**America’s Contested History I Syllabus**

**Instructor**
Fred W. Beuttler, Ph.D

**Quarter:** Autumn  
**Start – end date:** September 27 – November 15  
**Session day/time:** Tuesday, 6:00 pm – 8:30 pm CST

**Course Code and Section:** HUAS90911 - 22A2

**Email**
beuttler@uchicago.edu

**Modality**
Remote learning

**Course Overview**

In this three-quarter sequence, we will examine the history of America, from the colonial period to the present, as “contested ground” over the origins and meaning of liberty and equality and the conditions for a just and stable democratic/republican society. Using some secondary source texts from different political perspectives, such as the *New York Times’ 1619 Project* and Howard Zinn’s *A People’s History of America* contrasted with the more “patriotic” Wilfred McClay’s *Land of Hope: An Invitation to the Great American Story*, combined with primary source readings, we will seek to find a common meaning in America’s historical development. This course is part of the American History Sequence at UChicago Graham.

The first quarter will examine the period from Discovery in 1492 to the election of 1800, the Winter quarter from 1800 until 1917, and Spring quarter from 1917 to the present. There are no prerequisites, and students can take one, two, or all three courses.

**Required texts**


*NYT 1619 Project.*  


Primary source readings, emailed to students each week.

Books can be purchased online through the [University of Chicago Bookstore](https://www.chicagobooks.com).
## Course readings

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
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| Week 1 | Hannah-Jones, Wood, McClay, Hillsdale | **Introduction: The Contested American Story/Stories**  
N. Hannah-Jones, “America Wasn’t A Democracy …”, 1619 Project  
McClay, “Introduction: One Long Story”  
Hillsdale 1776 Curriculum, here: https://k12.hillsdale.edu/Curriculum/The-Hillsdale-1776-Curriculum/  
As this class is partly “teaching the controversy,” you may want to take a look at the Massachusetts HS history curriculum of 2018, which is part of the basis of Illinois’ curricular reform, here: https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/hss/2018-12.pdf. If you jump to p.198 on the website, and then p.201, you will see the recommended primary sources.  
See also: http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/ |
| Week 2 | McClay, Zinn, Hannah-Jones, De Las Casas, Mayflower Compact, and Tocqueville | **Discovery, Encounter, Invasion?**  
McClay, c1 Beginnings: Settlement and Unsettlement”  
Zinn, c1 “Columbus, the Indians, and Human Progress”  
Hannah-Jones, c1 “Democracy”  
De Las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1552)  
Mayflower Compact (1620) |
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| Week 3| McClay, Zinn, Hannah-Jones, Massachusetts Body of Liberties, and South Carolina Act | **Colonization: Jamestown and Puritan New England**  
McClay, c2 “The Shaping of British North America”  
Zinn, c2 “Drawing the Color Line”  
Hannah-Jones, c2 “Race”  
Massachusetts Body of Liberties (1641)  
SC: An Act for the Better Ordering and Governing of Negroes … (1740) |
| Week 4| McClay, Zinn, Hannah-Jones, Mather, Seward, and Woolman | **Restoration and Empire, 1660s-1760s**  
McClay, c3 “The Revolution of Self-Rule”  
Zinn, c3 “Persons of Mean and Vile Condition”  
Hannah-Jones, c3 “Sugar”  
C. Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana* (Selections)  
S. Seward, “The Selling of Joseph”  
J. Woolman, *Journals* |
| Week 5| McClay, Zinn, Hannah-Jones, Paine, and Declaration of Independence | **Towards Revolution 1763-1776**  
McClay, c4 “A War, A Nation, and a Wound”  
Zinn, c4, “Tyranny is Tyranny”  
Hannah-Jones, c4 “Fear” |
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<td>T. Paine, <em>Common Sense, The Crisis I</em></td>
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<td>Declaration of Independence</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Zinn, Hannah-Jones, Virginia Declaration</td>
<td><strong>Winning Independence and the Critical Period</strong></td>
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<td>of Rights, Massachusetts Constitution of</td>
<td><strong>Zinn, c5 “A Kind of Revolution”</strong></td>
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<td>1780, and Iroquois Confederation Docs</td>
<td><strong>Hannah-Jones, c5 “Dispossession”</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Virginia Declaration of Rights</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Massachusetts Constitution of 1780</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Iroquois Confederation Docs</strong></td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>McClay, Virginia Statute for Religious</td>
<td><strong>Constitution and Freedom</strong></td>
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<td>Freedom, US Constitution, and George</td>
<td>**McClay, c5 “The Experiment Begins”</td>
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<td>Washington</td>
<td><strong>Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom</strong></td>
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<td><strong>US Constitution, Bill of Rights</strong></td>
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<td><strong>George Washington, Farewell Address</strong></td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>McClay, Hannah-Jones, and Olaudah Equiano</td>
<td><strong>America in the World: Between France and Britain</strong></td>
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<td><strong>McClay, c6, “From Jefferson to Jackson: The Rise of the</strong></td>
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<td>**Common Man”</td>
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<td><strong>Hannah-Jones, c6 “Capitalism”</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano</strong></td>
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<td>(1789)**</td>
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Accessing remote courses

Remote courses are taught through our Canvas platform. Approximately two weeks before your class begins, we will add you to your canvas site using the email address you provided at the time of registration. An invitation will then be sent to that email. Click the “Get Started” button in the email to begin the Canvas login process. For step-by-step instructions, please visit https://grahamschool.uchicago.edu/academic-programs/online/learning-resources/liberal-arts. Once you’ve created your Canvas account, you can access any Graham School canvas course for which you are registered at: https://canvas.uchicago.edu.

Accessibility information

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For more information, please see this handout for students as well as the University’s Policy on Harassment, Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct and Policy on Title IX Sexual Harassment. You can also reach out directly for services and support from the Office for Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Support by emailing titleix@uchicago.edu.

If you, or another student you know, wishes to speak to a confidential resource who does not have this reporting responsibility, please contact the Sexual Assault Dean on Call through the UChicago Safe App or at 773.834-HELP.

Questions? Contact Zoë Eisenman at zme1@uchicago.edu.