"History does not refer merely, or even principally, to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do." James Baldwin

"The past is never dead. It is not even past." William Faulkner

"Among the biggest difficulties in making a historical film is presenting the idea that there may be more than one reasonable version of events. Understanding that is a very, very difficult thing for most Americans, who have been trained by popular entertainment to want an answer in half an hour, an hour, or two hours, depending on whether it's television or the movies. And they want an unambiguous answer." John Sayles

History 172: The Key Questions:

- What is the story of American history?
- What is the role of historical imagination and historical memory in American culture?
- When historians make their stories, how do they know what they say they know?
- Why would I want to think like a historian?

Everything we do in this course is designed to address one or more of these questions.

What You Can Expect to Learn in this Class:

Knowledge: This course aims to broaden and deepen your knowledge of some of the most important events, people, developments, and issues in U.S. history from the eve of European contact to the aftermath of Civil War.

Ways of Thinking: This course will help you develop fundamental skills of critical and historical thinking, such as reading for the main point, asking good questions, drawing connections, assessing the reliability of sources, constructing sound arguments, assessing change over time, and determining the limits of what can be known. Equipped with such skills, you will learn to exercise discernment when confronting historical claims people make about the past. In addition to learning how to "think like a historian," you'll also learn why it makes sense to want to do so.

A Point of View on American History: As we examine some of the major issues in early American history and how they've been depicted in films and documentaries, you will take steps toward developing your own perspective on the nation's past. You will also learn to recognize and critique other
perspectives. You will also develop a more sophisticated understanding of the cultural work of historical imagination and historical memory in contemporary American culture.

Communication Skills: This course will help you improve your ability to listen, talk, write, and assume responsibility for your own education. Because curiosity is fundamental to learning, the skill that will be valued above all others in this course is the ability to ask good questions.

Required Course Texts:


These texts may be purchased at the University Bookstore. Additional readings and materials may be distributed in class or via BeachBoard. You should also possess a style manual and a quality dictionary to look up the unfamiliar words you will inevitably find in our readings.

Course Assignments & Grading:

Your final grade will be determined by your performance on the following:

- Historical Analyses (3) 45%
- Quizzes, In-Class Writing & Web Assignments 30%
- Final Essay 25%

Course Design:

Topics: In six weeks it is impossible to cover everything of importance in U.S. history for this period. Emphasizing major historical issues and their treatment in the American imagination, I have selected the following nine topics for our primary consideration: the collision of European and Native American cultures, the development of a slave society, the meaning of the American Revolution, the competing visions of empire in post-revolutionary America, westward expansion and Indian response, the boisterousness of politics in the early republic, religious revival and social reform, the changing status of women in antebellum America, and the Civil War and emancipation.

Time Allocation: This class meets in four-hour blocks twice per week. If you are unable to participate in class as scheduled you may wish to seek out another summer session offering. Class time will be used for film screenings, in-class writing and quizzes, brief lectures on key topics, and both small group and full class discussion. We will take several breaks each night to enable us to remain focused.

BeachBoard: This class is using the web as a primary means of information sharing and communication. To that end, all students enrolled in the class are simultaneously enrolled in BeachBoard. To contact me with questions, participate in discussion groups, access assignments and grades, and submit your final essay you'll need to log-in to [www.beachboard.csulb.edu](http://www.beachboard.csulb.edu).

Film Screenings: Our study of historical topics will usually begin with the screening of a historical film of some sort: usually a documentary or Hollywood movie. We begin our study of history this way because, growing up in a media culture, most of us find it easier to apprehend the past when we can see visual representations of it. Unfortunately, little in our culture equips us to be critical, discerning viewers of
moving images. Therefore I will teach you some basic skills of visual literacy that will sharpen your habits of critical thinking when it comes to watching historical films. As a means to this end, we will analyze these films through in-class & web-based writing and discussion.

**Reading Historical Sources:** To prepare for our class meetings, you will be asked to read primary documents and secondary historical interpretations from *Major Problems in American History*. These readings on important topics in U.S. history will be contextualized through my brief lectures in class and your readings in *The Free and the Unfree*, which provides an synthetic overview of American history. As you read:

- note what questions the primary documents seem to be useful for answering
- note similarities or differences of opinion among the primary and secondary documents
- underline quotations you find particularly interesting or significant
- identify the differing interpretations of the secondary sources and the evidence they use in making their arguments
- make connections between ideas of the authors and to other things you know
- list questions you want to know more about

While these analytical strategies are generally useful (after all, those who don't learn to discern risk being deceived), they are also essential to developing your knowledge, ways of thinking, and points of view on American history.

**Practicing Historical Skills through Writing:** Although we will discuss various historical issues and stories during this summer session, history is fundamentally a written discipline. Accordingly, each student will write three short (3-4 page) historical analyses and one final 5-7 page essay this summer session. In order to make sure that we have historical analyses for each topic on this syllabus, we will divide into three groups—the Madisons, the Hamiltons, and the Jays—at our first class meeting. Each group will assume primary responsibility for three of our nine sessions by preparing and submitting historical analyses and helping to facilitate our classroom discussion. If your group is not responsible for a given class, you are still expected to have completed the day's readings prior to coming to class and to be prepared to participate in discussions.

The historical analysis papers should articulate and defend a point of some kind you wish to make about the documents and essays you've read. Do not use your papers to merely summarize the readings. Instead, your papers should demonstrate that you thought about the readings and took the trouble to wrestle your musings and insights into coherent, defensible arguments. On occasion, I may suggest questions for you to write on; otherwise, you can find ideas for what to think about in the introductions to the documents, in the essays that follow, and in the themes addressed in *The Free and the Unfree*. At the end of your papers, triple space and write down the question your paper addresses. These questions will become the basis for our discussion in class.

The final essay topic will be distributed in class on Wednesday, June 30th. This essay will need to be submitted electronically to our BeachBoard "Digital Drop Box" by 9:30pm on Wednesday, July 7th. This final essay, and all other work written outside the classroom, must be word-processed in a standard 10 or 12 point font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. All papers should have your name, the course title and number, the due date, and an appropriate title or label for the assignment at the top. I strongly recommend that you keep copies of all your work, either on paper or electronically, for your protection.

**Grading:** Your papers and in-class writings will be evaluated for earnest effort and thoughtful, coherent content on a twelve point scale, as follows: A+ (12), A (11), A- (10), B+ (09), B (08), B- (07), C+ (06), C (05), C- (04), D+ (3), D (2), D- (1), F (0). Usage and grammar are not major concerns of grading, but a
minimum mechanical competence to insure the "readability" of these papers is expected. I expect that you will proofread your papers and exams before handing them in. All papers except the final essay are due in class on the day assigned. If you know you are going to miss class on dates assignments are due you must be proactive and turn the assignment in early or request an extension in advance. Late assignments will lose one-third of a letter grade for each day they are late and will not be accepted more than one week past their due date without a previously agreed to extension.

**Quizzes:** Each class will begin with a quiz on the assigned readings. The quizzes will be distributed as class begins and will be collected within the first five minutes. If you are late for class, you will miss the quiz and receive a zero. There will be no make-up quizzes for any reason. However, you may take a quiz ahead of time if you know in advance that you will miss class.

**Attendance:** Attendance is not mandatory, but this is not the sort of class you can miss and expect to earn a good grade. Your active and engaged participation at all class meetings, not just on those days when your group is leading discussion, is essential. Note the consequences of non-attendance: By skipping a class you will not only fail to complete any in-class writing (such as film analyses) but will also receive a zero on the reading quizzes. You will also miss the discussions and lectures that will contextualize specific assignments and contribute to the skills and understandings of American history that will prove central to your overall success in the course. These consequences may be waived only if 1) I receive an explanation for your absence from a medical or mortuary professional, the Dean, or the Athletic Director, or 2) you inform me in advance of your absence so we can work out alternative ways for you to complete your course work.

**Other Course Policies:**

**Classroom Environment:** Please ask questions and express opinions in this course, approaching readings and ideas actively and critically. As you do so, however, please strive to be courteous to your fellow students. To create a respectful and productive environment please avoid unnecessary distractions (such as ringing cell phones, beeping pagers, and conspicuous food consumption) during class meetings.

**Disability Accommodation:** Any student who feels that he or she may need an accommodation for any sort of disability should make an appointment to see me during my office hours so we can make arrangements for you to complete the requirements of the class.

**Plagiarism & Academic Integrity:** Students in this class will be held to a high standard of academic integrity, which is defined as "the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception." Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. If you have any questions about academic integrity, please talk with me. I can and will fail a student for major infractions.

**Student Services:** If you need help with written assignments or require guidance on note-taking and critical reading, please take advantage of the Writer's Resource Lab (LAB-312; 985-4329) or the Learning Assistance Center (Library East 12; 985-5350). The CSULB Technology Help Desk is also available for students. Help is available on a wide range of computer issues including: BeachBoard, Windows and Mac OS, CSULB Internet Accounts, Remote Connectivity, Microsoft Desktop Applications, Anti-Virus, Internet and Web related topics. Visit them on the web at http://helpdesk.csulb.edu or contact the THD by phone at 562-985-4959 or e-mail: helpdesk@csulb.edu.
Course Schedule:

June 2nd  Introduction / Skills in Visual Literacy
Reading:  MP "Introduction to Students"; CN-Prefaces
Film:  The Simpsons, "Lisa the Iconoclast"
Assignment:  Web Assignment 1: Log on to our BeachBoard site. Take a look at the web site "Making Sense of Films," available under "External Links." Then write a short response (one to two paragraphs should suffice) to the web site. What did you find most interesting about it? Which of Gunning's questions about film did you find most provocative? Ultimately, do you find films to be a useful source for the historian? Why or why not? Next, e-mail your response to me, also using BeachBoard. Make sure you include your name, the course title and number, the due date, and an appropriate title for the assignment at the top. We'll discuss your responses in class on June 7th.

June 7th  European & Native American Cultures in Collision
Reading:  MP-01 (documents 4-7, Merrell & Salisbury essays); MP-03 (document 9); CN-01
Film:  Black Robe
Assignment:  Madisons: Historical Analysis (MP-01) Due

June 9th  The Development of American Slavery
Reading:  MP-02 (documents 1-2, 4-7, Brown & Morgan essays); CN-02 & 03
Film:  Amistad; Africans in America
Assignment:  Hamiltons: Historical Analysis (MP-02) Due

June 14th  Interpreting the American Revolution
Reading:  MP-04 (documents 1-5, 7-10, Bailyn & Wood essays); CN-04
Film:  Revolution; The Patriot; Liberty: The American Revolution; 1776
Assignment:  Jays: Historical Analysis (MP-04) Due

June 16th  Competing Visions of Post-Revolutionary America
Reading:  MP-05 (documents 6-7); MP-06 (documents 1, 3-7, Kerber & McCoy essays); CN-05 & CN-08, pp. 185-196
Film:  The Duel; Lewis & Clark; Almost Heroes
Assignment:  Madisons: Historical Analysis (MP-06) Due

June 21st  American Expansion & Indian Response
Reading:  MP-07 (documents 1-5, 10, Dowd & Perdue essays); CN-07, pp. 163-178
Film:  500 Nations
Assignment:  Hamiltons: Historical Analysis (MP-07) Due

June 23rd  The "Age of the Common Man"?
Reading:  MP-08 (documents 1-4, 6-7, Ryan & Altschuler and Blumin essays); CN-08, pp. 196-205
Film:  Gangs of New York
Assignment:  Jays: Historical Analysis (MP-08) Due

June 28th  Religious Revival & Social Reform
Reading:  MP-09 (documents 1-9, Johnson & Hatch essays); CN-06 & CN-07, pp. 178-184
Film:  Africans in America
Assignment:  Madisons: Historical Analysis (MP-09) Due
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>June 30th</td>
<td><strong>Antebellum Women's Lives</strong></td>
<td>MP-10 (documents 2-6, 8, Cott &amp; DuBois essays); MP-11 (document 1); MP-12 (document 8)</td>
<td><em>A Midwife's Tale; Not For Ourselves Alone</em></td>
<td>Hamiltons: Historical Analysis (MP-10) Due</td>
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<td>July 5th</td>
<td><strong>Slavery and the Civil War</strong></td>
<td>MP-12 (documents 5, 7); MP-14 (documents 1-2, 4, 7, McPherson &amp; Berlin essays); CN-08, pp. 205-209 &amp; CN-09</td>
<td><em>Africans in America; Glory; The Civil War</em></td>
<td>Jays: Historical Analysis (MP-14) Due</td>
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<td>July 7th</td>
<td><strong>No Class</strong></td>
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Assignment: Final Papers due electronically to our BeachBoard "Digital Drop Box" by 9:30pm.

Note: This syllabus is a work in progress and is subject to change. Changes will be announced in class and posted on the course web page.