



RHIS301 – American Military History Master Course Syllabus

Course Overview (QM Standards 1.2)

Course Catalog Description: This course examines the broad range of experiences of the US military from 1492 to the present. The course is structured around a chronological exploration of the history of the American armed services and their participation in the following conflicts: Wars with Native Americans, the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War. In each instance, we will explore both the relationship of military to the larger society and the connections between military history and the American experience. As an introductory survey, we will of course devote particular attention armies, leaders, and weapons. Expect to spend a great deal of time studying tactics and strategy. But it is not enough to simply look at maps and memorize battles. We will also study politics and diplomacy, we will explore supply, logistics, and strategy, and we will examine the military's connection to the larger society.

Military history has fallen out of favor in academia. For example, military history had not been taught at Marshall University for nearly a decade prior to my arrival in 2009. Social history (the study of divisions and distribution of wealth, gender and racial equality, and the perspectives and experiences of everyday people) now dominate the historical profession where once the trinity of military, political, and economic history held sway.

This is a reflection of changes in our society, and I believe these are changes that we should all embrace. After all, history should focus on the American people rather than a handful of leaders-military or otherwise. However, I believe military history is still relevant because armies reflect the societies they defend. In fact, I believe that military history is one of the finest avenues to understanding the history of a people and their government, as well as the history of a particular time period.

In this spirit, this course will not only study battles and discuss tactics and strategy, but also view military history as a window to understanding the American people at various times in history.

Critical Thinking Skills

Students will be presented with many primary sources, as well as the written opinions of several historians. The most important aspect to thinking historically is the ability to critically and “read between the lines” and interpret the accuracy of their sources and determine their meaning. By reading the work of professional historians and using what you

learned to interpret historical sources, students will develop critical thinking skills that will be useful in any academic discipline.

Analysis and Synthesis

As an historian, you must interpret the work of others as well as primary sources. Each student will analyze both primary and secondary sources throughout this course. By developing the skills necessary to integrate one's own ideas with the work of others, students will develop the ability to analyze and synthesize data in any field they chose.

Communication Skills

Each student will participate in a research project that will help the general public connect to museums, battlefields, and monuments. By providing a concise, carefully constructed summary and analysis of primary sources as well as their own ideas and arguments, students will develop their ability to communicate effectively.

Pre-Requisites (QM Standard 1.6)

There are no course prerequisites for this course other than being an RBA (Regents Bachelor of Arts) student.

Minimum Technical Requirements and Online Resources (QM Standards 1.5 & 1.7)

In addition to a web browser (preferable Firefox) that is Blackboard compatible, you will need the other WVROCKS supported technologies outlined in the student policies section and

- Word Processing package capable of reading and creating rich text formatted documents.
- PDF Creator Software: If you are on campus you can automatically print any file to PDF by selecting the PDF printer. If you are off campus and do not have this capability, you can download a free version of Cute PDF at:
<http://www.cutepdf.com/Products/CutePDF/writer.asp>
- Virus Protection Software. This course requires you to download and upload files from your PC. Virus protection software protects your computer and my computer.

Online Resources: This course makes use of many online resources. I have made every effort to make sure the links I have are up-to-date. However, due to the changing nature of the web, you may find that a resource is temporarily unavailable or has been removed. If this should happen, please send me an email and I will find an alternative resource or modify the assignment accordingly.

Instructor Information (QM Standards 1.8 & 5.3)

Individual instructors complete this information.

Optional/Required Course Materials (QM Standard 4.6)

You will find your required textbook information in the course catalog at <http://ilearn-wvrocks.wvnet.edu>. All other materials are found in the individual course modules.

Grading Policy (QM Standard 3.2)

Grading

15% Midterm Exam

15% Final Exam

20% Quizzes (4 quizzes, 5% each)

30% Research Project (Three entries in Clio, 10% each)

20% Discussion Boards (2 forums, 10% each)

How your discussions will be graded:

In the first week of a module that contains a discussion board, students are required to post a detailed response (at least 200 words) that address one of the questions listed with examples from the reading or some other credible source. Students will also respond to three other students in that first week. After the first week, the instructor will post a follow-up question related to each student's initial post. Students are required to answer that question in the second week. The response should be at least 200 words and include references to course materials and/or other credible sources. The discussion grade will reflect the quality and detail of the initial post, the three responses to other students, and the response to the instructor's follow-up question. Be sure that each post incorporates specific examples from the reading or some other credible source.

Final Grades will be determined based on the following scale:

Total Weighted Points Earned	Percent	Grade
90 – 100	90 - 100%	A
80 - 89	80 - 89%	B
70 - 79	70 - 79%	C
60 - 69	60 - 69%	D
Below 60	Below 60%	F

Quizzes

One graded quiz will be given at the end of each of the four modules. These quizzes test your comprehension of the assigned readings. These quizzes are low-stakes in that each quiz is only worth 5% of your course grade. These assessments are designed to test comprehension of each reading assignment and are based on key periods of American military history. As such, you will want to do more than simply “read” each assignment, you will want to take notes as you read, paying particular attention to how each battle unfolded, the connection between tactics and strategy, and the way the outcomes of battles affected the overall conflict as well as American history in general. You should take notes for each quiz-students who do this do very well on the quizzes.

The online quizzes will often ask contemplative and reflective questions such as, “Why was Antietam a critical battle in the Civil War?” or “Compare the strategy of Robert E. Lee to that of General George Patton.” As a result, your notes should contain both summary and analysis of key events, people, strategy, and outcomes. You may use these notes when you take the assessments, however, each assessment has a time limit so you will need to be thoroughly prepared before you attempt each to take it. (In other words, you may have time to review a few pages of notes during the assessment, but you will not have the time to look up the answers in the course or textbook.) No proctor is required for quizzes.

Exams

Midterm and Final Exam questions will cover material from the assigned readings up to the date of the test. (Exams are non-cumulative, meaning that the first exam will cover events in the first half of the class and the second exam will cover readings over the second half of the class). Exam format will be a mixture of multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, one essay, and short answer. No proctor is required.

A study guide will list possible essay questions so students can prepare outstanding responses. Your essay must be completely written in your own words and should be at least five complete paragraphs in length. Most importantly, it must be full of examples from course materials such as online readings, videos, and especially your textbook-these are the sources you will use to construct an argument that answers the essay question. The exam will be timed. You will have ninety (90) minutes to complete the exam. I will have to deduct points for exams that run past the 90 minute time limit (one point for each minute over).

Research Project

Each student will research the history of three historical sites related to American military history and upload this information to a free educational website. Because this website serves the public and is used in many classrooms, students will be expected to verify all of the information in their entry with proper citations. Students will also be required to complete any revisions required by the instructor before any entry will be uploaded to this educational site.

Students will be provided with a guide and rubric to help them with this assignment. Although this project may sound ambitious, it has been successfully completed by hundreds of students in courses at several colleges and universities. It has also become the most popular aspect of many

courses and allowed students to include an online publication on their resumes. Because all entries are published under a Creative Commons license and available to all without cost, students can use their work in this class to show potential employers their writing and research skills.

Each entry will contain an introduction/summary of 5-8 sentences followed by 3-5 paragraphs of accurate and original information in the backstory/more information section. There is a rubric that provides more information and also a discussion board for any questions related to this assignment. A few lists of potential topics are provided, as well as a guide to show how to enter this information, and a grading rubric. For now, have some fun and play with the website-it's a lot of fun and you'll learn a lot at the same time!

Discussions

The purpose and structure of graded discussion boards follow below:

Discussion links are located in Blackboard modules. The purpose of discussions is to give you an opportunity to communicate with other students and the instructor in an online environment, to raise questions, and to answer them. It is also one of the best parts of taking an online course.

The questions serve to encourage critical thinking, prepare students for graded assessments, and facilitate informed participation.

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Module Objectives and Assessments (QM Standard 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.4, 3.5, 5.1)

Module 1

After you have complete the readings and content for this module you will be able to:

- Navigate the online classroom and recognize course expectations and deadlines. [**M1A1: Introductions**]
- Discuss the history of colonial warfare, the Revolutionary War, and the War of 1812. [**M1S1: Self-Assessment, M1A2: Discussion**]
- Describe Native American and Colonial Warfare. [**M1A3: Quiz**]
- Identify events and implications involving the American Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. [**M1A3: Quiz**]

Module 2

After you have complete the readings and content for this module you will be able to:

- Identify events and implications of military history of the early 1800s, the Civil War, the post-civil war period, and the Spanish American War. [**M2A1: Quiz**]
- Identify events, implications, and connections related to the American military from the Colonial Period to the War of 1812 and of the early 1800s, the Civil War, the post-civil war period, and the Spanish American War. [**M2A2: Midterm Exam**]
- Identify three historic sites (monuments, museums, historic markers, etc) related to military history that are not already in Clio www.theclio.com for the research project. Create draft entries for these three sites and continue to research and update/improve these entries during the third module. [**CLIO Activity**]

Module 3

After you have complete the readings and content for this module you will be able to:

- Discuss the history of World War I and World War II. [**M3S1: Self-Assessment, M3A1: Discussion**]
- Identify events and implications related to the history of World War I and World War II. [**M3A2: Quiz**]
- Complete your research and publish three entries related to historical sites in Clio, a free educational website. [**M3A3: Research Project, M3A4: Optional Research Project Discussion**]

Module 4

After you have complete the readings and content for this module you will be able to:

- Identify events and implications related to the history of the Cold War and Modern Era. [**M4A1: Quiz**]
- Identify events and implications related to World War I, World War II, the Cold War, and the Modern Era. [**M4A2: Final Exam**]