

USHIST101 | United States History I

Course Text

No need to track down a textbook; this text is provided digitally as part of the course enrollment:

Brinkley, Alan. *The Unfinished Nation: A Concise History of the American People*, 10th edition, McGraw-Hill, 2022.

Course Description

This course focuses on the characteristics of societies existing in the Americas prior to 1877. Students learn about pre-Columbian Indigenous societies and their impact on the social and cultural landscape of the Americas. In turn, this course examines the impact of European exploration and colonization of the "New World" on Europe, Africa, and the young United States. Students explore the transformation of the American landscape due to colonial competition among England, France, and Spain. In addition, this course discusses the development of colonies like Virginia and South Carolina, as well as the evolution of the institution of slavery across the Thirteen Colonies. Specific causes of the American Revolution are examined as well as the emergence of the United States of America and the development of the Constitution and Bill of Rights. Moreover, the evolution of the American presidency is analyzed through the western and industrial expansion from the Jeffersonian era through Abraham Lincoln's presidency. Students also examine the causes and events of the Civil War, and they evaluate how Reconstruction plans succeeded or failed.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Apply historical research skills to major themes in American history to 1877
2. Detect the causes of European exploration and colonization in the New World and assess the impact of these activities on Europe, Africa, and the Americas
3. Explain how political, religious, economic, and social institutions emerged in the American Colonies
4. Specify the causes of the American Revolution and evaluate the impact of the Revolution on politics, the economy, and society
5. Recognize how the institutions and practices of government evolved to create the foundation of the American political system
6. Explain territorial expansion from 1801 to 1878 and assess its effects on relations with Native Americans and external powers
7. Recognize how the Industrial Revolution and Western expansion changed the lives of Americans
8. Specify the major causes and events of the Civil War and assess the impact of the war on the American people
9. Summarize the sources and character of cultural, religious, and social reform movements in the antebellum period
10. Explain how various Reconstruction plans succeeded or failed

11. Analyze a primary source historical artifact and apply critical thinking to answer questions about its historical evidence

Course Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for United States History I.

Academic Integrity Statement

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an honest, truthful and responsible manner. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication and academic misconduct. Failure to comply with the Academic Integrity Policy can result in a failure and/or zero on the attempted assignment/examination, a removal from the course, disqualification to enroll in future courses, and/or revocation of an academic transcript.

Course Completion Policy

In order for a course to be considered complete, **all required coursework must be attempted, submitted, and graded.** Required coursework consists of graded assignments. Any Academic Integrity Policy violations may prevent a course from being considered complete.

Assessment Types

StraighterLine courses may include any combination of the assessment types described below. Review the descriptions to learn about each type, then review the Course Evaluation Criteria to understand how your learning will be measured in this course.

Benchmarks

Benchmarks test your mastery of course concepts. You have 3 attempts, and your highest score counts.

Note: Cumulative Benchmarks (final exams) only allow 1 attempt.

Capstones

Capstones are project-based assessments that help you apply concepts to real-world scenarios. You have 2 attempts, and your highest score counts.

Checkpoints

Checkpoints are quick knowledge checks on important course concepts. All are open-book, and most have 1-3 attempts.

AI Use-Case Policies

StraighterLine Capstone assessments operate under one of three AI Use-Case Policies. These designations are selected intentionally to support learners in developing digital literacy, ethical reasoning, and authentic communication skills. Each model requires students to engage meaningfully with the course outcomes while adhering to academic standards.

Independent Work Requirement: Capstones with this designation must be completed independently without using AI tools. The goal is for learners to showcase their own understanding and skills without AI assistance. Students are expected to generate and submit original work developed solely through their own reasoning and effort.

AI-Assisted Planning Option: Capstones with this designation may allow AI tools to support brainstorming and assessment planning. If allowed, students will be asked to document any AI assistance by noting how it informed their work. Documentation must be included within the assignment or in a designated reflection field. Examples include describing how an AI tool helped organize an outline, generate ideas, or surface sources for further exploration.

AI-Integration Requirement: Capstones with this designation require AI tools as part of the learning process. Students will be asked to reflect upon their AI interactions and AI contributions to the assessment. Reflections must include which tools were used, how they were used, and what insights students gained from the process. This promotes transparency, ethical use, and metacognitive skill-building.

Course Evaluation Criteria

Your score provides a percentage score and letter grade for each course. A passing percentage is 70% or higher.

There are a total of 1000 points in the course:

Assessment	Points	Learning Outcomes
Checkpoint 1: The Collision of Cultures	0	N/a
Checkpoint 2: Transplantations and Borderlands	0	N/a
Checkpoint 3: Society and Culture in Provincial America	0	N/a
Benchmark 1: Examining Causes	10	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Checkpoint 4: The Empire in Transition	0	N/a
Benchmark 2: Checkpoints 1-4	150	1, 2, 3, 4
Checkpoint 5: The American Revolution	0	N/a
Checkpoint 6: The Constitution and the New Republic	0	N/a
Benchmark 3: Multiple Perspectives on History	10	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Checkpoint 7: The Jeffersonian Era	0	N/a
Capstone 1: Primary Source Analysis	150	1, 5, 11
Checkpoint 8: Expansion and Division in the Early Republic	0	N/a
Benchmark 4: Checkpoints 5-8	150	1, 3, 4, 5
Checkpoint 9: Jacksonian America	0	N/a
Benchmark 5: Leadership and the Shape of History	10	1, 3, 5
Checkpoint 10: America's Economic Revolution	0	N/a
Checkpoint 11: Cotton, Slavery, and the Old South	0	N/a
Benchmark 6: Technology and History	10	1, 7, 9
Checkpoint 12: Antebellum Culture and Reform	0	N/a

Assessment	Points	Learning Outcomes
Benchmark 7: Checkpoints 9-12	150	1, 7, 9
Checkpoint 13: The Impending Crisis	0	N/a
Benchmark 8: Cultural Exchange	10	1, 2, 7, 9
Checkpoint 14: The Civil War	0	N/a
Capstone 2: Compare and Contrast Historical Events	200	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Checkpoint 15: Reconstruction and the New South	0	N/a
Benchmark 9: Checkpoints 13-15	150	8, 9, 10
Total	1000	

Course Roadmap

This roadmap provides an overview of the checkpoints and lessons covered in this course.

Checkpoint 1: The Collision of Cultures

- Chapter 1 Presentation
- Textbook Reading Assignment: Chapter 1
- Pathfinder: The Americas Before and After the Advent of the Europeans

Checkpoint 2: Transplantations and Borderlands

- Chapter 2 Presentation
- Textbook Reading Assignment: Chapter 2

Checkpoint 3: Society and Culture in Provincial America

- Chapter 3 Presentation
- Textbook Reading Assignment: Chapter 3

Checkpoint 4: The Empire in Transition

- Chapter 4 Presentation
- Textbook Reading Assignment: Chapter 4

Checkpoint 5: The American Revolution

- Chapter 5 Presentation
- Textbook Reading Assignment: Chapter 5
- Pathfinder: The American Revolution

Checkpoint 6: The Constitution and the New Republic

- Chapter 6 Presentation

- Textbook Reading Assignment: Chapter 6

Checkpoint 7: The Jeffersonian Era

- Chapter 7 Presentation
- Textbook Reading Assignment: Chapter 7

Checkpoint 8: Expansion and Division in the Early Republic

- Chapter 8 Presentation
- Textbook Reading Assignment: Chapter 8

Checkpoint 9: Jacksonian America

- Chapter 9 Presentation
- Textbook Reading Assignment: Chapter 9

Checkpoint 10: America's Economic Revolution

- Chapter 10 Presentation
- Textbook Reading Assignment: Chapter 10

Checkpoint 11: Cotton, Slavery, and the Old South

- Chapter 11 Presentation
- Textbook Reading Assignment: Chapter 11

Checkpoint 12: Antebellum Culture and Reform

- Chapter 12 Presentation
- Textbook Reading Assignment: Chapter 12

Checkpoint 13: The Impending Crisis

- Chapter 13 Presentation
- Textbook Reading Assignment: Chapter 13

Checkpoint 14: The Civil War

- Chapter 14 Presentation
- Textbook Reading Assignment: Chapter 14

Checkpoint 15: Reconstruction and the New South

- Chapter 15 Presentation
 - Textbook Reading Assignment: Chapter 15
 - Pathfinder: The American Civil War
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