

**History 313: Nineteenth Century America**  
**Virginia Wesleyan College**  
**Spring 2009**

Dr. Dan Margolies  
 Office: Blocker 15  
 Office Hours: TTH 1-3, or by appointment  
 Email: [dmargolies@vwc.edu](mailto:dmargolies@vwc.edu)  
 Webpage: <http://facultystaff.vwc.edu/~dmargolies/>  
 Phone: 455-5716

**Class Meeting: Mon, Weds, 3\_4:15, Blocker 215**

This class is an exploration of the major themes, issues, conflicts, people, and events that shaped America during the volatile nineteenth century, as the new nation grappled with momentous ideological, existential, technological, and practical questions alike. This course examines the central themes and experiences of this time period, including ideologies and theologies, agricultural and environmental change, political revolution and reaction, the experience of exploration, war, and frontier settlement, and the impact of empire and industrialization on American society, culture, and economy. This semester we will be focusing particularly on the intertwining of race, power, and expansion.

**Required Readings:** (on sale at the college bookstore)

Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Conquest Of Texas: Ethnic Cleansing In The Promised Land, 1820-1875*

Dale Cockrell, *Demons of Disorder: Early Blackface Minstrels and their World*

Richard Harding Davis, *Soldiers of Fortune*

Jerome A. Greene, *Lakota and Cheyenne: Indian Views of the Great Sioux War, 1876-1877*

Abraham Lincoln, *Selected Speeches and Writings: Abraham Lincoln*

Mark E., Jr. Neely, *The Civil War and the Limits of Destruction*

Scott Reynolds Nelson and Carol Sheriff, *A People at War: Civilians and Soldiers in America's Civil War*

Heather Cox Richardson, *West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War*

Adam Rothman, *Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South*

Scott Trafton, *Egypt Land: Race and Nineteenth-Century American Egyptomania*

Thomas A. Tweed, *The American Encounter with Buddhism, 1844-1912: Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent*

**Course Requirements:**

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**Attendance and Participation:**

This class is a reading and discussion seminar designed for history majors and other interested upper-level students. Regular attendance in class is, of course, mandatory, as is prompt completion of all readings

and assignments. You are expected to *read and reflect* upon the assigned materials before coming to class each week so you can get the most out of discussion. Because we will cover a large amount of engaging reading over the course of the semester, you should be prepared to spend the time it takes to complete the reading thoroughly and thoughtfully. **You MUST do the reading before each class to be prepared for discussions and to do well in this class.** Your active participation in all aspects of the class is expected, and your final grade will reflect your level of involvement and commitment.

Late assignments (such as papers or other assignments) will be graded down **one grade per day** and **are accepted only at the discretion of the professor.**

More than two absences that are not expressly approved by the professor will result in a lower final grade for the semester. **For each absence after two excused absences, your discussion grade will be lowered one-half grade.**

Excused absences include legitimate illness, a field trip, or a pre-approved athletic event. However, such excused absences will require extra work to make up for the missed class time.

If your cell phone rings during class (unless authorized by the professor) your final grade will be lowered by one-half letter grade.

### **Written Assignments:**

#### **Book papers:**

You will write an approximately 3-5 page paper on at least three of the books we will read this semester covering the argument of the book, discussing evidence and technique, comparing it to others we have read, and providing a critique of the overall work. These papers are due during the week after we have completed discussing the book.

#### **Other writings:**

There will be occasional short writings, either in class or take-home, on thematic subjects we cover. These assignments will be discussed in greater detail during the course of the semester.

#### **Final:**

There will be a final take-home essay.

#### **Grades:**

Class Participation: 25%

Book Papers: 30%

Other writing assignments 15%

Final Exam: 30%

*The following grading point scale will be used in determining your grade, subject to the discretion of the instructor: A= 93-100; A- = 90-92; B+ = 88-89; B = 83-87; B- = 80-82; C+ = 78-79; C = 73-77; C- = 65-69; D = 50-64; F = less than 50*

**Email policy:** I do not respond to or read emails that lack capitalization, proper punctuation, or a salutation.

## ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In accordance with Title 5, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, reasonable accommodation will be provided to any student who has followed the College's procedures as outlined in the current *Academic Bulletin*. It is best to begin this process by contacting the disability services coordinator, Fayne Pearson (455-3246) at the beginning of the semester. Once the need for accommodations has been officially established, the student should consult with the instructor to insure that the student's needs can be met as effectively as possible.

### Reading Schedule:

*Any changes in the course schedule will be announced in class. All additional due dates for papers and other assignments will be announced in class. It is your responsibility to contact the professor if you miss class in order to find out about these due dates. Please be sure to bring your books with you for each meeting.*

#### **Week 1 – Jan.26, 28**

##### **Course Introduction; Approaching the nineteenth century**

Reading: Selected reading out of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*:  
[http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/toc\\_indx.html](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/toc_indx.html)

#### **Week 2 – Feb 2, 4 The slaveholding republic**

Reading: Rothman, all

#### **Week 3 – Feb 9, 11 Tejas**

Reading: Anderson, introduction, ch. 1-13

#### **Week 4 – Feb. 16, 18 Texas**

Reading: Anderson, ch. 14-22

#### **Week 5 – Feb. 23, 25 Way down in Egypt Land**

Reading: Trafton

#### **Week 6 – March 2, 4 "Get out de way!"**

Reading: Cockrell

#### **Week 7 – Mar 9, 11 Towards War**

Reading, Nelson and Sheriff, 1-8  
 Lincoln (selections)

#### **Week 8 – Mar 14, 16**

#### **SPRING BREAK**

**Week 9 – Mar 23, 25          The Civil War as a War**

Reading:          Nelson and Sheriff, 9-12  
                 Lincoln (selections)

**Week 10 – Mar 30, April 1    The Civil War as Bloodletting**

Reading:          Neely  
                 Lincoln (selections)

**Week 11—April 6, 8          "Reconstruction"**

Reading:          Richardson, ch. 1-4

**Week 12 – April 13, 14      War and expansion**

Reading:          Greene

**Week 13 – April 20, 22      Struggle**

Reading:          Richardson, ch. 5-9

**Week 14 – April 27, 29    The Global USA**

Reading:          Tweed

**Week 15 – May 4, 6          Understanding the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and The New World Order**

Reading          Davis, all

*FINAL ESSAY DUE DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED*