HH 1010
The Unrealized Dream: An Introduction to U.S. History

Instructor: Assistant Professor Miles Powell
Email: miles.powell@ntu.edu.sg
Office: HSS-05-24
Office hours: By appointment

Pre-requisites: None
Academic Units: 3
Meeting time: Lectures: Tuesdays, 9:30-11:30 am; Tutorials: Tuesdays, 1:30 – 2:30 pm, and 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm
Venue: Lectures: S3.2 SR6; Tutorials: S3.2 SR2

Introduction:

In this class, students will contemplate what some historians term “The American Irony” – the fact that American citizens have often acquired independence, freedom, and affluence by conquering, enslaving, and impoverishing other peoples. Students will explore the major events that shaped the development of the United States, from the colonial period through the War on Terror. In the process they will learn how the United States rose to a position of global hegemony, and question whether that situation is likely to endure. This class will focus particularly on issues of race, class, and gender, which carry relevance beyond the boundaries of the United States.

Required Books:

This course has no textbook, so students are encouraged to attend all lectures. Tutorial readings will be available on the NTULearn course site. To help you follow along, you may wish to consult the following book, copies of which are on reserves at the Library Outpost:


Student Assessment:

   In-Class Participation: 10%
   Midterm Exam: 15%
   Essay Outline: 5%
   Argumentative Essay: 20%
Final Exam: 50%

In-Class Participation:

Students must attend every tutorial prepared to discuss that week’s assigned readings. I will also encourage student participation during lectures. Outstanding participants will demonstrate a thorough and critical understanding of the assigned material by offering perceptive comments and asking informed questions.

Midterm Exam:

Students will write an in-class midterm exam on Week VII. This will include three ID and significance type short answer questions (I will explain what these are in lecture), and one essay question. You will be able to choose from multiple prompts for both components. I will draw questions from lectures and readings.

Essay Outline:

At the start of lecture on Week X, students will submit an outline of their essay (see essay prompt below), so that I can make sure you are on the right track. This outline must include a thesis statement, a list of sources, and an overview of the essay’s structure.

Argumentative Essay:

At the start of the final lecture, students will submit an argumentative essay (1,800-2,000 words) responding to the following prompt: What is the American Irony? How does this term apply to ONE of the following topics: the American Revolution; Antebellum economic growth; nineteenth-century westward expansion; the pursuit of markets in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; the Second World War; or the Cold War? Every essay must contain a clear thesis, and must incorporate properly cited evidence from at least two tutorial readings, plus at least four additional scholarly sources.

Final Exam:

You will need to complete five ID and significance type questions, one short essay, and one long essay. You will be able to choose from multiple prompts for all of these components. I will draw questions from lectures and readings.

Course Outline and Readings:

Week I (10/01): Prehistory to Colonial Period
No Tutorial Readings:

***Writing workshop in tutorial***

Week II (17/01): Revolution and Constitution

Tutorial Readings:


Week III (24/01): The Promise and Perils of Nationhood

Tutorial Readings:


Week IV (31/01): Westward Expansion

Tutorial Readings:


Week V (07/02): Slavery and the Civil War

Tutorial Readings:

Emily West, “‘Between Slavery and Freedom’: The Expulsion and Enslavement of Free Women of Colour in the US South before the Civil War” *Women’s History Review* 22(3) (June 2013): 460-477.

Week VI (14/02): Midterm Exam


Week VII (21/02): The Indian Wars

Tutorial Readings:


***Recess Week***

Week VIII (07/03): Industry and the Search for Markets

Tutorial Readings:


Week IX (14/03): World War I and the Roaring Twenties

Tutorial Readings:


Week X (21/03): The Depression and the New Deal
Tutorial Readings:


***Essay Outline Due***

Week XI (28/03): World War Two

Tutorial Readings:


Week XII (04/04): Cold War, Consensus, and Protest

Tutorial Readings:


Week XIII (11/04): Conservative Backlash and the War on Terror

Tutorial Readings:


***Argumentative Essay Due***