DOANE COLLEGE LINCOLN
HIS 205: History of the U.S. before 1877 (3 credits)
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
A survey of the American colonial and U.S. national experience, this course is designed for the general student with emphasis on politics and society. Students successfully completing this course will demonstrate knowledge of the major themes and chronological periods of American history. They will also demonstrate a deeper understanding of historical method, and the role of interpretation and perspective in constructing historical narratives. History 205 will examine characteristic sectional differences and what Churchill referred to as the “noblest and least avoidable of all the great mass conflicts,” the American Civil War. This survey fulfills the Doane Plan history requirement.

TEXT (recommended but not required)
Instructor will provide copies of primary sources which will be required reading.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
Upon completing this course the student should be able to demonstrate (through research, reports, and exams):

• a knowledge of the major events, personalities, and trends in the history of the United States before 1877
• the ability to place past, as well as current, social, political, economic and cultural issues into an historical context and to recognize the interrelationship of such issues
• the ability to recognize primary and secondary sources and begin to discern and question accuracy in historical sources
• a familiarity with the issues surrounding diversity in the United States and an ability to consider the question of values when analyzing major areas of history.

COURSE OUTLINE
CLASS I        Introduction
Instructor will address current issues in historiography and discuss the report assignment, the purpose of which is to introduce the student to primary and secondary sources, as well as accuracy and legitimacy in historical writing. Each report will concern the nature of the American experience and the coalescing of an American identity. Varying historical interpretations will be pointed out. Each lecture will call attention to differences of opinion and will consider diversity and change in historical thought. Illustrations will accompany lectures; discussion will be encouraged.
LECTURE: A Collision of Worlds
Native and European backgrounds; Spanish and British exploration; initial contacts with the American continent; settlement of Jamestown and Boston
TEXT: Chapters 1 & 2

CLASS II  LECTURE: Colonial Differences; the Battle for America
Differences among colonial settlements; slavery and the South; religion and education in New England; Pennsylvania and the middle colonies; France and England battle for control of a continent
POSSIBLE REPORTS: Benjamin Franklin and the nature of science, philosophy, politics in colonial America;
TEXT: Chapters 3 & 4

CLASS III  LECTURE: From Revolution to Republic
How revolutionary a revolution? Ideas, economics, and battles of the Revolution; first days of the republic; Jefferson vs. Hamilton
POSSIBLE REPORTS: George Washington and leadership; Thomas Paine and radical philosophy; the independence of John Adams;
TEXT: Chapters 5, 6 (optional), 7 & 8 (pp. 281-296)

CLASS IV  EXAM
POSSIBLE REPORTS: Alexander Hamilton and the formation of the Treasury; the Report on Manufactures;

CLASS V  LECTURE: Jeffersonian Democracy; the Emergence of an American Society
Jeffersonian influence; Lewis and Clark and the significance of the frontier; beginnings of industrialism and mass immigration;
POSSIBLE REPORTS: Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the women’s movement; Thomas Jefferson, protean republican, democratic “sphinx”;
TEXT: Chapters 8 (pp. 296-316) & 9

CLASS VI  LECTURE: The Age of Jackson and American Expansion
Political and social changes under Jackson; the emergence of modern political parties; the Mexican War exposes the danger of sectionalism and slavery;
POSSIBLE REPORTS: Andrew Jackson as seen by Schlesinger, Ward, Remini, Burstein, and a host of others
TEXT: Chapters 10, 12 (optional), & 13 (pp. 461-477)

CLASS VII  LECTURE: The Disunited States
The nature of southern society and slavery; the economic and social background of the war; major battles and legacy of the Civil War;
POSSIBLE REPORTS: the role of Abraham Lincoln; Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass, heroine and hero of a people;
TEXT: Chapters 11, 13 (pp. 478-501) & 14
CLASS VIII  FINAL EXAM
FINAL REPORTS: Lee and Grant and the nature of warfare; the aftermath of the Civil War;

COURSE POLICIES

Students are responsible for the required text and any additional readings. Attendance is mandatory. Absences will affect the performances on exams, since extensive material is covered in the lectures. More than two absences will result in a failing grade. There will be a midterm and final which will include essay and objective questions. In case of emergency, make-up exams may be arranged, but no tests will be repeated and all results are final. Research for a report will be required and presentation of the report will be considered as a significant contribution to class discussion. An interpretation of a primary source from the text will be included in the overall report grade. Late reports will result in lowering of the student’s grade. Each exam will be worth 40% of the final grade, and the report (and discussion) will be worth 20%. The Doane College academic integrity policy will be adhered to in this class. All projects and tests will represent the student’s own work and any use of others’ ideas or words without proper citation of sources will result in loss of all points for an assignment or exam.

Because of the extensive information contained in the lectures, and the considerable time period covered by this course, it is not possible to include an adequately representative bibliography in this syllabus. The instructor, however, will be providing the names of sources and authors throughout the term, and will be happy to suggest further sources on any topic or individual.