

*Boston Clemente Course in the Humanities
Codman Square Health Center / 450 Washington Street*

[AMERICAN HISTORY 101: FREEDOM STORIES]

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The British scholar Eric Hobsbawm once wrote that historians are the “professional remembrancers of what their fellow citizens wish to forget.” W. E. B. Du Bois, in his groundbreaking 1935 study, *Black Reconstruction*, wrote that if “we are going to use history for our pleasure or amusement, for inflating our national ego, and giving us a false but pleasurable sense of accomplishment, then we must give up the idea of history...and admit frankly that we are using a version of historical fact in order to influence and educate a new generation along the way we wish.” Taken together, these two eminent historians challenge us to respect the past, to engage it on its own terms, and to resist the temptation of harsh judgment or excessive celebration. In other words, history is not meant to help us feel good or bad; it exists to help us question and understand.

This is an introductory survey course in American history focusing on one of its major themes: *freedom*. Throughout the term, we will investigate the meaning of freedom from the American Revolution to the Civil Rights Movement using a variety of sources representing different perspectives. Since history is first and foremost an integration of stories, we will devote most of our attention to the social experiences and individual voices of a diverse group of Americans: photographers and poets, politicians and social reformers, sharecroppers and journalists, Founding Fathers and fugitive slaves. In the process, we will see that ideas like *freedom*—as well as other key concepts like *rights*, *equality*, *democracy*, *citizenship*, and the like—have always meant different things to different people.

REQUIRED READINGS

Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House* (1910)

Black Elk (with John G. Niehardt), *Black Elk Speaks* (1932)

Timothy Patrick McCarthy and John McMillian, eds., *The Radical Reader*

[RR]

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

- **Regular Attendance** (students are required to attend every class; if you're going to miss class due to health or family emergency, please notify Tim *in advance*)
- **Weekly Reading Assignments** (must be completed *before* class each week)
- **Two Paper Assignments** (due Monday, April 12th and Monday, June 7th)
- **Lively Class Participation**
- **Civility and Respect for Others**

COURSE SCHEDULE

[American History #1, Monday, 2/22: Introduction]

Declaration of Independence (1776), RR, pp. 44-47, and Jefferson's draft [handout]

[American History #2, Wednesday, 3/3: The American Revolution]

Slave Petitions for Freedom (ca. 1770s), RR, pp. 25-28

Phillis Wheatley, selected poems (1773, 1776), RR, pp. 38-40

Patrick Henry, Second Virginia Convention Speech (1775), RR, pp. 29-32

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1776), RR, pp. 33-37

Abigail Adams, Letter to John Adams (1776), RR, pp. 41-43

Thomas Jefferson, Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom (1785), RR, pp. 48-50

U.S. Constitution (1789) [handout]

Bill of Rights (1791), RR, pp. 54-56

[American History #3, Monday, 3/8: Antebellum Reform]

Thomas Skidmore, *The Rights of Man to Property* (1829), RR, pp. 63-65

William Lloyd Garrison, *Liberator* Editorial (1831), RR, pp. 118-119

American Anti-Slavery Society, *Declaration of Sentiments* (1833), RR, pp. 124-127

Charles Grandison Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* (1835), RR, pp. 66-68

William Apess, *Indian's Looking-Glass for the White Man* (1836), RR, pp. 223-226

Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self-Reliance* (1841), RR, pp. 73-75

Seneca Falls *Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions* (1848), RR, pp. 172-175

[American History #4, Monday, 3/22: Writing Class with Ann Murphy]

[American History #5, Monday, 3/29: Slavery and Abolition]

Opening Editorial, *Freedom's Journal* (1827), RR, pp. 111-113

David Walker, *Appeal* (1829), RR, pp. 114-117

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative* (1845), RR, pp. 141-144

Sojourner Truth, *Ar'n't I A Woman?* (1851), RR, pp. 178-180

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), RR, pp. 145-150

John Brown, Last Speech to the Jury (1859), RR, pp. 157-159

[American History #6, Monday, 4/5: Civil War and Reconstruction]

Abraham Lincoln, First Inaugural (1861) and Gettysburg Address (1863)
[handout]

Emancipation Proclamation (1863) [handout]

Abraham Lincoln, Second Inaugural (1864), RR, pp. 89-91

Walt Whitman, "O Captain! My Captain" (1865) [handout]

Mary Chestnut, *A Diary from Dixie* (1861-1865), selections [handout]

13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments (1865, 1868, 1870), RR, pp. 160-162

Frederick Douglass, Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln (1876)
[handout]

[American History #7, Monday, 4/12: The Frontier]

Black Elk, *Black Elk Speaks* (1932), chapters 1, 3, 7, 24-25

*****First Papers due on Monday, April 12th*****

Monday, 4/19: NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK

[American History #8, Monday, 4/26: The Progressive Era]

Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890), selected photographs [in class]

Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (1905), RR, pp. 277-280

Jane Addams, *Twenty Years at Hull House* (1910), chapters 1-2, 5, 8, 11, 16

[American History #9, Monday, 5/10: Depression and World War II]

Huey Long, "Share Our Wealth" (1935), RR, pp. 324-326

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, First Inaugural Address (1933) and Acceptance Speech for the Renomination (1936) [handout]
Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Four Freedoms Speech (1941) [handout]
Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Declaration of War (1941) [handout]
Franklin Delano Roosevelt, D-Day Prayer (1944) [handout]

[American History #10, Monday, 5/17: The Cold War]

Dwight D. Eisenhower, Address to the United Nations (1953) [handout]
Allen Ginsberg, *Howl* (1956), RR, pp. 463-467
John F. Kennedy, Speech on the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) [handout]
Students for a Democratic Society, Port Huron Statement (1962), RR, pp. 468-476
Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), RR, pp. 413-416

[American History #11, Monday, 5/24: The Civil Rights Movement]

James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (1963), RR, pp. 378-381
Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from Birmingham Jail (1963), RR, pp. 362-377
Malcolm X, Ballot or the Bullet Speech (1964), RR, pp. 382-389
Lyndon Johnson, Speech on Voting Rights (1965) [handout]
*****Final Papers due on Monday, June 7th*****