This course offers an interpretative overview of United States history from the eve of the European invasion of North America through the Civil War and Reconstruction – a period of more than four hundred years. No single course can offer an exhaustive history of this period, and this one will not even attempt to do so. Instead, we will focus on the hopes and dreams of some Americans to build a "city upon the hill," "to form a more perfect union," or to fulfill their "manifest destiny" while others struggled either to be included in these ideals or to create a future of their own making. In doing so, we will pay particular attention to agency (peoples' ability to shape, within constraints, their own histories), diversity (a condition of North American society from the very beginning), and the triumvirate of gender, race, and class (each of which is a historical and cultural construct that changes over place and time). Our goal is see this history from a variety of perspectives, as there is no single story of the U.S.

We will explore U.S. history not only as collectivities of lived experiences (i.e., what happened, where, when, and how) but also as a matter of interpretations and perspectives. The pedagogical focus will be on historical explanation and interpretation rather than memorization of names, dates, and places (that's what reference books are for). Our objective is to understand not only what happened but, more importantly, why it happened. To this end, we will employ a variety of analytical methods and consider a wide range of scholarly interpretations. My hope is that you will leave this class with an understanding of how historians interpret and analyze the past as well as an increased ability to undertake that interpretation and analysis yourself.

**Course Perquisites:** none

**Required Text**
- M. McLaurin, *Celia, a Slave*
- Sarah Vowell, *The Wordy Shipmates*
- Alfred Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution*

You should complete all assigned readings for each week before your tutorial meeting.

**Course Evaluation**
- 25% midterm (October 26)
- 20% reading responses
- 25% Tutorial Participation
- 30% Final Paper