

A. HISTORY

AMH 2210, United States History 1 – U.S. History to 1877: A survey of the social, political, economic, geographic, and cultural development of the American people through the Reconstruction. Emphasis is placed on enabling students to understand and appreciate their heritage.

AMH 2220, United States History 2 – U.S. History since 1877: American history since 1877. Emphasize the social, political, and economic factors instrumental in the rise of the US to a position of world leadership. Enable student to better understand the problems of the present

Project Guidelines: *Choose ONE of the following options to complete in fulfillment of the course's "Gordon Rule" writing requirement:*

OPTION A—RESEARCH PAPER:

Each student is required to choose a topic relating to American History up to 1877 and, after thorough research, write a ten-page paper on the subject. The topic of the paper is up to the student. You may choose a particular event in the period (such as the Boston Tea Party), a theme (change, for instance), or a specific person (Elizabeth Cady Stanton, for example). Your text provides many good topic suggestions, or you may explore the library, and even the worldwide web, for potential subject matter. Choose a topic you like! There is nothing worse than having to research and write a paper on a subject you hate. Believe me, I know!

Make sure the topic is not too broad. For instance, the student will find that writing a ten-page paper covering the entire Civil War is impossible. A paper on one aspect of the war, however, such as the Battle of Vicksburg, may be more manageable. On the other hand, make sure the topic is not so narrow in focus that source material is lacking.

Writing is an exercise in persuasion. Assume, therefore, that the reader is unfamiliar with the topic and write to demonstrate your mastery of the subject. Indicate a thesis statement of your research problem/topic at the beginning of the paper. Why are you writing the paper? Why is it important to American history and this course? What conclusions have you made about your topic? Do not be content with a simple description of what you read. Use your sources as a lens through which you may examine part of the historical era. A strong introduction to the topic, prior to jumping into the narrative, is vital to a successful paper, as is a strong conclusion to "wrap things up."

Each paper must be written in clear, concise English, and in a proper, literate style. The paper should be typed, double-spaced, and have margins no more than one inch. Please include a cover page that includes the title of the paper, your name, the course number, and date. **You must utilize a minimum of three sources.** Examine a variety of primary and secondary sources in your research, including not just books but journal articles as well. You may even use as a primary source an interview with someone who lived through the event and/or has firsthand knowledge of the topic. Technology has opened up a whole new avenue for student research. Therefore, feel free to gather source material from the Internet/worldwide web. Please note that an encyclopedia is NOT to be included as one of your sources, nor is any textbook.

Edit, edit, edit for content, spelling and style. Are you saying what you want and mean to say? Are you sticking to your topic, or digressing from the subject at hand? Check your paper carefully before handing it in.

OPTION B—BOOK REVIEWS:

OPTION C—SERVICE LEARNING:

History is not just about the “old dead white guys,” as a graduate professor used to say, or a grocery list of dates floating in space for that matter. It is about ordinary people who, through the course of living their lives, made history. What better way, then, to learn history than to live it through service to the community in which one lives? Instead of a formalized research paper or book reviews, students may choose to participate in a Service Learning experience. Through interaction and reflection, you will learn to apply knowledge and interact with the “real” world, as well as exercise critical thinking skills (a key component in the practice of history in general), develop self-learning and helping skills, societal knowledge, and sensitivity to the diverse world around you.

Students who choose to engage in this Service Learning option must complete a **minimum of 20 hours of volunteer service, keep a journal** detailing their service experience, **meet with the instructor at least twice** during the term to discuss the experience, and **write a formal 3-5 page reflection paper** relating the value of the experience to the course itself and how their service affected them individually.

Each student is required to register through the Center for Service Learning (CSL) on the Cocoa campus. The Center will facilitate volunteer placement and provide paperwork through which documentation of place, time, and performance will be reflected. Students are encouraged to volunteer with an agency which relates in some way to history or the historical experience (a museum or historical society for instance, or a nursing home where students might interact with individuals who “lived” history); though other agencies not directly related to the pure study of American history may be used. Remember, your service hours may be reflected on your transcript under Community Service Hours if you complete a SHOAT (Service Hours on Academic Transcript) form, which can be obtained at the CSL.

Students must confirm their placement by the 2nd week of class by meeting individually with the instructor. **A second meeting will take place at the end of the term** during which time student and instructor reflect on the experience as a whole.

Participants will keep a journal detailing their service. This journal must include at least one **½ page entry for every volunteer session** and should be **reflective** in nature (thoughts, feelings, challenges, peak experiences/learning, course connections, etc.). Do not simply include a chronology of activities, but rather, write analytically and thoroughly reflect your experience. Consider the following when writing journal entries:

1. events that occurred during the session
2. feelings about the day’s activities—what you learned, how you benefited, how someone else benefited, etc.

3. impact of the day's experiences, positive or negative, on you and the volunteer site
4. relationship of the experience to larger issues (societal, personal, etc.)
5. course connections

Be creative with your journal. You may include illustrations, photos, or anything else you believe may help express your participation. For instance, if you are working with elderly Americans, you may wish to interview them on topics raised in. Include their reflections, and perhaps a photo of the individual, in the journal as an example of the connection between past and present. Write with candor and use your senses and observational skills to chart your growth and development, both academically and personally. Include events, people, feelings, striking thoughts/insights, dreams, etc. Your journal need not be typed, but should be readable and coherently organized.

Students must compose a **final reflection essay (3-5 pages, typed, double-spaced)** in which you reflect upon the service experience as a whole, its value, positive/negative qualities, etc. Address the following questions regarding your volunteerism in the course of the narrative:

1. Where did you volunteer and why? Why service learning in general?
2. What was your impression of the agency?
3. How was the experience similar/different from what you expected?
4. What things stand out most in your mind?
5. What have you learned about yourself through this experience?
6. How have you benefited overall?
7. How did the agency/community benefit from your participation?
8. How did your experience relate to your classroom work?
9. What insights did you gain that may assist you in future decisions about career, family, etc.?
10. How can you best use what you've learned?
11. What would you change about the experience, if anything, and why?
12. Would you participate in a similar experience again, why or why not?

All written material (journal and reflection essay) is due by the project deadline as reflected in your syllabus. Students who anticipate volunteering more than 20 hours may wish to consider registering for a Service Learning Fourth Credit Option.

Students must choose which project option they will be completing by the 2nd week of class. If you have any further questions or comments, or are having difficulty choosing an option, topic, review book, or service agency, let me know. Good luck, and have fun!!