Introduction to U.S. History

Bevezetés az Amerikai Egyesült Államok történelmébe

*Course Code:* BBLAN12600

Lecture Course for Part Time Students

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**Lecturer**: Balogh Beatrix

**Time and place**: Two longer class sessions: **February 23 & March 9 (Saturdays) 13.15-17.15**

 Venue: Sophianum 203

**Availability**: by appointment or via email: trixiebalogh@yahoo.com

**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); Historical Documents listed at the end of the syllabus.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 and the complete material of the lectures. **It is also strongly recommended to consult at least a reference volume** for 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*)

Given the limited time frame, the lecture course is designed to acquaint students with the major turning points of US history and to uncover the major changes and processes that have shaped the United States of America. Conventional chronological method of presenting history is occasionally replaced by thematic approaches. The required readings should invest students with the elementary terminology of history and with the skills of critically analyzing primary source texts.

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|  |  | Lecture Topics |
| Session 1February 2313.15-17.15 | * Introduction, study goals, useful tips.
* Colonial America
* War of Independence and the “making” of the United States; The Early Republic
* Westward Movement: territorial expansion, shaping the frontier, and fight over slavery
* Civil War and Reconstruction
* Imperial Thrust: Hawaii, Panama Canal and the Spanish American War

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; 1-6 of the Historical documents listed below. Text available at <https://btk.ppke.hu/uploads/articles/463213/file/UShistory_sourcetexts_2018.pdf> |
| Session 2March 913.15-17.15 | * Assuming an international role: from the Spanish American War to Wilson’s Fourteen Points
* Gilded Age, Progressivism, and the Roaring 20s; Great Depression and New Deal
* World War II and the origins of Cold War Rivalry
* 1950s and 1960s: escalating interventions and changing society
* Diplomacy from Détente to the collapse of the Berlin Wall
* Post 9/11 US: (re)Negotiating identity and international role

Reading: Chapters 9-15 of textbook (pp188-337); 7-12 of the assigned historical documents. |

Attendance and evaluation:

1. It is a survey course advertised to Part Time (correspondence) students. Attending the sessions is highly recommended. Lectures will discuss not only the key events, persons, documents and historical developments but will also point out their relevance to US culture, society, and politics today.
2. Compulsory texts should be reviewed preferably before the class sessions so that students can make a full advantage of the otherwise limited contact hours.
3. The exam questions will be based partly on the compulsory texts, partly on the material covered by the lectures.
4. 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 Examination will consist of **4 parts**. **The First Part (Essentials, or the Basics of US History)** will test students’ ability to accurately define and date seminal events, concepts and persons. This means that definitions should include not only “dates and deeds” but also significance, implications (i.e. shaping an important period of US history), or symbolic value (often used as reference points/historical, social, political shortcuts). Test questions in this section may include short written definitions, multiple choice questions, gapped sentences, or reading a thematic historical map. Essentials include 30 dates and events, 12 persons, and 20 concepts. Lists will be provided in class.

**The Second Part** 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 Third Part** will feature two short essay questions. One will require students to briefly discuss the milestones and historical relevance of a given (chosen from given options) period/movement. 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.

The second short writing should summarize (main theme, key findings, relevance) one of 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.

In the **Fourth Part**, students will have to answer questions about one of the set historical documents and glean information from the “original texts” or excerpts provided at the exam. Compulsory historical documents:

1. Declaration of Independence (July 4, 1776)

2. The Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution (1791)

3. Abraham Lincoln: First Inaugural Address (1861)

4. The Emancipation Proclamation (1862)

5. Abraham Lincoln: Gettysburg Address (1863)

6. The Reconstruction Amendments (1865–1870)

7. Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)

8. Woodrow Wilson: Fourteen Points Speech (January 1918)

9. Franklin D. Roosevelt: First Inaugural Address (1933)

10. *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954)

11. John F. Kennedy: Inaugural Address (1961)

12. Martin Luther King Jr: I Have a Dream (1963)

Recommended Readings: Essentially any book on American history available in public libraries (e.g. Szabó Ervin Library) including the following:

* Philip Jenkins: *A History of the United States* (Palgrave/Macmillan)
* Tindall–Shi: *America: A Narrative History* (Norton)
* 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)