

Vesalius College

Table I.2 Course description

Course title: Topics in American History from Colonization to the Cold War				
Course code: HIS221E				
Teacher responsible: William L. Chew III, PhD, Full Professor of History at Vesalius College				
Course description: Discovery and Settlement; Keynote Lecture: Geography and Climate as Social and Economic Determinants of American History; Colonial America--The Beginnings; America and the British Colonial System; The Colonial Economy; Independence; Federalism and Republicanism; Keynote Lecture: Main Themes of U.S. History, 1789-1815; An Expanding Economy, An Expanding Democracy; America Becomes an Industrial Nation; Ante-Bellum Expansion and the Coming of the Civil War; Negro Slavery; The Civil War and Reconstruction; Post-War Expansion and Growth; Keynote Lecture: Racism in American Society, The View from Europe; The Rise of the Industrial Giant; Progressivism, Expansionism and World War I; The United States Becomes a World Power; The Great Depression and the New Deal; World War II; The American People in World War II; The Origins of the Cold War; Keynote Lecture: Songs of the Cold War Era. The course is conducted in an open seminar fashion with a focus on class discussion and several topical keynote lectures. Videos and occasional aural sources will deepen or illustrate textbook readings.				
Course objectives: Given the status of the United States of America as the dominant economic and military superpower of the early 21 st century, an acquaintance of the main elements of its history seems imperative for the education of a well-rounded international affairs major. The course therefore provides a selective topical survey of the main political, social and economic developments that contributed to the formation of the modern United States from discovery and colonization to the early Cold War. Students will research and draft an analytical paper on a key historical document, and present this in class. This will not only acquaint them with fundamental texts in US history, but also serve to deepen their understanding of historical-critical textual analysis and its analytical categories.				
Grade weighting scheme:				
source	term paper	participation	midterm	final
15%	25%	20%	15%	25%

Used course material (handbooks, readers, readings, newspapers, magazines) and references:

Mark C. Carnes and John A. Garraty. *The American Nation*. 12th ed. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2006.

Reader