United States to 1865 Teaching Field Comprehensive Exam Reading List
Michael J. Jarvis (updated 10/14)

This list of books provides a basic grounding in early American and Antebellum U.S. history, circa 1500 to 1865. It is by no means comprehensive. Students are strongly encouraged to develop topical and temporal specialties within the expansive period that this field covers. A modest number of appropriate book substitutions (with my advanced permission) may also be made. Note that my conception of “early America” expands well beyond a colonial prehistory of what became the United States to encompass hemispheric, transnational, multicultural, and Atlantic approaches toward America’s past. Alan Taylor’s *American Colonies* and Donald Meinig’s *Atlantic America* provide good introductions to this more geographically expansive vision of early America prior to 1776. Students taking this exam field with me are strongly encouraged to TA for or audit U.S. survey I (HIS 160) or my Early America (HIS 162) and Democratic America (HIS 164) courses to help prepare.

Books


Nancy Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood* (New Haven, 1979)

William Cronon, *Changes in the Land* (New York, 1983)


James Horn, *Adapting to a New World: English Society in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake* (Chapel Hill, 1994)

Paul Johnson, *A Shopkeeper’s Millennium* (New York, 1979)


Drew McCoy, *The Elusive Republic* (Chapel Hill, 1980)

John McCusker and Russell Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill, 1985)

Forrest McDonald, *Novus Ordo Seculorum: The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution* (Lawrence, 1985)


Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War* (Chapel Hill, 1979)


David Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America* (Chapel Hill, 1997)


Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (New York, 1999)


Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812 (New York, 1990)

Daniel Vickers, Farmers and Fishermen: Two Centuries of Work in Essex County, Massachusetts, 1630-1830 (Chapel Hill, 1994)


Peter Wood, Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina (New York, 1974)

Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South (Oxford, 1982)

Articles

David Armitage, A Three Concepts of Atlantic History, in David Armitage and Michael Braddick, eds., The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800 (New York, 2002)


Nicholas Canny, “The Ideology of English Colonization: From Ireland to America,” William and Mary Quarterly XXX (1973), 575-598


Alison Games, A Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities, American Historical Review CXI (2006), 741B757


Jesse Lemische, “Jack Tar in the Streets,” William and Mary Quarterly 3rd ser.,


Neal Salisbury, “The Indians’ Old World: Native Americans and the Coming of Europeans,” William and Mary Quarterly LIII (1996), 435-458


Primary Sources

The Declaration of Independence (1776) and U.S. Constitution (1787)

Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave (1845)

Olaudah Equiano, Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African (1789), ed. Vincent Caretta (New York, 1995)

George Fitzhugh, Cannibals All!, Or Slaves Without Masters (1856)

Benjamin Franklin, Autobiography (1771 et. seq.)

Richard Hakluyt, “A Discourse Concerning Western Planting” (1584)

Alexander Hamilton, “Report on Manufactures” (1791)

Harriet Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (1860)
Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787)

British Navigation Acts of 1651, 1660, and 1696

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1776)
She taught onsite at several colleges and universities in the Los Angeles area, including Los Angeles City College and Pasadena City College, specializing in Modern U.S. History and Early World History. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. It's never too early to start studying for the CLEP History of the United States II exam; the earlier you begin, the more time you will have to sharpen your skills. Do not procrastinate! Listed below are ways to help you become accustomed to the CLEP CBT, some of which may be applied to other computer-based standardized tests as well. Know the format of the CBT. Read all of the possible answers. Just because you think you have found the correct response, do not automatically assume that it is the best answer. The exam covers the period of United States history from the end of the Civil War to the present, with the majority of the questions being on the twentieth century. The exam contains approximately 120 questions to be answered in 90 minutes. Some of these are pretest questions that will not be scored. Any time test takers spend on tutorials and providing personal information is in addition to the actual testing time. Knowledge and Skills Required. Questions on the History of the United States II exam require test takers to demonstrate one or more of the following abilities. Identify and describ