



# Building Undergraduate Courses: American History

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## Background

The purpose of this project was to construct the syllabus for an undergraduate US History course. This means that this project was less focused on original research and more focused on collecting existing research and synthesizing it in a new way. The goal in designing the course was to create a US History course that looks at traditional course material in a new light. Therefore, the readings for each week of the course were chosen to reflect the growing emphasis on intersectionality in historical research and to encourage students to think about US History in a way that might be different than what they have previously been taught.

## Example Syllabus Weeks

### Week 2: Europe and the Americas

- Reading 1: Colonial Origins and Colonial Transformations in Spanish America pages 3-9
- Reading 2: Women, Property and Law in the Anglo-American World, 1630-1700 pages 537-564
- Reading 3: Food Choice and Social Identity in Early Colonial New Mexico pages 223-236 and 239-246
- Textbook: Chapter 3: Initial Contact and Conquest
- Quiz 1

### Week 4: The New England and Middle Colonies

- Reading 1: Mary Occom and Sarah Simon: Gender and Native Literacy in Colonial New England pages 387-401 and 410-412
- Reading 2: A Safe Haven for Witches? Colonial New York's Politics and Relations with New England in the 1690s pages 37-57
- Reading 3: Repairing the Breach pages 382-403 and 411-417
- Textbook: Chapter 5: English Colonization After 1660
- Quiz 2
- Essay 1

## Locate Readings

## Read and Summarize

## Create Syllabus

I found three readings (articles for the students) and a book (for the instructor) for each syllabus week. I found the articles via JSTOR, and the book through Strozier Library.

After I found each of the readings, I read and annotated them thoroughly and then provided a summary of each reading in an annotated bibliography format.

After outlining as many weeks of the course as possible, I created an actual syllabus outline and schedule.

## Conclusion

This course was designed to focus on intersectionality in history and to provide students with new ways of learning about important events and ideas in American history. This is a new focus emerging in the field, and one that newer history classes should certainly take advantage of. Future discussion around building American history courses should focus on how emerging research can be brought into classrooms to diversify the perspectives to which undergraduate students are exposed.

## References

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