

**J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College  
Course Content Summary**

**Course Prefix and Number:** HIS 121    **Credits:** 3

**Course Title:** United States History to 1877

**Course Description:**

Introduces the history of the United States from its origins to 1877. Includes the European exploration, development of the American colonies and their institutions, the Revolution, major political, social and economic developments, geographical expansion, the Civil War, and Reconstruction. This is a Passport and UCGS transfer course. Lecture 3 hours. Total 3 hours per week. 3 credits

**General Course Purpose:**

HIS 121 surveys the general history of the United States from the pre-Columbian period through 1877. This course allows students to reach a basic understanding of the early historical development of the United States through a combination of educational methods including lecture, document analysis, and historical methodology. Students will learn about the important political, economic, social, intellectual, cultural and religious changes that shaped the development of the United States. These changes will be considered from the perspectives of the multiple and diverse historical groups of people driving them and affected by them.

**Course Prerequisites/Corequisites:**

None

**Course Objectives:**

Upon completing the course, the student will be able to:

Written/Oral Communication

- Explain the changing social, cultural, economic, and political structures and development of the United States from pre-Columbian times through Reconstruction through written activities and/or oral presentations/discussion.
- Describe the key events, developments, and people from pre-Columbian times through the Reconstruction through written activities and/or oral presentations/discussion.

Critical Thinking

- Analyze and evaluate primary and secondary sources dealing with American history through Reconstruction and draw conclusions regarding their impact on the history of that time.
- Differentiate between fact, inference, and opinion as pertaining to American history through 1877.

Quantitative/Graphic Analysis

- Analyze numerical data, graphs, and maps as they pertain to understanding the development of events and trends throughout American history through Reconstruction.

Before First Contact: Suggested Context Native American Societies, European Culture, West African Culture





- Explain how CSA committed treason against the United States.
- Identify the key military actions of the Civil War and their effect.
- Discuss the impact of political activities and the home front on the outcome of the Civil War.
- Discuss how minorities, women, American Blacks, native Americans, aided in the Civil War on both sides.
- Explain the events that brought an end to the Civil War.

Reconstruction: Suggested Context - Emancipation, Presidential Reconstruction, Congressional (Radical) Reconstruction, The Unofficial and Official Ends of Reconstruction

- Analyze the diverse meanings of freedom between African Americans and Anglo Americans and how each group sought to shape the emancipation experience.
- Explain the need for the Freedmen's Bureau.
- Articulate what the black codes meant for freed people.
- Describe the actions of the national and Southern state governments
  - Explain the changes Congressional (Radical) Reconstruction brought.
  - Discuss the ways in which Reconstruction ended (both unofficially and officially).

**Major Topics to be Included:**

- **Before First Contact:** Native American Societies, European Culture
- **First Contact:** Fifteenth and Sixteenth-century contact between Europe, East Asia, and the Americas; The Columbian Exchange; The American Renaissance