**HIST 2010: American History I (Spring 2012)**

**Midterm Study Guide**

**Format**

The examination comprises:

(1) twenty-five multiple-choice questions (50%); and  
(2) three essay questions of which students are required to answer two (50%).  
  
**Required Materials**Students should bring to the examination:  
  
(1) two sharpened #2 pencils for recording answers to the multiple-choice section;  
(2) a blue or black ballpoint pen; and  
(3) at least one examination booklet (blue book) for writing the essays (available in the bookstores on both campuses).  
  
**Regulations**(1) The total time allowed for the examination is one hour and fifteen minutes: twenty-five minutes for the multiple-choice section and fifty minutes for the essay.

(2) **No books, notes, electronic devices (e.g. cell-phones), or other materials may be consulted during the examination.  
  
Examination Dates**

February 29-March 2, 2012  
  
Classes meeting two days per week will complete the entire examination on Wednesday, February 29 or Thursday, March 1.  
  
Classes meeting three days per week will complete the multiple-choice section of the examination on Wednesday, February 29, and the essay section on Friday, March 2.  
  
**Studying Guidelines**The examination is designed to test the learning outcomes stated in the syllabus for the course. The multiple-choice questions test your familiarity with historical persons, institutions, and events (course learning outcome 1), and the essay questions ask you to demonstrate your ability to use this knowledge in making connections, analyzing arguments, and presenting your own ideas.

The essay section of the examination will include three of the questions listed below, of which you will be required to answer two. Because the selection is not published in advance, it is important to prepare responses to all, or at least all but one, of the questions listed. Multiple-choice questions provide an opportunity for you to demonstrate content mastery of important factual information presented in the textbook and lectures. One approach to preparing for this section of the examination is to develop a list of essential terms and concepts from each chapter of assigned reading. For each term, you should know basic factual information (who, what, when, where) and recognize significance (why is the term important). If you can do this, you should generally be able to answer a related multiple-choice question correctly.

In responding to an essay question, it is important to think carefully about what the question is asking and what specific thinking skills you are being asked to demonstrate. Each question tests specific thinking abilities related to learning outcomes #2-5 in the syllabus. The essay questions are not asking you to recite information from lectures or the textbooks. They are asking for *your* voice, analysis, and judgments. Thorough and accurate information from the course is very important, but a good essay is not just information. It *uses* information to develop a carefully reasoned response to a specific question and to demonstrate your abilities as an original thinker.

The other skill that you are asked to demonstrate in writing your essays is learning outcome #7: the ability to “construct well-written essays using basic academic writing conventions.” This means that grammar, spelling, legibility, and organization matter. Your essays should comprise five to eight paragraphs of a reasonable length, including a thoughtful and complete introduction and conclusion.

Most students achieve this quality of essay writing only by developing their responses outside of class before actually taking the examination. Although students are not allowed to consult notes or essay drafts during the examination, outlining your responses in detail or even writing complete essays and discussing them with your instructor obviously provides excellent preparation for doing your best on this part of the test. Writing drafts of your essays before the examination also allows you to use this study guide effectively as a resource.

**Topics**

**1. Ancient Africa, Europe, and America**

**Learning Outcome:**

Demonstrate an understanding of the international context of American history.

**Essay Question:**

The textbooks for this course begin with detailed discussions of early African, Native American, and European civilizations. Why is it important for textbooks on U.S. history to begin here? How does studying the histories of these three parts of the world help you to understand their later contributions to American history?

**Considerations:**

- origins of humans in Africa

- the rich cultures of Africa and early North America

- religious, political, and economic changes in early modern Europe

- the long-term impact of the Columbian Exchange

**2. Colonization in Early America**

**Learning Outcomes:**

Demonstrate an understanding of regional diversity and the relationship between regions in American history.

**Essay** **Question:**

Although ultimately part of a common colonial system, early English settlements in the Chesapeake region were significantly different from those of Puritan New England. What features distinguished settlements in these two regions during the seventeenth century, what did they have in common, and what was the nature of the relationship between them?

**Considerations:**

-environmental characteristics, motivations for settlement, and economic differences

-social patterns and changes in population

-the character of village life and religious beliefs

-relationships with Native Americans

-the beginnings of slavery

**Readings:** Nash, Chapter 3; Carson, Chapter 3

**3. Eighteenth-Century Colonial Society**

**Learning Outcomes:**

Analyze the impact of ideas in American history.

Demonstrate an understanding of regional diversity and the relationship between regions in American history.

**Essay Question:**

Much more than a religious revival, the Great Awakening influenced patterns of thought and behavior among many different groups in colonial America, often in unintended ways. Discuss the social and political effects of the Great Awakening, including its impact in urban New England, in the rural South, and among both white and black populations.

**Considerations:**

-the growth of thoughts and behaviors that threatened established authority

-the ability of the Great Awakening to cross regional, racial, and class divisions

-the different ways in which the religious revival was experienced by different groups

-the relationship of the Great Awakening to the Enlightenment

**Readings:** Nash, Chapter 4; Carson, Chapter 4

**4. The Revolutionary Era**

**Learning Outcome:**

Analyze the interrelationship of economic, social, cultural, and political change.

Analyze the impact of ideas in American history.

**Essay Question:**

How “revolutionary” was the American Revolution? Did the Revolution truly change social and economic relationships in American society, or did it essentially preserve them? In your discussion, include the effects of the Revolution on male and female patriots, slaves, free blacks, Loyalists, and Native Americans.

**Considerations:**

-the causes of the American Revolution and divergent understandings of its meaning

-the social groups that led the Revolution

-the participation of women in the Revolution

-the roles of slaves and free blacks on both sides of the conflict

-political changes resulting from the separation of the United States from Britain

**Readings:** Nash, Chapters 5-6; Carson, Chapter 5

**5. A Post-Revolutionary People**

**Learning Outcome:**

Analyze the historical development of the American political system, including government, the party system, and agents of political change.

Analyze the international context of American history.

**Essay Question:**

How does the U.S. Constitution reflect the political and economic atmosphere of the United States in the late eighteenth century? What domestic and international concerns prompted the Constitutional Convention of 1787, how were these addressed by the debates of the framers, and to what extent did the final document successfully meet the political challenges of the period?

**Considerations:**

-weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation

-arguments for and against strengthening the federal government

-the international vulnerability of the new nation

-sectional conflicts concerning representation and slavery

-conceptions of individual rights

**Readings:** Nash, Chapter 6; Carson Chapters 5-6

**6. Origins of the Party System**

**Learning Outcomes:**

Analyze the historical development of the American political system, including government, the party system, and agents of political change.

Analyze the international context of American history.

**Essay Question:**

Discuss the beginnings of the party system in the United States during the 1790s. What caused the formation of the Federalists and Democratic-Republicans as two opposing political parties, and how did domestic and international events shape their early history?

**Considerations:**

-major ideas and political principles of the parties

-specific social groups and interests represented by each party

-international sympathies of each party vis-à-vis the conflicts of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars

-attitudes toward commerce, expansion, and slavery

**Readings**: Nash, Chapter 7; Carson, Chapter 6