disclosures* (bCourses)

October 12 **Fighting About Slavery**

October 14 **MIDTERM**

Week 9 --

Family Values

Key Document: H.L. Horowitz, *Attitudes Toward Sex in Antebellum America*, pp. 43-88, 111-138.

[*BECOMING AMERICA*, CHAPTER 12]

October 19 **What is Reform?**

October 21 **Men, Women, and Domesticity**

Week 10 --

Going West

Key Documents: F. Zeh, *Immigrant Soldier in the Mexican War* (Reader);
J.R. Ridge, *Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta* (Reader)

October 26 **Manifest Destiny**

October 28 **Immigration and Nativism**

Third Document Analysis due on October 30, 10 PM

Week 11 -- Frontiers

Key Document: L.A.K.S. Clappe, *The Shirley Letters*
[*BECOMING AMERICA*, Chapter 13]

November 2 **Gold Rush**

November 4 **Overland Migration**

Third Document Analysis due on October 29, 10 PM

Week 12 -- White Empire

Key Document: “The Hop of Fashion”

November 9 **Blackface Stages and Opera Houses**

November 11 **NO CLASS -- Holiday**

Week 13 -- Connectedness

Key Document: Atlantic & Great Western Railroad timetable

November 16 **Nationalism and Mass Communications**

November 18 **Railroad Nation**

Fourth Document Analysis due on November 20, 10 PM

Week 14 -- Sectionalism

Key Document: W. Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*
[*BECOMING AMERICA*, CHAPTER 14]

November 23 **Fugitive Slaves and the Boundaries of Responsibility**

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15 Disunion

No new reading

December 1 Political Realignment

December 3 The End of an Era?

