

Essentials of U.S. History

HIST 15

Spring 2026 Section 04 In Person 3 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/21/2026

Contact Information

Instructor: Raymand Buyco

Email: Please use Canvas messaging for most communication

Office: DMH-237B

Phone: 408-924-5517

Website: <https://www.sjsu.edu/people/raymand.buyco/index.html>
(<https://www.sjsu.edu/people/raymand.buyco/index.html>)

Office Hours: Tuesday 4-5pm on Zoom, Wednesday 1:15pm-2:15pm in DMH-237B

Peer Connections SI Leader: Ronaldo Lora

Email: ronaldo.lora@sjsu.edu

Website: <https://www.sjsu.edu/peerconnections/index.php>
(<https://www.sjsu.edu/peerconnections/index.php>)

Course Information

Course Description From the SJSU Catalog: Treatment of essentials of U.S. history. Satisfies the American institutions requirement in U.S. history (US1) and the Core GE requirement in Social Sciences: Comparative Systems, Cultures, and Environments (D2).

From the SJSU GE Guidelines (S14-5): In this course you will be exposed to alternative interpretations of the historical events and political processes that have shaped the social, economic, and political system in which you live. This course will provide a multicultural framework, including both conflict and consensus perspectives, of the choices and options available to individuals and groups in their social, economic and political relations. The focus of the course is the growth of a multicultural society and the interactions, including cooperation and conflict, as these many and varied peoples have dealt with social, economic, and political issues.

Course Description and Requisites

Treatment of essentials of U.S. history. Satisfies the American Institutions (US1) and the GE Area D: Social Sciences requirements.

Satisfies GE Area 4. Social and Behavioral Sciences (Formerly Area D), and US 1. U.S. History.

Grading: Letter Graded.

* Classroom Protocols

Our class time will take a variety of formats, including lecture, large group discussion, small group discussion, and in-class exercises. I encourage you to ask questions during lectures. Because most of our time together will be interactive, your participation will be essential.

In order to make our class discussions and activities successful, you should complete all required readings and homework assignments before each class period, and bring these readings to class with you.

You are expected to arrive to class on time. *Cell phones must be on silent and must be put away for the duration of the class!* Tablets and computers are allowed only for taking lecture or discussion notes. Close all applications except the one that allows note taking.

***Note: This semester, Professor Buyco will experiment regularly with asking students to put their electronic devices away. At this time, he will ask you to take notes by writing in a notebook or on sheets of paper.

Please refrain from talking when I begin to lecture. During the discussion sections, discuss only the in-class assignment at hand. I reserve the right to penalize repeat offenders by lowering the offender's grade.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material University Policy S12-7, requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.

***However, Professor Buyco does not allow students to record the class. Exceptions: Students with prescribed accommodations from the SJSU AEC (Accessible Education Center). Official AEC Accommodations are governed by federal law: The Americans with Disabilities Act.

Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.

***Professor Buyco does not give that consent: *Students are prohibited from recording class activities (including class lectures, office hours, advising sessions, etc.), distributing class recordings, or posting class recordings.* Materials created by the instructor for the course (syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, presentations, etc.) are copyrighted by the instructor.

University policy (S12-7) is in place to protect the privacy of students in the course, as well as to maintain academic integrity through reducing the instances of cheating. Students who record, distribute, or post these materials will be referred to the Student Conduct and Ethical Development office. Unauthorized recording may violate university and state law. It is the responsibility of students that require special accommodations or assistive technology due to a disability to notify the instructor.

Program Information

Welcome to this General Education course.

SJSU's General Education Program establishes a strong foundation of versatile skills, fosters curiosity about the world, promotes ethical judgment, and prepares students to engage and contribute responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural, information-rich society. General education classes integrate areas of study and encourage progressively more complex and creative analysis, expression, and problem solving.

The General Education Program has three goals:

Goal 1: To develop students' core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.

Goal 2: To enact the university's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.

Goal 3: To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the [GE website \(https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php\)](https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php).

Course Goals

CG1: Courses in American Institutions should meet one or more of the following requirements: U.S. History, U.S. Constitution, and California Government. Students enrolled in these courses should be exposed to alternative interpretations of the historical events and political processes that have shaped the social, economic, and political systems in which they live.

CG2: Courses in American Institutions will provide a multicultural framework, including both conflict and consensus perspectives, of the choices and options available to individuals and groups in their social, economic, and political relations. The focus of the courses is the growth of a multicultural society and the interactions, including cooperation and conflict, as these many and varied peoples have dealt with social, economic, and political issues.

CG3: Social Science sources should increase the student's understanding of human behavior and social interaction in the context of value systems, economic structures, political institutions, social groups, and natural environments.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

GE Area 4: Social and Behavioral Sciences

Area 4 courses increase students' understanding of human behavior and social interaction in the context of value systems, economic structures, political institutions, social groups, and natural environments.

Through fulfillment of the Area 4 requirement, students develop an understanding of problems and issues from different disciplinary perspectives and examine issues in their contemporary as well as historical settings and in a variety of cultural contexts. Courses that emphasize skills development and professional preparation are excluded from Area 4.

The CSU requires students to complete General Education courses in the Social and Behavioral Sciences in at least two different disciplines. Students may meet this requirement by either 1) taking two lower-division Area 4 courses in different disciplines, or 2) taking two lower-division Area 4 courses in the same discipline and an UD Area 4 upper-division GE course in a different discipline.

GE Area 4 Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of an Area 4 course, students should be able to:

1. demonstrate understanding of the ways in which social institutions, culture, and environment shape and are shaped by the behavior of individuals, both past and present;
2. compare and contrast the dynamics of two or more social groups or social systems in a variety of historical and/or cultural contexts;
3. place contemporary social developments in cultural, environmental, geographical, and/or historical contexts; and
4. draw on social/behavioral science information from various perspectives to formulate applications appropriate to historical and/or contemporary social issues.

Writing Practice: Students will write a minimum of 1500 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

American Institutions US1: US History

The American Institutions (AI) requirement is based on the premise that any student graduating from the CSU should have an understanding of the history and governmental institutions of the United States and the State of California. This requirement, which was put in place by the State of California, is laid out in

California State University Executive Order 1061. The original mandate appears in the State Education Code Title 5, Section 40404.

US1 Learning Outcomes

To fulfill the requirements for U.S. History, students should be able to explain and evaluate the principal events, developments, and ideas covering a minimum time span of approximately one hundred years in all the territories now in the United States (including external regions and powers as appropriate).

As students explore the historical development of the United States, they should be able to evaluate and synthesize different positions, support analysis with relevant evidence, and create evidence-based interpretations of:

- A. major subtopics in United States history, such as Native Americans and their interactions with the U.S. government; slavery and its legacies; the foundational ideals of the American Republic; colonization and territorial expansion; economic development; political reform and reaction; immigration to the United States and the experiences of immigrants; foreign relations; wars and conflicts; and movements including religious, labor, civil rights, feminist, and environmental; and
- B. multiple perspectives related to, for example, diverse cultures, communities, and environments; age, gender, and sexuality; the history and experience of racial, ethnic, and religious minorities; the experiences of people with disabilities; and patterns of race and class relations.

Course Materials

Required Texts/Readings Textbook (Embedded in Canvas)

Shi, David Emory, *America: A Narrative History, Brief (Combined)*, 13ed., (New York: WW Norton, 2025)*

Specific Primary Sources are also required and are included in the textbook associated online reader aspartof the textbook package on Canvas.

*The textbook materials for your course are now available in digital format through Canvas, and the cost will be reflected on your student account. 20% of the Course grade is associated with the Canvas embedded textbook and associated assignments.

Do not opt out if you want credit for this part of the grade.

Other Required Readings (Not embedded, but available in the Spartan Bookstore)

Douglass, Frederick, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, 3rd ed., (Boston:Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003), ISBN: 9781319048891

Course Requirements and Assignments

"Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical

practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

NOTE that University policy F69-24 states that “Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to insure maximum benefit for all members of the class. Attendance per se shall not be used as a criterion for grading.” (<https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf>)

1.) Honesty Agreement:

Students must review and sign an honesty agreement before they can participate in this course.

2.) In-Class Lecture Quizzes (10% of grade):

Open handwritten note, timed multiple choice quizzes, focusing on themes covered in lecture and discussion, given regularly sometime during class. Keep scantrons in your backpack.

During Lecture quizzes, put all your electronic devices (phone, tablet, computer, apple watch, cameras etc.) in your backpack. Put everything else in your backpack except your writing instrument, and your handwritten notes*.

*Students who take notes by laptop should condense lecture objective related notes to handwritten notes weekly.

**Students found with electronic devices on their person may fail the quiz.

3.) Midterm 1 (20% of grade): Multiple Choice and Essay questions focusing on themes covered in lecture and discussion.

Midterm 1 will be conducted in-class during a specified date and time (see course schedule), and students will be allowed to use one page, front and back, of their own handwritten notes only. You will turn in these notes along with your exam.

4.) Midterm 2 (20% of grade): Multiple Choice and Essay questions focusing on themes covered in lecture and discussion.

Midterm 2 will be conducted in-class during a specified date and time (see course schedule), and students will be allowed to use one page, front and back, of their own handwritten notes only. You will turn in these notes along with your exam.

5.) Final* (25% of grade)

Multiple Choice and Essay questions focusing on themes covered in lecture and discussion.

The final exams will be conducted in our classroom during a specified date and time (see course schedule), and students will be allowed to use one page, front and back, of their own handwritten notes only. You will turn in these notes along with your exam.

Final Exam is not cumulative except for the cumulative essay question in order to satisfy the following requirement:

University policy S17-1 1.

“Faculty members are required to have a culminating activity for their courses, which can include a final examination, a final research paper or project, a final creative work or performance, a final portfolio of work, or other appropriate assignment.”

**Protocol on in-class Exams:

- a.) Bring a new, clean, greenbook (do not write on or in it) to the exam and give it to the professor.
- b.) Put all your electronic devices (phone, tablet, computer, apple watch, cameras etc.) in your backpack. Put everything else in your backpack except your writing instrument, and one page of handwritten notes.

***Students found with electronic devices on their person may fail the exam

- c.) Leave your backpack in the front of the classroom.
- d.) Collect the exam and a greenbook from the professor and sit down to take the exams.

***Preparing for quizzes & exams:

- a.) Review notes from lectures after every class and weekly
- b.) Go to SI Sessions regularly (optional, but highly recommended)
- c.) Think about broader issues and connections between all of the material covered in the course.
- d.) Condense your notes to one hand written page, front and back, the weekend before the exams.

***Note on Missing Scheduled Exams: A valid, documented excuse, is required to make up quizzes and exams. For example, if sick, a doctor's note is required. Excuses for required academic or athletic events that interfere with classwork or exams must be authorized by an administrator or an appropriate counselor or faculty member in writing, well in advance.

4.) Frederick Douglass Discussion, Quiz & Assignments (5% of grade): Includes reading the assigned book, online & in-person discussions, and other homework.

5.) Assignments (20% of grade): Includes Chapter Reading, Primary Source Reading, All Assigned Online Quizzes & homework, In-class Activities, and Canvas Discussions.

You should come to class having done all the assigned textbook chapter and quizzes by the due date.

Read the weekly assigned primary sources and do the worksheet homework by the due date.

Textbook related quiz & homework assignments cannot be made up or extended except for documented illness or documented unforeseen circumstances.

There are occasional discussions on Canvas that you will be required to participate in. We will also have discussions in class. Expressing your take and analysis on the material will help you in terms of having a complete understanding the material. You will also aid to the collective understanding of the material.

6.) Participation: Take advantage of opportunities to participate. Here are excellent ways of contributing to the class: regularly showing up to class; listening carefully to others; sharing your ideas; asking questions; responding to others' thoughts; participating in small group activities.

Academic Dishonesty

Students who are suspected of cheating during an exam or quiz, or using Artificial Intelligence OR plagiarizing a paper will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development, and depending on the severity of the conduct, will receive a zero on the assignment or a grade of F in the course.

Grade Forgiveness does not apply to courses for which the original grade was the result.

✓ Grading Information

Determination of Grades

Grading will be A-F.

Final course grades will be assigned based on the following scale; grades below 60% will be considered failing ("F"):

A plus = 98 – 100% B plus = 88 – 89.9% C plus = 78 – 79.9% D plus = 68 – 69.9%

A = 92 – 97.9% B = 82 – 87.9% C = 72 – 77.9% D = 62 – 67.9%

A minus = 90 – 91.9% B minus = 80 – 81.9% C minus = 70 – 71.9% D minus = 60 – 61.9%

Grade Symbols and Values:

A plus: 4.0; A: 4.0; A minus: 3.7; B plus: 3.3; B: 3.0; B minus: 2.7;

C plus: 2.3; C: 2.0; C minus: 1.7; D plus: 1.3; D: 1.0; D minus: .7; F: 0

Grade will be weighted as follows:

In-Class Lecture Quizzes (10%)

Midterm 1 (20%)

Midterm 2 (20%)

Final Exam (25%)

Frederick Douglass Discussion, Quiz & Assignments (5%)

Assignments (20%): Includes Chapter Reading, Primary Source Reading, All Assigned Online Quizzes & homework, In-class Activities, and Canvas Discussions and Quizzes

*Caution: Canvas grades can be misleading until the very end of the semester as the final, the last Inquizitive grade sync, in-class Activities, and other assignment grades need to be factored in. Feel free to come to office hours or make an appointment to discuss your progress in this course.

**Note: Under certain circumstances, and regardless of the percentage points listed above, a student's contributions and academic curiosity (or lack thereof) may influence that student's final grade beyond the listed scope. In other words, students who do not come to class and regularly participate in discussions may find their final grade significantly reduced to reflect the full scope of class involvement. An "A" grade requires more than good test-taking and essay-writing.

Grade Checks

In general, you should keep track of your own grade by checking Canvas, and/or keeping your returned assignments, noting the scores, and using the course grading breakdown listed above. If you need formal verification of your grade (for paperwork associated with a scholarship, student organization, etc.), you should Canvas message me at least 24 hours ahead of time to let me know you'll be bringing grade check paperwork to class or to office hours or to make an appointment. If you ask me in class with no advance notice, I will not be able to provide a grade estimate for you. In general I do not discuss grades by email; I prefer discussing grades during office hours or by appointment.

Contact Professor Buyco by Canvas prior to the time an assignment is due if you need an extension because of illness or other reasons. You will need a documented excuse to be officially excused. Forged doctors notes are grounds for being reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/students/>

Textbook related quiz & homework assignments cannot be made up or extended except for documented illness or documented unforeseen circumstances.

Other late assignments will be marked down 1/3 grade for each day late. For example, a B will be reduced to a B- if turned in one day late. I do not grant extensions except in cases of documented illness or documented unforeseeable circumstances. If such circumstances arise, you should contact me immediately. (<http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/students/>)

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Course Schedule

The schedule is subject to change with fair notice.

Week 1 (1/22, 1/23)

MW classes do not meet

Week 2: Introduction, The Coming of the American Revolution

M 1/26: Introduction to the Course

Tu 1/27: Reading & Assignments: Start Here Module

W 1/28: Lecture/Discussion: Rising Expectations

Reading & Assignments: Week 2 Module

Week 3: The American Revolution & Founding of a Nation

Su 2/1: Reading/Assignments: Week 3

M 2/2: The American Revolution

T 2/3: Reading/Assignments: Week 3B Module

W 2/4: Lecture/Discussion: Articles of Confederation

Week 4: Founding of A Nation/Securing the Republic

Su 2/8: Reading/Assignments: Week 4 Module

M 2/9: Lecture/Discussion: The Constitution

Tu 2/10: Reading/Assignments: Week 4B Module

W 2/11: Lecture/Discussion: Securing the Republic

Week 5: Market Revolution/Democracy in America

Su 2/15: Reading/Assignments: Week 5 Module

M 2/16: Lecture/Discussion: Market Revolution

T 2/17: Reading/Assignments: Week 5B Module

W 2/18: Lecture/Discussion: J. Q. Adams, A. Jackson & Democracy in America

Week 6: The South & Slavery/ Abolition & Midterm 1

Su 2/22: Reading/Assignments: Week 6 Module

M 2/23: Lecture/Discussion: Slavery & Abolition

W 2/25: Midterm 1

Week 7: Reform Impulse/Manifest Destiny

Su 3/1: Reading/Assignments: Week 7 Module

M 3/2: Lecture/Discussion: Abolition/Women's Movement

T 3/3: Reading/Assignments: Week 7B Module

W 3/4: Lecture/Discussion: War with Mexico

Week 8: The Civil War and Reconstruction, 1860-1877

Su 3/8: Reading/Assignments: Week 8 Module

M 3/9: Lecture/Discussion: The Civil War, 1861-1865

T 3/10: Reading/Assignments: Week 8B Module

W 3/11: Lecture/Discussion: Reconstruction, 1865-1877

Week 9: The Gilded Age 1877-1900 & Frederick Douglass

Su 3/15: Reading/Assignments: Week 9 Module

M 3/16: Lecture/Discussion: The Gilded Age

T 3/17: Reading/Assignments: Week 9B Module

W 3/18: Discussion: Frederick Douglass

Quiz: Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass

F 3/20: Reading/Assignments: Week 9C Module

Week 10: The Gilded Age 1877-1900 & Midterm 2

Su 3/22: Reading/Assignments: Week 10 Module

M 3/23: Lecture/Discussion: Gilded Age

W 3/25: Midterm 2

Week 11: Spring Break

Week 12: Progressive Era & WWI 1900-1920

M 4/6: Lecture/Discussion: The Progressive Era

T 4/7: Reading/Assignments: Week 12, 12B & 12C Modules

W 4/8: Lecture/Discussion: WWI

Week 13: 1920s & Great Depression & New Deal

Su 4/12: Reading/Assignments: Week 13 Module

M 4/13: Lecture/Discussion: 1920s

T 4/14: Reading/Assignments: Week 13 Module

W 4/15: Great Depression & New Deal

Week 14: WWII and the Cold War

Su 4/19: Reading/Assignments: Week 14 Module

M 4/20: Lecture/Discussion: WWII

T 4/21: Reading/Assignments: Week 14B Module

W 4/22: Lecture/Discussion: The Cold War

Week 15: Affluence & Anxiety, Civil Rights 1945-1968

Su 4/26: Reading/Assignments: Week 15 Module

M 4/27: Lecture/Discussion: The Affluent 1950s

T 4/28: Reading/Assignments: Week 15B Module

W 4/29: Lecture/Discussion: 1960s: Civil Rights

Week 16: Great Society/The Conservative Turn

Su 5/3: Reading/Assignments: Week 16 Module

M 5/4: Lecture/Discussion: Civil Rights/The Great Society

T 5/5: Reading/Assignments: Week 16B Module

W 5/6: Lecture/Discussion: 1968, Nixon

Week 17: The Conservative Turn

Su 5/10: Reading/Assignments: Week 17 Module

M 5/11: Lecture/Discussion: Reagan Revolution/End of the Cold War

Week 18: Final Exam

M 5/18: Final Exam 10:45am-12:45pm