

Essentials of U.S. History

HIST 15

Spring 2026 Section 08 In Person 3 Unit(s) 01/22/2026 to 05/11/2026 Modified 01/21/2026

Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Caitlín Jeffrey
Office Location:	DMH 141
Telephone:	contact instructor by email
Email:	caitlin.jeffrey@sjsu.edu
• If you email me after 5pm Monday-Thursday, I will not respond to your message until the following day. • After 5pm Friday, I do not check my email until Monday morning.	
Office Hours:	Monday, Wednesday: ◦ 8:00am-8:30am, DMH 141 ◦ 12:00pm-12:30pm, DMH 141 Tuesday, Zoom Office Hour: 10:00am -11:00am. Schedule an appointment via my email to meet during an office hour.

Class Days/Times:	Monday, Wednesday: • 9:00am-10:15am
Classroom:	DMH 227

MLK Academic Liaison Librarian:

Nyle Monday

Email: nyle.monday@sjsu.edu

Phone Number: (408) 808-2041

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

Be attentive in class. Please do not check emails or send text messages during class. Mobile phones and computers must be used only for class participation, note taking, or class activities. Engaging in personal activities is distracting to faculty and other students, infringes upon classroom discussion, and inhibits a culture of respect and shared learning.

Please respect the following structure for the classroom:

- Arrive on time to class
- Do not disrupt class or instructor by leaving class early
- If University policy requires, wear a mask
- You should be prepared for class, bringing your texts and laptops to class as needed
- Listen and dialogue with each other respectfully

Learning Accommodations

Students who may need academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Accessible Education Center (AEC) as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

Documentation from Accessible Education Center needs to be provided to the instructor so that your learning needs are incorporated into the course.

Academic Honesty

All work submitted in this course must be your own and plagiarism detection tools such as Turnitin will be used to monitor academic honesty.

Additional Information on proper citation in your writing is provided in the section on grading policy in the syllabus.

Cases of Academic Dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development (SCED). Students who violate the academic integrity policy of the University will receive a failing grade on an assignment, exercise, quiz, and exam where plagiarism and/or cheating occurred.

Changes to Classroom Protocol

The instructor reserves the right to create new policy for classroom protocol during the semester if a need arises.

Equipment/Software Requirements

You will need access to a laptop or tablet and the internet for class and to complete assignments on Canvas. If you don't have a laptop or tablet, you need to get one from SJSU Equipment Loan. Here is the SJSU Equipment Loan Link to allow you to book for equipment. The website provides other helpful links on MLK library equipment loan and qualifying for free broadband program:

<https://sjsuequipment.getconnect2.com/>

Canvas/Zoom Requirements

It is also strongly recommended that your computer or mobile device be running the most recent available operating system & other software.

- See Canvas Technical Requirements:
<https://guides.instructure.com/m/4214/l/82542-what-are-the-basic-computer-specifications-for-canvas>
- See Zoom System Requirements:
[Zoom system requirements: Windows, macOS, Linux](#)

How to Use Canvas & Get Tech Support

The Canvas developers & the SJSU e-Campus have put together a wonderful collection of resources intended to help you successfully navigate the Canvas LMS:

- **Searchable Canvas Student Guide:** <https://guides.instructure.com/>
- Additional resources & help docs can be found via the **SJSU e-Campus:** <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/>
- If those links don't fully address your needs, you can submit an **iSupport ticket** and you will receive a response back promptly from SJSU support personnel. See Support tab on this page: <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/ec/>
- In Canvas, you can also click on the Question Mark icon on the far left-hand navigation bar for help options

Dropping the Course

If you feel you cannot complete the work required for this class, you must drop before the required deadline!

- Last Day to Drop Class without a "W" Grade: **February 17**
- Last Day to File Late Drop/ Semester Withdrawal Petition: **April 20**

It is the responsibility of the student, NOT the instructor to drop, so don't assume that because you have stopped attending, you will be dropped.

Academic Integrity Policy

Cases of Academic Dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development (SCED). Students who violate the academic integrity policy of the University will receive a failing grade on an assignment, exercise, quiz, and exam where plagiarism and/or cheating occurred.

Course Workload

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.

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 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

TEXTBOOKS:

The course uses Macmillan Bookshelf of American History. The cost is \$36.13 for access to all texts used for this course.

To acquire access to the survey textbook and other readings sources used for the course, you need to purchase access via Course Materials. (see Course Materials section in left column of the class site)

This course uses First Day Access from the SJSU bookstore. Once you opt into Course Materials, the Bursar will charge you for the cost of access.

You are not acquiring your textbooks directly from the SJSU bookstore; you are accessing the texts through Course Materials.

See the General Information Section in class site in Canvas that provides information and videos on the assigned texts for the course and First Day.

You have until February 17 to opt out of Course Material portal.

If you choose to opt out, then you are responsible for finding and purchasing the required survey textbook and required readings via online booksellers.

You will see the first day billing on your student account via the Bursar’s Office shortly after February 17. Any questions regarding the materials should be directed to Spartan Bookstore 408-924-1812.

It is not recommended that you Opt-Out, as these materials are required to complete the course. However, you may choose to Opt-Out on the first day of class and no later than February 17. You will see the course materials charge on your Bursar’s student account unless you have opted out prior to the deadline.

The survey textbook for the course:

Roark et al., *The American Promise*, volume 1. Macmillan: 9th edition, 2023.

Roark et al., *The American Promise*, volume 2. Macmillan: 9th edition, 2023.

Other Required Readings & Sources (Available via Macmillian Bookshelf of American History):

Assigned primary sources, secondary readings, documentaries, and other source materials will be available via the Macmillan Bookshelf of American History.

 Course Requirements and Assignments

Assessments:	Points	Percentage of Grade	Course Learning Objectives Assessed
Class Work:			
Exercises/Discussions	250	45%	US 1 A-B; D-1, D-2, D-3, D-4
Independent Work:			
Quizzes	100	55%	US 1 A-B, D-1; D-2, D-3
Historical Analysis Papers (2x)	200		US 1 A-B; D-1, D-2, D-3, D-4
Points	550	100%	

Course Assignments

CLASS EXERCISES/DISCUSSIONS (250 points)

Exercises and Discussions serve as a foundation for assessing specific themes, issues and debates in American history and culture. A rubric providing criteria for assessment is provided in the rubrics section of canvas. Class Exercises/Discussions will range from ten (10) to fifty (30) points. The dates for class exercise will be provided within the class assignment list for a week module.

QUIZZES (100 points)

Quizzes will test you on various chapters of the textbook, assigned readings, and lectures. Quizzes consist of multiple-choice questions and/or short responses. Quizzes will range from five (5) points to thirty (30) points. You may complete a quiz at any time from the start of Module Week to its completion. Quizzes are open-book, timed assessments.

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS PAPERS (200 points)

You will write two (2) historical analysis papers for the semester; each paper factors for hundred (100) points. Each paper requires primary and secondary source assessments to construct an analytical argument that summarizes major developments of American democracy. The first paper will cover issues defining American democracy from the 1776 to 1880. The second paper will address American democracy from 1890-1970s. A rubric providing criteria for assessment will be available in the rubrics section of Canvas and embedded in assignment.

EXTRA CREDIT:

Extra Credit may be available for certain activities throughout the semester that students can choose to complete.

✓ Grading Information

Letter Grade	Points	Percentage
A	512-550	93%-100%
A-	495-511	90%-92%
B+	479-494	87%-89%
B	457-478	83%-86%

B-	440-456	80%-82%
C+	425-439	77%-79%
C	402-424	73%-76%
C-	385-401	70%-72%
D+	369-384	67%-69%
D	347-368	63%-66%
D-	330-346	60%-62%
F	0-329	0%-59%

Criteria

GRADING and LATE POLICY:

Rubrics for curriculum assessments are provided in Canvas.

All assessments for the courses should be completed by their due dates and times.

Extending Circumstances:

If you have extending circumstances, you need to communicate to me privately your needs **BEFORE** a due date by email or Canvas message. You need to provide documentation for your extending circumstances, verifying your absence (i.e., a doctor's note explaining your absence).

Once you have provided documentation, the instructor will discuss with you an extension to an assignment.

Late Penalties:

Class discussions and class exercises facilitate the learning process and serve as building blocks for your understanding of the curriculum, learning outcomes, and your successful completion of assignments.

Assessment is based on active engagement in discussions and exercises. If you are not engaged in the discussions and exercises, this will impact your grade.

Late Online Class Exercises:

Late submissions to a class exercise will be penalized five (5) points for missing the deadline and additional five (5) points for every day late after the original due date and time. After forty-eight (48) hours from the original due date, no late submissions will be accepted.

Missed Class Exercises/Class Discussion:

If you miss a class where group class exercise/discussion occurred, **you will have one (1) "excused" absence from class exercise/discussion for the semester.**

If you miss additional class exercises/discussions, they factor as missed and a zeros in your grade book.

Late Papers:

Late Papers will have ten (10) points deducted from the overall score for every day past the original due date.

An extension window is built into the paper assignments, allowing for late submissions. After forty-eight (48) hours from the original due date, no late submissions will be accepted.

If you miss the extension deadline, you will receive a zero for your missed assignment.

Papers must be submitted to the drop box on the class website. I will not accept papers to my email inbox.

If you do not submit your papers to the class website correctly or submit a paper that is unreadable by the system, you will not receive a grade for the assignment.

Technological Difficulties with Exercises and Assignments:

If you are unable to complete an assignment by the due date because of problems with technology, you must take the following steps:

- notify me within a 24-hour period after the due date of the assignment.
- You must provide me via my email a snapshot of your computer screen, documenting the technological difficulty you are experiencing.
- You need to create a ticket to SJSU Canvas helpdesk to get assistance and to resolve the matter.

If you do not follow these steps, I will not accept late assignments due to technological issues.

If the system is down, then the due date for an assignment will be adjusted for the entire class.

Citation, Plagiarism, AI-Generated Text:

- Class Exercises and Assignments for the course are submitted to Turnitin.
- You can submit your assignment prior to the due date to check your citations and possible areas of plagiarized text.
- Turnitin will generate a report immediately upon your submission to let you know if you are not citing correctly and will highlight text that exhibits plagiarized text that needs proper citation. You should review this report and revise your writing if needed to cite sources correctly and to correct any areas in your writing that exhibit plagiarism and upload a second corrected file to your drop box before the due date for the assignment.
- If you submit your response at the due date and time and Turnitin provides a report that your assignment has more than 30% of text incorrectly cited and exhibiting plagiarism or submission of AI-generated paper, the instructor will schedule a meeting with you to review the assignment in question.
- If you use AI software for translation, grammar construction, writing/editing software, spelling and word choice selection or AI software that has aided you in your thinking about an assignment such as ChatGPT, Microsoft CoPilot, Google Gemini, editing software or other programs, you need to give citation to these sources in your writing and give acknowledgement to these programs in your Works Cited.
- You **may not use** AI software to craft an argument for an assignment or generate a paper for you that you present as your own writing. This will be viewed as plagiarism.
- Turnitin will tag AI generated areas of your writing for my report and if you have not acknowledged your use of AI in your writing, then you will meet with the instructor during an office hour to discuss proper citation and use of AI in this course.
- Turnitin will tag AI generated areas of your writing for my report and if you have not acknowledged your use of AI in your writing, then the following policy applies:
 - If you use AI software in aiding you in your writing and do not disclose use of AI software in your in-text citations and Works Cited and Turnitin tags your paper; ten (10) points will be deducted from your overall score with the first instance.
 - If you use AI software for generating your argument, providing content of paper, you will redo your writing assignment for partial credit with the first instance.

After this first instance, this policy applies:

- If future submissions for an assignment or exercise exhibits plagiarized or AI-generated text that you are presenting as your own argument or you have not given citation and acknowledgement to the software, the percentage of plagiarized text and/or AI-generated text will be multiple by the points of the assignment, resulting in given points deducted from your overall score for the assignment. For example, 30% AI generated text multiple by 50-point assignment results in fifteen points deducted from overall score.
- The instructor reviews Turnitin reports to make the final determination if an assignment exhibits plagiarism or AI-generated text that compromises the Academic Integrity Policy of the University.
- If you commit plagiarism or submit AI-generated text as your own writing, the University Academic Integrity Policy will be adhered to.

Grading Policy for Quizzes:

You may complete a quiz at any time from the start of a Module to its completion. The dates for quizzes will be posted on the class website. If you miss the due date of a quiz, you cannot make it up and it will factor as a zero in your grade book.

Technological Difficulties with Assignments:

If you are unable to complete an assignment by the due date because of problems with technology, you must take the following steps:

- notify me within a 24-hour period after the due date of the assignment.
- You must provide me via my email a snapshot of your computer screen, documenting the technological difficulty you are experiencing.
- You need to create a ticket to SJSU Canvas helpdesk to get assistance and to resolve the matter.

If you do not follow these steps, I will not accept late assignments due to technological issues.

If the system is down, then the due date for an assignment will be adjusted for the entire class.

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

All readings and assignments are due by the dates and times stated within syllabus and Canvas.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments and Deadlines
1		No class meeting
2	Mon. 1/26	First Day of Instruction: Introduction Review of Syllabus and Canvas
	Wed. 1/28	Lecture/Class Discussion: Slavery and the Making of America Assignments provided in Assignment List of Week 2 Module.

3	Mon. 2/2	Class Discussion: Slavery and the Making of America
	Wed. 2/4	Lecture: Founding of the Nation Declaration of Independence Assignments provided in Assignment List of Week 3 Module.
4	Mon. 2/9	Lecture: Early Republic U.S. Constitution
	Wed. 2/11	Class Discussion: U.S. Constitution Readings and Assignments provided in the Assignment List of Week 4 Module.
5	Mon. 2/16	Lecture/Exercise: Market Revolution
	Wed. 2/18	Lecture: Cherokee Removal Readings and Assignments provided in the Assignment List of Week 5 Module
6	Mon. 2/23	Lecture/Exercise: Abolitionism
	Wed. 2/25	Lecture: Women's Rights Movement Readings and Assignments provided in the Assignment List of Week 6 Module

7	Mon. 3/2	Lecture: Contested West
	Wed. 3/4	Lecture: Secessional Crisis Readings and Assignments provided in the Assignment List of Week 7 Module
8	Mon. 3/9	Lecture/Discussion: Civil War
	Wed. 3/11	Lecture/Discussion: Civil War/Reconstruction Readings and Assignments provided in the Assignment List of Week 8 Module
9	Mon. 3/16	Lecture/Exercise: Reconstruction
	Wed. 3/18	Lecture: American City and its Workers Readings and Assignments provided in the Assignment List of Week 9 Module First Historical Analysis Paper Due

10	Mon. 3/23	Lecture: Great Depression
	Wed. 3/25	Lecture/Exercise: Great Depression Readings and Assignments provided in the Assignment List of Week 10 Module
Spring Break: March 30 - April 3		
11	Mon. 4/6	Lecture/Class Discussion: Second World II
	Wed. 4/8	Lecture/Discussion: Second World II Readings and Assignments provided in the Assignment List of Week 11 Module
12	Mon. 4/13	Lecture: American Society, 1945-1955
	Wed. 4/15	Lecture/Discussion: Brown Decision Readings and Assignments provided in the Assignment List of Week 12 Module

13	Mon. 4/20	Lecture: Civil Rights Movements, 1960s
	Wed. 4/22	Class Lecture/Discussion: Freedom Summer Readings and Assignments provided in the Assignment List of Week 13 Module
14	Mon. 4/27	Lecture/Discussion: Feminist Movement
	Wed. 4/29	Class Lecture/Discussion: Freedom Summer Readings and Assignments provided in the Assignment List of Week 14 Module
15	Mon. 5/4	Class Lecture/Discussion: Freedom Summer
	Wed. 5/6	Lecture/Discussion: TWLF Readings and Assignments provided in the Assignment List of Week 15 Module

16	Mon. 5/11	Last Day of Instruction - Review Day Readings and Assignments provided in the Assignment List of Week 16 Module
Final Exams		Second Historical Analysis Paper Due