

**HIS 103**  
**American History to 1877**

Satisfies: DIV, SBS, USA [DEC: F&4]

MW, 12:00-12:53pm

Professor Paul Kelton

This course examines key themes in American history from the pre-contact and colonial eras to the founding and expansion of the United States through the Civil War and its aftermath. We'll explore a wide range of subjects including: cross-cultural encounters and conflicts among Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans; settler-colonialism and the dispossession of Native peoples; the rise of capitalism, industrialization, and changing labor systems (including slavery, indentured servitude, and wage-based); major cultural, religious, and social reform movements; competing political ideologies, including the roots of revolution, democratization, and sectionalism; and, changing historical constructions of race, ethnicity, class, and gender. We will also consider why historians continue to offer new interpretations of American history—by questioning the assumptions, biases, and silences in traditional narratives, revisiting old sources and gathering new evidence, and bringing more diverse perspectives into view. Readings include an interesting mix of works by historians and primary sources written by people in the past. Sections are designed to complement, reinforce, and build on materials covered in lectures and assigned readings. Grading will be based upon attendance at lectures and sections, class participation (including section activities, discussions, and in-class writing exercises designed to assess comprehension of assigned readings), midterm, and final exam.