

HIST 2650 - CL History of American Democracy

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section 08, CRN 43839,

Credit hours: 3

Instructor

Joseph Alessi

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Public Instructor Information

Instructor Title: Dr.

Instructor Professional Qualifications: PhD History, Saint Louis University, 2005, MA History Youngstown State University 1999, BA Secondary Education, Comprehensive Social Studies 1990.

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Course Description

2650. CL History of American Democracy. A one semester survey of the American past focusing on history and civic literacy. The emphasis will be on important developments in American political, economic, and social history; particularly on the emergence and evolution of the concepts of democracy and the American economic system. No prerequisite. Meets state "Civic Literacy" requirements. 3 s.h.

Course Readings

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	https://openstax.org/books/us-history/pages/6-1-britains-law-and-order-strategy-and-its-consequences		
	1_Declaration.docx		
	https://openstax.org/books/us-history/pages/7-4-the-constitutional-convention-and-federal-constitution		
	https://constitutioncenter.org/the-constitution/full-text		
	https://openstax.org/books/us-history/pages/7-4-the-constitutional-convention-and-federal-constitution		
	3_Fed_51.docx		
	https://openstax.org/books/us-history/pages/9-introduction		
	https://openstax.org/books/us-history/pages/27-introduction		
	5_Four_Freedoms.docx		
	https://openstax.org/books/us-history/pages/29-3-the-civil-rights-movement-marches-on		
	6_Birmingham_Jail_1_.docx		
	https://openstax.org/books/us-history/pages/31-1-the-reagan-revolution		
	Reagan_First_Inaugural_Address.docx		

No required purchases; all materials are open-access.

Students are required to read and demonstrate mastery over *all* of the following:

1. The Declaration of Independence
2. The Constitution of the United States
3. Five of the Federalist Papers (No. 10, 39, 42, 51, 78)

4. Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*
5. The Emancipation Proclamation
6. The Gettysburg Address

Letter from Birmingham Jail

The course readings are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, research developments, current events, and/or to ensure better learning.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Week of	Reading(s)	Proposed Topic	Due/To Prepare for Class
8/24	Origins of the United States	Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity" (1630) Maryland's "Act of Religious Toleration" (1649) from Statues of Virginia (1667-1682) from Haudenosaunee "Great Law of Peace" (c. 1750) The Declaration of Independence (1776)	Comparative Source Assignment 20 Points Primary Source Analysis 50 Points
8/31	Revolutionary Governments	Articles of Confederation (1777) Northwest Ordinance (1787) Constitution of the United States	Comparative Source Assignment 20 Points Primary Source Analysis 50 Points
9/7	Revolutionary Governments Continued	The Federalist Papers (1787-1788) No. 10: faction/partisanship No. 39: republicanism No. 42: powers of Congress/states No. 51: federalism/checks and balances	Comparative Source 20 Points Primary Source Analysis 50 Points
9/14	Economic Transformations	Smith, <i>The Wealth of Nations</i> (1776) Owen, "Discourses" (1825) from De Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i> (1835) "Declaration of Rights & Sentiments" (1848) <i>Dred Scott v. Sandford</i> (1857)	Comparative Source Assignment 20 Points Primary Source Analysis 50 Points
9/21	Union and Liberty in Crisis	Stephens, "Cornerstone Speech" (1861) Lincoln, The Emancipation Proclamation (1863) Lincoln, The Gettysburg Address (1863) The Reconstruction Amendments (1865-1870) Chief Joseph, "An Indian's View on Indian Affairs" (1879)	Comparative Source Assignment 20 Points Primary Source Analysis-a 50 Points Primary Source Analysis-b 50 Points
9/28	Democracy at Home and Abroad	from Riis, <i>How the Other Half Lives</i> (1890) [images] from Turner, "The Sig. of the Frontier" (1893) DuBois, "Returning Soldiers" (1919) Roosevelt, "The Four Freedoms" (1941) [audio] Nixon, "The Kitchen Debate" (1959) [audio/visual]	Comparative Source Assignment 20 Points Primary Source Analysis 50 Points
10/12	Pursuit of the American Promise	Hernandez v. Texas (1954) The Port Huron Statement (1962) King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (1963) from Friedan, <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> (1963) selections of protest music [audio] *administer practice Final Exam	Comparative Source Assignment 20 Points Primary Source Analysis 50 Points
10/19	Modern America	Schlaflly, "What's Wrong with 'Equal Rights' for Women" (1972) Carter, "Crisis of Confidence" (1979) [audio/visual] Reagan, First Inaugural Address (1981) [audio/visual] Buchanan, "Address to the RNC" (1992) [audio/visual] Bush, State of the Union (2002) [audio/visual]	Comparative Source Assignment 20 Points Primary Source Analysis 50 Points
12/7	Final Exam		Exam 100 Points

The course schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better learning.