Development of the U.S. I  
512:103-14  
Harry Furman

This Saturday course is a chronological survey of the formation and development of the United States through the period of Reconstruction (1877). As a whirlwind introduction to American history, it will include such themes as;

1. the “discovery” of “America” and the encounter with natives from Pocahontas to Sitting Bull
2. Puritan/Pilgrim belief and conflict- defining authority, the “city upon a hill” and witch trials in the wilderness
3. the development and impact of slavery and differing interpretations of “freedom”
4. American conceptions of frontier, nature, the West, manifest destiny and exceptionalism
5. The American Revolution (conservative, liberal, radical?)
6. the creation of a republic of virtue under the Constitution: the process of nation building
7. the rise of popular culture: Barnum, confidence men and the great orators
8. 19th century reform and social control-abolition, temperance, women’s rights, prisons, asylums and schools
9. the meaning of “social construction”- poverty, character and disease in the early republic
10. the origins and waging of the Civil War
11. Washington, Lincoln and the construction of public memory and history
12. Reconstruction and the road to Jim Crow

We will consider the impact of events and choices in American history through the prism of race, class, gender, law and faith. Throughout the course, we will explore the lives and experiences of well-known and ordinary women, men, blacks, immigrants, natives and others by reading and analyzing sources including primary documents, art, poetry, literature, film and music.

Texts: (subject to revision)