



# *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

## *Syllabus*

### *American Civilization to the Civil War - 39368*

*Last update 27-08-2024*

*HU Credits: 2*

*Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)*

*Responsible Department: History*

*Academic year: 0*

*Semester: 1st Semester*

*Teaching Languages: Hebrew*

*Campus: Mt. Scopus*

*Course/Module Coordinator: Yoav Hamdani*

*Coordinator Email: [yoav.hamdani@gmail.com](mailto:yoav.hamdani@gmail.com)*

*Coordinator Office Hours: Tuesday, 2:00-3:30 p.m.*

*Teaching Staff:*

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Dr. Yoav Hamdani

Course/Module description:

*This class is about the origins of the United States of America, covering the years from 1492 to 1865. We will start when colonists invaded a continent of hundreds of Native nations. We will examine how an unlikely republic formed out of thirteen British provinces and came to dominate the continent's midsection. And we will end with the American Civil War, the war that nearly tore that fast-growing republic in two. Our major themes will include the control of land and people, the evolution of American political and economic institutions, the relationships between religious and social movements, and the link between ideologies of race and gender with larger processes such as enslavement, dispossession, and industrialization. All along, we will keep asking how, why, and what were they thinking? This class is also about the discipline of history, the business we historians call "an argument without end." You will not just be learning standalone "facts," rather, you will learn why scholars ask certain questions, and how we try to answer them. Each lecture introduces a central question that animates historians' research and debates. The readings and paper assignments will also challenge you to do what historians do, that is, read sources and make arguments about the past. My hope is that you leave this course with a greater appreciation of the depth of the American story, and a better understanding of how we study it.*

Course/Module aims:

*To develop historical and critical thinking  
Understanding North American History as inseparable from Indigenous and African-American History  
Understand how historians use textual evidence to construct narratives about the past.*

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

*Critically evaluate secondary and primary sources through close reading and analysis.  
Interpret selections of primary and secondary sources and to construct original arguments from those sources  
Evaluate different accounts of the same event and adjudicate between varying interpretations*

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of that event.

*Synthesize a larger historical narrative through an exam that combine ideas and events*

*introduced in lectures into coherent analyses.*

Attendance requirements(%):

80

*Teaching arrangement and method of instruction:*

Course/Module Content:

*A detailed syllabus will be on the course website*

*Themes:*

*Indigenous History*

*European Invasions of America*

*Slavery and Enslavement*

*Religious, Social, and Cultural History*

*Racism & Gender*

*Democratization*

*The American Revolution*

*Federalism and the Constitution*

*Conquest, Dispossession and Territorial Expansion*

*Industrial and Market Revolutions*

*The U.S. -Mexico War*

*The Civil War*

Required Reading:

*Reading assignments will be on the course website*

Additional Reading Material:

Grading Scheme:

*Written Exam % 50*

*Submission assignments during the semester: Exercises / Essays / Audits / Reports / Forum / Simulation / others 30 %*

*Mid-terms exams 10 %*

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*Attendance / Participation in Field Excursion 10 %*

*Additional information:*