



**Nanchang University**  
**HIS11: United States to 1877**  
(Last Updated in Jan. 2025)

**Credit: 6**

***Contact Hours***

This course is composed of 24 lecture sessions, 3 tutorial sessions and 9 office contact hours. Each lecture session takes 2 contact hours in length; each tutorial session takes 3 contact hours in length; There will be a Q-A review session (3 contact hours) and Final Exam (3 contact hours) at the end of this term. This course has 72 contact hours in total.

***Course Description***

This course covers American history from the colonial period to the end of Reconstruction in 1877. During this era, Britain and other European empires established colonies in North America, some of Britain's colonies declared independence and became the United States of America, and the United States consolidated power in North America but nearly fell apart over white Americans' right to enslave black Americans. We will focus on a set of tensions that were at the heart of early American society. These include:

1. the interconnected expansions of freedom and oppression in a nation that was both a republic and an empire;
2. the power of government and the power of the people as envisioned and applied in the U.S. constitution;
3. the development of different understandings of "American" identity—including regional, racial, gendered, and historical conceptions of what it meant to be American—that were often in conflict with each other.

*Note: This Syllabus is subject to change based on the needs of the class.*

***Required Textbook***

1. *Who Built America? Volume One: Through 187: Working People and the Nation's History*; Author: American Social History Project, Publisher: MPS, Edition: 3, Year Published: 2008
2. *Oroonoko*, Author: Behn, Publisher: Penguin, Year Published: 2003
3. *Heroic Slave*, Author: Douglas, Publisher: Createspace, Year Published: 2001
4. *Common Sense*, Author: Paine, Publisher: Dover Press, Year Published: 1997
5. *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age*, Author: Rediker, Publisher: Random House, Year Published: 2004



## ***Grading***

- Participation 10%
- 3 Essay 10% each
- Midterm 25%
- Final Exam 35%

Letter Grade	Grade Points
High Distinction	85-100
Distinction	75-84
Credit	65-74
Pass	50-64
Fail	0-49

## ***Course Schedule***

The course has 24 class sessions in total. All sessions are 2 contact hours in length. At the end of this term, there will be a Q-A review session(3 contact hours) and Final Exam (3 contact hours).

Note: the course outline and required readings are subject to change.

Class 1:

Introduction and general overview of the United States of America (geography and earliest historical data / events)

Class 2:

The Colonial World and the Empire

Class 3:

Piracy and the time of the Enlightenment

Class 4:

Role of Religion

Class 5:

The Seeds of the Revolt (Origin of the American Revolution)

Class 6:

Building Toward War; or, British Policies / American Reactions

Class 7:

The Revolutionary War, creation of the Republic



Class 8:

The Constitution and the Articles of Confederation

Class 9:

The Constitution and The Federalist Era, Presidents: Washington and Adams

Class 10:

President Jefferson and The Jeffersonian Revolution  
(Essay No. 1 due)

Class 11:

Review and discussion of Essay No. 1  
Midterm Writing

Class 12:

The Early Supreme Court

Class 13:

Jackson Election and the end of Old Guard

Class 14:

Mexican-American War, Expansion of America

Class 15:

The Antebellum Crises

Class 16:

The Origins of Civil War

Class 17:

Lincoln's Election and the early war in the East  
(Essay No. 2 due)

Class 18:

Review and discussion of Essay No. 1

Class 19:

The War in the West and Sherman's March to the Sea

Class 20:

Antietam, Gettysburg and Emancipation

Class 21:

Johnson and Grant



Class 22:

The Rise of Racism and Ku Klux Klan

Class 23:

Sharecropping and Carpet-bagging

Class 24:

Essay No. 3 due

### ***Attending Policy***

Regular and prompt attendance is required. Under ordinary circumstances, you may miss two times without penalty. Each absence over this number will lower your course grade by a third of a letter and missing more than five classes may lead to a failing grade in the course. Arriving late and/or leaving before the end of the class period are equivalent to absences.

### ***Policy on "Late Withdrawals"***

In accordance with university policy, appeals for late withdrawal will be approved ONLY in case of medical emergency and similar crises.

### ***Academic Honesty***

Nanchang University expects all students to do their own work. Instructors will fail assignments that show evidence of plagiarism or other forms of cheating, and will also report the student's name to the University administration. A student reported to the University for cheating is placed on disciplinary probation; a student reported twice is suspended or expelled.

### ***General Expectations:***

Students are expected to:

- Attend all classes and be responsible for all materials covered in class and otherwise assigned;
- Complete the day's required reading and assignments before class;
- Review the previous day's notes before class and make notes about questions you have about the previous class or the day's reading;
- Participate in class discussions and complete required written work on time;
- Refrain from texting, phoning or engaging in computer activities unrelated to class during the class period;
- While class participation is welcome, even required, you are expected to refrain from private conversations during the class period.



### ***Special Needs or Assistance***

Please contact the Administrative Office immediately if you have a learning disability, a medical issue, or any other type of problem that prevents professors from seeing you have learned the course material. Our goal is to help you learn, not to penalize you for issues which mask your learning.