Introduction to U.S. History

Bevezetés az Amerikai Egyesült Államok történelmébe

*Course Code:* BBLAN12600

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**Purpose:** To provide a comprehensive survey of the social, political and cultural history of the United States

from the colonial times to the present. **Compulsory Texts:** Coursebook: *Outline of U.S. History,* U.S. Department of State, 2005 (available from the Institute’s homepage [https://btk.ppke.hu/uploads/articles/463213/file/Outline of US History.pdf](https://btk.ppke.hu/uploads/articles/463213/file/Outline%20of%20US%20History.pdf)); Essays from the volume *Historians on America* (ed. George Clack), U.S. Department of State (available from the Institute’s homepage <https://btk.ppke.hu/uploads/articles/463213/file/historians-on-america.pdf>); Historical Documents listed at the end of the syllabus.

**Material for the Examination: The content of the coursebook/compulsory texts and the complete material of the lectures.** There are two longer lecture sessions in your timetable (February 5 and March 12). The lectures, however, will be delivered in smaller audio-narrated pptx installments following the proposed topics below. Thus, the lecture course runs async but tackling the course material early on (starting February 5) and reading/studying in ongoing fashion is strongly recommended. Consultation time (most likely in MS Teams) will possibly be arranged in the scheduled slot of the lecture (14.15) on March 12. It is also strongly recommended to consult at least a reference volumefor the precise definition and interpretation of the compulsory concepts as well as the role and relevance of historical figures.

**Requirements**: kollokvium (see *at attendance and evaluation*)

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|  |  | Lecture Topics |
|  | | * Introduction, study goals, summary * First Encounters and Colonial America * War of Independence and the “making” of the United States; The Early Republic * Growth and Reforms in the early 19th century * Westward Movement: territorial expansion, shaping the frontier, and fight over slavery * Civil War and Reconstruction   Reading: Chapters 1-8 of textbook (pp4-187 or 1-92 of pdf format);  The US Constitution; start with the annotated Hungarian translation available on the website;  1-5 of the Historical documents listed below. Text available at <https://btk.ppke.hu/uploads/articles/463213/file/UShistory_sourcetexts_2018.pdf> |
|  | | * Assuming an international role: from the Spanish American War to Wilson’s Fourteen Points * Gilded Age, Progressivism, and the Roaring 20s * The Nation in Crises: Great Depression, New Deal, and World War II * The US in the Cold War; 1950s and 1960s: escalating interventions and changing society * From Identity Crisis of the 70s to the Reagan Revolution * Post 9/11 US: (re)Negotiating identity and international role   Reading: Chapters 9-15 of textbook (pp188-337); 6-11 of the assigned historical documents. |

Evaluation:

1. The exam questions will be based partly on the compulsory texts, partly on the material covered by the lectures.
2. Credits for the course can be earned by successfully completing a written test (55% of maximum scores) in the exam period.

**Form and Content of the Exam/Written Test:**

The exam is conducted via Unipoll with most of the questions delivered in multiple choice or T/F formats. These, however, can assume the shape and content of simple and straightforward (ie dates) OR complex and intriguing; can **test your knowledge of the most basic US history concepts**, or your ability to make finer distinctions, or your familiarity with the entire span of US history.

You will be asked to answer test questions randomly fed from a question bank for each "page". Make sure to read the instructions carefully before choosing the answer. Once you complete a page and move to the next batch of questions, you cannot return to a previous page. Incorrect answers are not penalized, you simply receive 0 point for incorrectly marked answers. You will find multiple choice and T/F questions on the first few pages. You will then have open questions: gapped sentences, short-answer, and a concept-matching and explanation task. **Open, short answer questions** will test student’s ability to match other important concepts/periods/dates/events/persons and to highlight the historical rationale of that particular match. In this section students are expected to place concepts and persons within a historical period, connect them to historical events or social developments, and point out their relevance. Eg: You find 8 concepts below. Create three relevant (logical and meaningful) pairs and point out the historical connection and relevance, as well as the date/decade. *Watergate, Rosa Parks, Federalist Papers, Alexander Hamilton, Richard Nixon, Pentagon Papers, First Amendment, Civil Rights Movement*

**The exam** **will also feature short answer or essay questions**. One will require students to answer a specific question about a historical event, whilst the essay type will ask you to briefly discuss the milestones and historical relevance of a given event/period. Eg: Briefly describe the a, Westward Movement, b, New Deal, c, Civil Rights Movement. Writing should be succinct concentrating on the key features and events. There will be space and sentence limitation.

Some questions may inquire about the information/insights you gained from the assigned essays from *Historians on America:*

“The Colonial Convention”, 9-15.

“Victory of the Common School Movement”, 22-29.

“The Sherman Anti-Trust Act”, 30-38.

“The GI Bill of Rights”, 46-54.

“Brown v Board of Education”, 62-69.

“The Immigration Act of 1965”, 76-83.

Students will also have to answer questions about one of the set historical documents or glean information from the “original texts” or excerpts provided at the exam. Compulsory historical documents downloadable from <http://btk.ppke.hu/uploads/articles/463213/file/UShistory_sourcetexts_2018.pdf>, unless specified differently here):

1. John Winthrop Dreams of a City on a Hill (1630) <http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/colliding-cultures/john-winthrop-dreams-of-a-city-on-a-hill-1630/>,
2. Declaration of Independence (July 4, 1776)
3. The Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution (1791)
4. The Emancipation Proclamation (1862)
5. Abraham Lincoln: Gettysburg Address (1863)
6. Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)
7. Woodrow Wilson: Fourteen Points Speech (January 1918)
8. Franklin D. Roosevelt: First Inaugural Address (1933)
9. *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954)
10. John F. Kennedy: Inaugural Address (1961)
11. Martin Luther King Jr: I Have a Dream (1963)
12. Ronald Reagan: Farewell Address (1989). Reagan Library,<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjECSv8KFN4>

You will have 60 minutes to complete the exam (start and finish within the 90-minute framework allocated to this particular exam).

Recommended Readings: Essentially any book on American history including the following:

* Philip Jenkins: *A History of the United States* (Palgrave/Macmillan)
* Sellers-May-McMillen: *Az Egyesült Államok története* (Maecenas)
* Magyarics-Frank: *Handouts for U.S. History* (Panem)
* Magyarics Tamás: *Az Amerikai Egyesült Államok története* (1918–2001) (Kossuth)
* Hahner Péter: *Az Egyesült Államok elnökei* (Maecenas)