

The Study of American History in Our Universities

National Commission Report

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Teaching American History in Our Colleges and Universities

Nobody can deny that there is a crisis in civic education in our nation today. This report spotlights the stark and worrisome contrast between the topics most civically involved Americans would expect in an introductory survey course on American history and what many professors have decided to teach instead. Indeed, this report's detailed analysis reveals the extent of the problem. Compiled data displays how higher education perpetuates this problem through ignorance.

A report released in 2022 by the National Assessment of Educational Progress revealed the severity of the crisis. The report found that only 13 percent of students tested showed proficiency in American history and only 22 percent of students scored proficient in American civics. Put another way, 40 percent of students fell below the expected, basic level of knowledge in U.S. History. These scores show a continuing slide in our civic knowledge, as these scores were compared with assessments of eighth graders in 2018, which were already low. Four years ago, this was a matter of concern for all Americans; this continued decline should raise a code-red. Understanding our nation's past, its unique role in creating the first constitutional republic in history, and why our unique experience has inspired people across the globe, is essential for our next generation of leaders and citizens.

American colleges and universities are being forced to become centers of remedial learning, but they are failing to provide basic facts of American history and civics to their students.

This report, produced from a year-long research project conducted by the Center of American Institutions at Arizona State University, shows that many teachers of introductory American history courses simply are not conveying foundational knowledge to their students. Instead, a heavy emphasis rests on racial, ethnic, and gender identity, usually to the detriment of a comprehensive and necessary knowledge of our nation's past. These professors' choices stoke the flames of personal grievance and identity politics, speeding up the erosion of our civic culture when they should instead be working to mend it.

This report would not have been possible without visiting scholar Professor Paula Baker of Ohio State University; Program Manager Roxane Barwick; Associate Director of the Center for American Institutions Professor Jonathan Barth; businessman Dean Riesen; Claire Christensen from the office of the Honorable Newt Gingrich, along with our team of student researchers and numerous supportive community members.

This is the first "State of Health" commission report issued by the Center for American Institutions. The second "State of the Health" commission report on "Civic Education in the Military" will be released Spring 2024.

These reports do more than gather objective data about the current state of the health of our institutions. These reports offer concrete and realizable recommendations for restoring and strengthening our failing institutions. Through these reports, the center fulfills its mission to foster and renew foundational institutions including civic, religious, educational, legal, military, financial, political, and family. At the same time, the Center for American Institutions is involved in undergraduate programming, high school leadership training, public affairs scholarly research, and public outreach.

Step-by-step, the Center for American Institutions commits itself to genuine renewal, reinvigoration, and reform of the foundations of American democracy.



Donald Critchlow

Donald T. Critchlow
Director, Center for American Institutions

Executive Summary



Executive Summary

The National Commission on the Teaching of American History in Our Universities, chaired by Governor Scott Walker, concludes that college students are not receiving in their introductory courses the information and knowledge necessary for good citizenship in our nation.

Our extensive research reveals that instructors in American history survey courses overemphasize racial, ethnic, and gender identity, most often to the detriment of a well-balanced and comprehensive understanding of our nation's past.

Many teachers of the introductory American history courses simply gloss over our vibrant religious, economic, and political history. At the same time, implicit and explicit bias is shown toward concepts of progress, the advantages of a free-market economy, and American prosperity. Economic, social, and political progress unique to our nation is ignored or dismissed, and America is often presented as a nation in decline.

To address problems found in the findings of the year-long research project, the Commission puts forth two sets of recommendations: A first set offering reforms within existing university structures and a second set proposing significant restructuring of our higher educational disciplinary structures and faculty appointments. The first set of recommendations proposes measures to extend educational transparency and foster greater intellectual diversity. The second set of recommendations proposes the restructuring of department faculties through the creation of new interdisciplinary degree programs that are taught by contractual faculty and are evaluated periodically on strict performance of teaching and research outcomes. Placing faculty on periodic contracts entails the gradual abolition of the tenure system, while still protecting academic freedom. We believe that academic freedom can be protected without an antiquated tenure system.

In a year-long research project, the commission surveyed syllabi for introductory courses in American history. Collection and analysis of syllabi were divided into the first and second halves of introductory courses: "Introduction to American History, Settlement to 1877" and "Introduction to American History, 1877-present" (starting and ending dates vary depending on university requirements and instructor preference). This report includes separate data from each half of American history.

We acknowledge that course syllabi do not include every detail covered in a course; syllabi highlight the prioritized topics and major themes of the course. Syllabi direct students to what is most important to pay attention to in their study. The absence of foundational topics and principles found in the great majority of syllabi indicate a serious problem in the education of our college youth today.

Both halves of introduction to American history serve as first-impression courses that provide surveys of American history to students. The second half of this course is weighted towards modern and contemporary American history, providing instructors with greater opportunities to frame events and themes within a presentist perspective. A presentist framework consists of an objective to examine history through the lens of contemporary American politics and norms.

To capture accurately how both halves of the survey are presented in classes, the report analyzed separately syllabi for each half of introductory American history courses. Every syllabus publicly available for both halves was collected and analyzed. Included in this survey were syllabi from large and small institutions, public and private schools.

Topics were coded as 'institutional' or "identity-based," but the coding decisions for both halves of introductory American History courses are not relevant for the descriptive statistics or regression analysis presented in the report.

Our research reveals the following:

- The use of identity-focused terms (e.g., "white supremacy," "diversity," "equity") are pervasive in introductory courses in American history.
- Identity-focused themes are found across syllabi at public and private, large and small universities.
- An emphasis is placed on identity-focused topics (e.g., race, gender, sexuality, and sexual identity).
- Anti-market bias is expressed through an emphasis on exploitation and oppression of workers, derision of consumerism, and persistence of inequity without an examination of actual economic data.
- Decline vis-à-vis progress provides a major theme or implicit understanding of American history, as presented by college instructors, especially in the second half of introductory American history courses.

Our research shows that little or, in some courses, no attention was given to traditional and foundational topics including the following:

- The contents of the Constitution, including federalism and fundamental American institutions, and its drafting
- The Industrial Revolution
- The democratization of American politics, including the expansion of suffrage to women and minorities along with party formation
- The role of religion in
 - our Founding documents
 - the abolition of slavery
 - women’s suffrage
 - temperance
 - the Civil Rights Movement
- Tariff and banking controversies

This lack of coverage of core topics and instructor bias is of particular concern because survey courses in American history are required in many universities to fulfill General Education requirements or requirements for Education majors who will be the teachers of tomorrow.

The neglected topics were once commonly taught in introduction to American history courses, not in a celebratory or propagandistic way, but as an obligation for instructors to provide civic knowledge to students and to engage students in the complexities of American history.

Members and researchers of the National Commission on the Teaching of American History are committed fully to academic freedom in the classroom. Instructors have academic freedom to teach their courses in ways they consider appropriate. At the same time, they have an academic and civic responsibility to present the complexity of history and to emphasize

founding principles and historical events that extend beyond a limited perspective of race, gender, and colonization. Our panelists understand that totalitarian systems require the falsification or erasing of historical events, persons, and social classes. At the same time, authoritarian systems entail the need to paint history in black-and-white tones.

One of the great virtues of studying and teaching history in a democracy is the ability and capacity to criticize the past. Progress in a democracy comes through historical and contemporary criticism. At the same time, democracy, if it is to thrive and endure, needs well-educated citizens and leaders who understand foundational principles, the origins and nature of citizen rights, and knowledge of basic institutions within the democracy.

Commission Recommendations

Recommendations within the existing college and university system are as follows:

Educational Transparency

Education within a democracy is strengthened through transparency. Academic freedom precludes legislatures or boards of regents from dictating specific curricula in college classrooms. Such intervention opens the door to willful ideological imposition.

State legislators and boards of regents, however, can enact an “Educational Transparency Act” or mandate that requires each academic unit within a college or university to provide easy-to-find links on the first page of their webpages that list the following:

- 1)** syllabi of courses being taught by that unit that term;
- 2)** approximate student enrollments and majors for that term;
- 3)** student enrollments per faculty or affiliated faculty for the term;
- 4)** publication of faculty meeting minutes (with the exception of person-specific matters);
- 5)** faculty and upper administration announcements;
- 6)** a two-year report of occupational outcomes for majors.

Intellectual Diversity

Within a faculty governance system and hiring process, imposing “intellectual diversity” is difficult. Faculty are hired based on areas of study, often with qualifying requirements that exclude other potentially good candidates. For example, a job announcement might invite applications from scholars of “Modern American History” with expertise in social protest in the 1960s. These stated preferences naturally exclude other qualified candidates able to teach in the area.

Upper administrations and deans should insist on faculty searches with broad areas of expertise not restricted to candidates focused solely on racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, or gender identity. For example, appointments can be made for presidential scholars, economic and business historians, military, and diplomatic historians. Such appointments will not exclude those scholars focused on race or gender but provide an opportunity for more intellectually diverse hires. State legislatures funding state universities and boards of regents can establish broad outlines for faculty appointments without subverting faculty governance.

Recommendations for Restructuring Our Colleges and University Systems include the following:

Reimagining the Curriculum through Interdisciplinary Departments

The modern university was created in the late 19th century and evolved into its present form throughout the 20th century. Instruction was offered through a departmental and college structure based on highly specialized faculties with research degrees in disciplinary subjects such as history, political science, sociology, literature, foreign languages, and others. Colleges were organized around the social sciences, humanities, sciences, engineering, and business.


The National Commission recommends the reimagining of disciplines particularly in the humanities and social sciences. This can be accomplished by combining and integrating existing programs. In addition, new interdisciplinary departments can be created and focused on more inclusive and expansive curriculum to provide students with access to broader knowledge, opportunities to engage in critical thinking, and better preparation for a changing world transformed by technology and science.

Regarding civic education – a problem documented in this report – the Commission recommends the establishment of new interdisciplinary degree programs allows the possibility of greater opportunities for civic education. The new interdisciplinary degree programs will be taught by a mix of relevant faculty drawn from the humanities, social sciences, business, and sciences. Curriculum within the degree programs will be developed within the university and can begin on an experimental basis.

The incorporating of teaching faculty from various disciplines creates a climate more welcoming to intellectual diversity.

Teachers should be evaluated solely on teaching and research outcomes, as determined within the university.

We recommend also that these hires as well as renewals and reappointments be made without candidates having to submit diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) statements. Some states, notably Florida, have banned such statements as they function as political tests.



New interdisciplinary departments can be created and **focused on more inclusive and expansive curriculum** to provide students with access to broader knowledge, opportunities to engage in critical thinking, and better preparation for a changing world transformed by technology and science.

Why Civic Education Is Essential



Why Civic Education Is Essential

Commission members believe these recommendations are essential because civic education is critical to the nation for the following reasons:

- The U.S. survey course provides basic material necessary for citizenship education.
- These courses should explore topics such as the Constitution, federalism, economic expansion, and democratization that are essential background for making sense of current politics and becoming an informed voter. These courses should introduce students to debates about the meaning of America. While few colleges and universities now require such courses, they are often required of students who are gaining credentials for high school teaching, and therefore shape the content of high school courses.

The commission posits the following:

- 1)** A common story about the unique creation of the American republic leads to a common vision for the future, making political activity more productive and less polarized.
- 2)** Students enrolled in these introductory U.S. history survey courses need to understand the nature of our constitutional republic based on a system of checks and balances between the three branches of government, and a federal system in which power and sovereignty are dispersed between states and the federal government. This system provides maximum liberty and safety to individual rights.

Without the proper understanding of the compromises made, and why, in the development of our Constitution a person will have less respect for our institutions and be much more open to radical change of the system and anti-social behavior.

- 3)** A sole focus on identity-related themes produces more divisiveness within our society. This is not to argue that identity themes should be necessarily excluded in these courses – this is a matter of academic freedom. Instructors, however, should be obligated to provide students a fuller understanding of the entirety of American history, both in themes and topics covered.

Current Practices Inhibit Student Critical Thinking Skills

Our research shows two major problems in the way introduction to U.S. history is being taught in many of our classrooms: 1) misleading or false narratives of our history presented in the classroom; and 2) a presentist mindset that filters American history through current problems.

This approach to American history prevents students from developing critical skills necessary for an engaged citizenry in a democracy. More importantly, by presenting false or misleading and filtered narratives in which students learn only of the injustices committed in the nation's past, these courses intentionally or unintentionally undermine confidence and trust in our institutions. A critical understanding of our foundational institutions is essential to a democratic nation.

Most instructors declare that one of the objectives of their courses is to develop student "critical thinking" skills. Yet, opportunities for critical engagement are limited by required course readings, lecture topics, and course themes outlined in syllabi. The uniformity of themes that focus on identity and social justice (narrowly defined) found in introductory American history courses reflects the general state of the American history profession today, which is more concerned about present social problems than the complexities of the past. In this way, the teaching and study of history becomes only an instrument for social change.

As a result, a false narrative is presented to students: that their nation solely neglected slaves, women, Native Americans, or other minorities, instead of including any discussion of political and social advancement of these groups over time. Course topics found in syllabi exclude positive achievements within a young nation and a nation that matured following the Civil War.

Alternative views are excluded in course themes and weekly topics. Many introductory courses no longer assign textbooks. When textbooks are assigned, these textbooks are open-sourced digital sources such as *The American Yawp*, a source limited in depth and accuracy. Some instructors rely on primary-source materials, often restricted to support the views of the instructors. Some instructors require the students to watch or listen to podcasts from explicitly progressive websites.

Specific themes emerge consistently within the syllabi reviewed in this study. Themes emphasized with striking uniformity in the syllabi found a consistency of themes, often combined, can be categorized as follows:

- Inequality and Exclusion
- Conquest and Imperialism
- Gender and Masculine Toxicity
- Violence as Endemic to White European Culture
- National Decline

Presentism in Scholarship and Teaching

Intellectual diversity provides students opportunities to engage in active debate and discussion. This is the foundation of a good education and for an informed citizenry.

Introductory history courses, if they are to fulfill the promise of developing critical thinking skills, need to provide students with material that allows them to understand the foundational principles of a constitutional republic and to participate in civic life as informed citizens. In addition, introductory courses need to present students with course materials through lecture, discussion, and readings that extend their knowledge of American history to allow for critical engagement beyond just “identity” defined in contemporary terms. According to professors, students should not be allowed to see American history beyond a lens of just the failure of America ideals to be fulfilled and a nation in present decline.

A presentist mindset, which communicates that the primary mission of the study of history is the correction of today’s social problems, pervades much of the historical profession today. A firestorm erupted within the American Historical Association (AHA) in August 2022 when the president of the AHA, Professor James H. Sweet, lamented in the organization’s newsletter the “trend toward presentism” and the politicization of scholarship. Professor Sweet, a recognized scholar of African history, wrote “The allure of political relevance, facilitated by social and other media,” has encouraged “a predictable sameness” that skews the complexity of the past.

His column unleashed a firestorm of criticism within the professoriate. Critics charged him with racial insensitivity. In response, he offered a public apology for questioning the presentist mind set of historical scholarship.

In the most recent annual meeting of the AHA, held in Philadelphia in January 2023, a five-person panel was convened the opening night of the conference to discuss the presentist approach within the profession today. As the *New York Times* (January 9, 2023) reported, “the panel was short on pointed disagreement, but long on juxtaposition.” A panelist teaching at a major Midwestern public university declared that since its inception in the 19th century, the historical profession has done “the work of injustice,” bolstering empire, colonization, and subjugation with “apologetics for those movements.” Other panelists echoed this sentiment for the necessity of social justice and grievance identity politics to form the basis of the study, and presumably the teaching of history. A panelist from an elite private university argued that the “cause of justice” needs to be “deeply tied to the work of history.” The panelists lamented, as one said, that just when the call for racial justice is reshaping the country, “these kinds of concerns, these kinds of imaginings are suddenly questionable.”

Scholars suggesting greater complexity in the study and teaching of American history have come under attack. The controversy over the “1619 Project” presents a case in point. When leading scholars in American history challenged the factual basis that a “slavocracy” was codified in the U.S. Constitution, they found themselves as the apparent minority within the profession.

The present-mindedness of the American history profession is further revealed in the Organization of American Historians annual conference in 2023. A survey of panels presented at the conference shows the emphasis placed on identity themes related to race, gender, and sexuality.

Of the panels listed in the program for the Annual Conference for the Organization of American Historians Conference held in Los Angeles, March 30 to April 2, the Commission counted how many topics were identity dominated. There was a total of 178 panels for the three-day conference. Ninety-three (93) of the one hundred and seventy-eight (178) panels were devoted to identity themes. A day-by-day breakdown of these panels is as follows:

Topic / Day	Thursday, March 30	Friday, April 1	Saturday, April 2
Gender	2	5	1
Race	12	15	21
LGBTQIA+	0	2	4
Intersectional	10	4	17
Total Panels	47	54	77
Identity-focused	51 percent	48 percent	56 percent

The presentist mindset is reflected in the teaching of American history in colleges and universities today.

The Commission’s extensive survey of course syllabi for the first half and second half of introductory American history courses show an overwhelming, and consistent, emphasis on identity, oppression of minorities, and negative aspects of American history.

Decline of History Courses as part of General Education Requirements

Many universities and colleges have dropped or substituted history as a field to fulfill General Education requirements.

A study by the American Historical Association in December 2020 showed that the long-standing introductory courses in Western or World History and U.S. History have been dropped by many universities as a General Education requirement. The American Historical Association concluded that “In many places, the humanities are conflated with the arts and seen as teaching self-understanding, empathy, and expression through textual analysis”¹.

The U.S. Department of Education reported that for the 2018-19 academic year the number of bachelor’s degrees awarded in history, teacher education, and historic preservation and conservation fell to 23,928: *a decline by more than one third from 2012*. This was the smallest number awarded since the late 1980s.

From 2012 to 2018, numbers of awarded bachelor’s degrees in history fell at an annual rate of over seven (7) percent. From academic year 2009-10 to 2019-20, history as a major declined thirty-five (35) percent. History is the only major to see consecutive declines over twenty years. As of 2019-20, when the Department of Education conducted its study, history conferred the fewest degrees in the Social Science fields recorded.

Placed in a broader perspective, history and related fields such as public history, historic preservation, and archival and museum programs as majors declined by fifty (50) percent in the last 20 years.

Those entering college as undergraduates fell by more than 650,000 students in a single year, over four (4) percent from 2021 to 2022. Over the last decade undergraduate enrollment has fallen fourteen (14) percent. The U.S. population increased in this same period by approximately 2 million a year.

Especially notable is that men accounted for 71 percent of the shortfall of students. Women now constitute almost 60 percent of college students. For both men and women entering college, many will be vocationally oriented but also reluctant to hear incessantly about toxicity in American history.

¹ Jones, Norm (2020, December 21). The Complex Roles of History Courses in General Education. <https://www.historians.org/research-and-publications/perspectives-on-history/january-2021/core-of-the-matter-the-complex-roles-of-history-courses-in-general-education>

Research Methodology

Objective analysis was provided through a survey of thirty-six (36) syllabi for the first half of introduction to American history from settlement to 1877, and thirty-nine (39) syllabi for the second half of introduction to American history from 1877 to the present.

These syllabi were accessible online to the public. The sample provides a means to provide a qualitative and quantitative analysis. Syllabi for the first half of the introductory courses were chosen from the top ranked 150 universities in a 2022 survey by *U.S. News & World Report*. For analysis of the second half of introductory courses, we expanded our research parameters to include more public universities.

With hundreds of introductory courses to American history taught across the country in any given year, the lack of public transparency in higher education is indicated in that only thirty-six syllabi could be found online after an exhaustive search.

To protect their privacy and academic freedom, the names of instructors, institutional affiliations, and courses are not specified in this report. Ohio State University and Arizona State University were excluded from this sample to ensure research integrity. The director of research for this project is a tenured faculty member at Ohio State University and the research team was located at Arizona State University. A determination was made at the outset of this project to exclude these two institutions from the study to prevent a conflict of interest.

In addition, in the detailed syllabi narratives, only a few syllabi are quoted more than once. This ensures that this report precluded cherry picking from a few syllabi as representative of the entire sample. If anything, the examples of syllabi quoted in the report do not fully capture the extensive bias found in the syllabi.

Part I: **“Introduction to American History from Settlement to 1877”**



Detailed Narrative of Syllabi of American History to 1877

Inequality

A consistent theme taught in many introductory courses is the persistence of social, political, and social inequality in America. Students are directed to see inequality as unchanging. Indeed, “inequality” is a stated “Learning Objective” for many courses.

An instructor at the leading state university in a Western state declares in “Learning Objectives” that students will “Demonstrate knowledge of history of diverse and persistently marginalized cultural groups in U.S. History.”

One syllabus at a major state university in the Midwest announces that the purpose of the class is to help students “grasp how inequality was woven into the nation’s very constitution” and how “democracy unfolded in an era marked by colonialism, revolution, social and economic stratification, and war.”

At a private university in the East, students are invited in the second week of the class to engage in the question, “What creates systemic inequalities in society?” Ignored is any discussion of the meaning or aspiration of political liberty or equality before the law. This aspiration is not discussed as either failure or limited success but ignored again and again in course topics and goals.

At a prominent private university in the Midwest, the instructor for the introductory American history course states that the major goal of the course is to enable students at the end of the course to “[s]ee how race and racism is snarled in every part of U.S. history.”

Another instructor at a large state university in the South presents American history as a persistent tale of unchanging inequity. Works by Howard Zinn, a noted leftwing historian, are assigned as the major reading for this course. Extra credit is given for reading brief reviews of essays such as “The Poor, Vicious and Infirm” and “I Am Disabled and Must Do Something Else Besides Hard Labor” from an edited collection, in *A Disability History of the United States*.

Conquest and Imperialism

White European conquest is presented as a major focus for exploring American history, with instructors spending an average of 4.5 class periods on the pre-Columbian/Settlement era.

An instructor at an Eastern university explains this focus as showing that “The American nation was created through warfare, slavery, and territorial expansion.” At the same university, an instructor teaching another section of the introductory course informs the class that “We will spend considerable time learning about major themes that trouble the present-day, including the expropriation of Native American lands; the entwined histories of race, slavery, and freedom; the creation and recreation of gendered economic, political, social relations; and the rise of capitalism.”

Colonization and imperialism offer a venue for many instructors: at one of the most prestigious state universities in the South, the first three weeks are devoted to “ecological imperialism” and “cultural imperialism.”

In another course at a premier state university on the West Coast, students are asked to explore three major themes: “First, indigenous people created thriving societies linked by trade, diplomacy, and technological exchange. Second, Europeans ‘discovered’ America, forcing them and Indigenous Americans to re-evaluate world geography and human history. Third, the invasion created a ‘new world’ for all people living in America.”

Gender and Masculine Toxicity

Oppression of women and masculine toxicity are presumed to be persistent and never changing tools for understanding American history. Instructors focusing on gender and masculinity exclude historical comparisons at the time with other societies or cultures, including European, Asian, African, or South American.

The status of women or attitudes of white males are presumed not to have changed substantially over time.

White-male masculinity provides a useful tool for understanding American history. At one large urban public university in the Midwest, two class periods are devoted to “Whiteness in the Age of Jackson,” and “Jolly Men and American Masculinity.”

The instructor presumes that American history is one of vicious cycles in which “gendered” roles in every aspect of American life are recreated in various forms without any social, political, legal, or economic advancements for women.

Violence as Endemic to American History

Violence in American history is a focal point in many classes.

As stated in one syllabus at a state university in the Midwest known as for its emphasis on the liberal arts, the instructor states that the central theme of the course is “the tension between the U.S. founding principles of individual liberty, justice, and human perfection and the violence that the American nation created through warfare, slavery, and territorial expansion.”

General Results of Quantitative Analysis for Pt. 1

To understand better the trade-off between institutions and identity topics that appeared in syllabi, we conducted several statistical analyses including regression and factor analyses. These techniques are used often to identify correlations that are likely not due to random chance. To conduct the analyses, we divided topics and themes each into two categories: those emphasizing institutions (e.g., “Constitution,” “rule of law”) and those emphasizing identities (e.g., “gender,” “social exclusion”). We then examined correlations among these themes and topics.

The full analysis is included in the appendix of the report, but our findings are summarized:

56%

On average, about 56 percent of classes focused on institutions topics.

1/3

Nearly a third of courses focused on institutions for less than half of class meetings.

80%

Eighty (80) percent of courses spent two class periods or less on the writing, ratification, and contents of the Constitution. Eleven (11) percent of classes did not cover the drafting of the Constitution in Philadelphia.

100%

All syllabi (100 percent) included at least one mention of an identity-related term such as “gender,” “racism,” “imperialism,” or “inclusion,” among others.

63%

Institutional phrases such as “liberty” and “freedom” appear in 63 percent of syllabi, while no syllabi mention “the rule of law” or “Western tradition.”



Syllabi that mentioned more institutions tended also to mention more identities, regardless of syllabus length.



Classes at larger universities included more classes on institutions topics.



Factor analyses clearly show that some syllabi prioritized identities whereas others (fewer) emphasize institutions; public universities are more likely to have identity-focused syllabi.

Part II: U.S. Survey from 1877 to Present



Part II: U.S. Survey from 1877 to Present

The Commission undertook a separate review and analysis of teaching American history since 1877. Course syllabi were gathered from across the country and analyzed separately. This second half of introduction to American history covers from 1877 to the present.

In its review of the second half of the introductory American course, the Commission found issues like those found in the teaching of the first half of this course: an emphasis on race to the exclusion of other topics, while at the same time most instructors stressed sexuality, gender roles, queer theory, and militant social protest.

As found in reviewing the first half of the introduction to American history, specific themes emerge in examining the second half of these introductory courses. The second half of introduction to American history allows more flexibility for instructors in designing this course because key events can be excluded. Professors end their courses at various dates or events, including Reagan and the rise of conservatism; the Iraq War and the end of the American empire. A few end with a lecture on the election of Donald Trump in 2016.

Post-Covid syllabi were difficult to find online. As a result, the Commission expanded the parameters of its search to include syllabi dating back to 2010 in its database. Consequently, the Commission developed two separate sets of databases, one for the first half and another for the second half.

The post-Covid syllabi, however, provided a large enough sample to provide data analysis. A clear bias is indicated in pre-Covid and post-Covid syllabi. The election of Donald Trump to the presidency in 2016, followed by the Covid pandemic, appears to have induced greater concerns among faculty and instructors that not only is America in decline, but that democracy itself is under threat.

Although the databases differ, similar problems are found in the first half and the second half of these introductory courses. An examination of the second half of introduction to American history revealed similar biases. Implicit and explicit bias were apparent in the second half of introduction to American history. Consistent themes pervade both halves of introductory American history courses including Inequality, Conquest and Imperialism, Gender and Masculine Toxicity, and Violence as Endemic to American Culture.

General Results of Quantitative Analysis

Based on analyses of 39 syllabi collected from history courses taught at 37 universities, we conclude the following:

60%

More than 60 percent of syllabi utilized at least one divisive identity-focused term such as “white supremacy,” “oppression,” and “toxic masculinity,” among others.

10%

More than 10 percent of class meetings focused exclusively on the Civil Rights Movement or feminism on average, with one syllabus dedicating 38 percent of all meetings to these topics.

40%

More than 40 percent of syllabi did not mention “freedom,” “prosperity,” or religion (or any variants of these terms).



Syllabi are polarized with many prioritizing identity-based topics and making widespread use of identity terms. *(The syllabi that had more class meetings focused on identity topics used divisive terms more often.)*



Identity-focused syllabi are found at all kinds of universities: public and private, large and small, religious and secular.

10%

While some instructors discussed “Second Wave Feminism,” only 10 percent mentioned the major critic of the movement, Phyllis Schlafly.

The second half of introduction to American history provides an opportunity for instructors to develop and expound on themes often only implicitly articulated in the first half of the course. These themes include the following:

Exclusion

Instructors teaching the second half of the introductory course emphasize exclusion of minorities, which in their eyes, remains a consistent theme in American history.

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

The second half of the introductory course provides a greater avenue for instructors to develop sexuality and sexual identity with a greater emphasis than in the first half. Homophobia emerges as a major theme in many courses within lectures and required outside readings.

Anti-market Bias

Explicit and implicit anti-market themes are prevalent by emphasizing social protest (Populism in the 19th Century; strikes in the 20th and 21st century.) Leaders of American industry, finance, and inventors such as Andrew Carnegie, Thomas Edison, or Steve Jobs receive little notice, good or bad.

Political History without Politics

Political history – presidents, elections, party development in the 19th century – is woefully absent in most syllabi reviewed.

Conservatism is usually framed in a negative context, with many courses ending with a discussion of conservatism evident in the election of Ronald Reagan, George W. Bush, or Donald Trump.

Legal History without Law

Legal history is generally excluded. For example, only a few professors mentioned *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*, the Civil Right Act of 1964, or the Voting Rights Act of 1965 in their syllabi.

Military History without War or Diplomacy

Military history is absent from nearly every syllabus that was reviewed. As a result, most instructors do not discuss military operations in either the First World War or particularly the Second World War. Instead, primary attention is given to the home front, the suppression of civil liberties in the First World War, and racial segregation and women workers (“Rosie the Riveter”) in the Second World War. The Jewish Holocaust is included in a few syllabi, but surprisingly few. In short, war is discussed without mentioning war itself, the sacrifice of those fighting the war or why these wars were being fought.

A few instructors, although not many, discuss President Truman's decision to end the war in the Pacific with the use of atomic weapons. While it is impossible to see fully how this topic is examined in lecture, the topic appears to be framed primarily as an identity issue, racial hatred of the Japanese.

In these courses, as taught by professors, students are not introduced to the bloody nature of warfare in the First or Second World Wars, or the heroic actions of American troops in these wars.

Diplomatic history, especially after the Second World War, is neglected. Very few students learn about Yalta, the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, or the Paris Peace Accords that ended the Vietnam War.

Progressive History without Progress

Not a single syllabus indicated any *concept of progress made in race relations, civil rights, industry, or standards of living*. Uniformly, instructors fail to mention any progress by groups or the nation in bettering themselves. Indeed, an inordinate number of faculty ended their courses with a “decline of the American empire” theme.

A Religious Nation without Religion

Religion is rarely mentioned in any of the syllabi reviewed and analyzed, other than some mention by a few instructors in discussion of the rise of conservatism. Religious impetus for reform evident in the prohibition movement, the struggle for woman's suffrage, and the black civil rights movement is avoided.

Required Outside Readings and Videos

These themes are reinforced in required readings and video.

Standardized textbooks are assigned in many of these courses. A significant number of instructors no longer assign textbooks and rely on supplemental readings or videos. These supplemental readings and videos present selective perceptions of events that insert a marked subjectivity in what students learn in their courses.

A review of these supplemental readings show *a heavy emphasis of social activism, especially revolutionary Black Nationalism and militant feminism; the gay and queer activist experience is required in supplemental readings and videos*.

Detailed Narrative of Syllabi in American History from 1877-present



Detailed Narrative of Syllabi in American History from 1877-present

The thousands of students taking the second half of introduction to American history learn primarily that the history of America since 1877 is a nation in decline that has and continues to discriminate against racial, gender, and sexuality minorities.

Through lectures, discussions, and required readings, students are directed to see a nation in decline. United States is portrayed as a nation that never fulfilled its ideals of equality, defined as social equality. The last week of many courses end on the sour note of “The Decline of the American Empire.”

Social, economic, and technological advances fail to be noted, discussed, or read about in required readings. Advances by women in voting rights, in professions, in work, in finances, professionally, the workplace, financially, or social relations are ignored in these classes. The focus on racial, ethnic, and sexual minorities focuses on protest politics to the exclusion of court decisions or legislative action.

Consumerism is portrayed as shallow without any examination of the benefits of capitalism or the marketplace. A number of instructors specifically focus on Walmart as an example of the one-dimensional character of the American consumer.

Leaders of industry, finance, or technology are excluded in most introductory courses. Instead of learning about the contributions of Andrew Carnegie, or Steve Jobs, students learn about the abuses of labor in the late 19th century, the 1930s, and today.

In summary, what is conveyed to students is **a nation without progress and in serious decline.**

Exclusion

Many instructors do not openly reveal their biases and, in fact, might be unaware of the assumptions they make in what they cover in class. Other professors openly state that the purpose of their course is to convey to students that America is a land of exclusion. The nation's history, they say, has benefited only a few.

A professor at one of the largest state colleges in the South states that students in the course will learn about the “diversity of American experiences with specific emphasis on race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexual orientation.” This course devotes considerable attention to race. The course begins with the Reconstruction era in which students are required to read primary documents of the “Mississippi Black Code, 1865” and the “Louisiana White League Platform,” while neglecting any federal civil rights acts or amendments. The last weeks of the class are given to “Women’s Lib and Second Wave Feminism,” “Native Americans and Red Power,” “Gay Liberation and LGBTQ Activism,” “Chicano Activism and Latino Movements,” and “Environmentalism and Green Movements.” The course concludes with “The Triumph of the Right” and “From Witch-hunts and Communist-hunts to Terrorist-hunts.”

An instructor at an elite, private university in the Eastern U.S. states that the central rubric for understanding American history is “the tension between belonging and exclusion.” The syllabus asks students, “What is the relationship between professed belief of Americans and the realities of their daily lives?” The course that follows spends the first four weeks on exclusion (primarily racial), before spending a week on sexuality, before returning to racial exclusion. The course ends with the professor exploring “race and incarceration.”

Many instructors of the second half begin their courses with post-Civil War Reconstruction. This becomes the foundation for examining the persistence of exclusion of racial and sexual minorities throughout the rest of the course.

In discussing Reconstruction, little attention is given to important civil rights amendments or civil rights legislation. Instead, great attention is given by many instructors to the white Southern backlash against Reconstruction.

For example, one professor at a large public university in Texas spends four weeks on the white Southern backlash to Reconstruction. During these four weeks, out of the fifteen-week semester, students are required to read Charles Dew’s “Apostles of Secession,” Ida Wells’ “Lynch Law in America,” watch D.W. Griffith’s *Birth of a Nation*, and watch a lecture video by historian Alan Theoharis titled “A More Beautiful and Terrible History.” The next three weeks focus of race in which students watch a Hollywood film, *Mississippi Burning*, about the activities of the Ku Klux Klan in Mississippi in the 1960s.

The exclusion of women and homosexuals provides for instructors another means of instructing students on deeply ingrained prejudice in American history. These themes – racial, gender, and sexual identity – are conflated. An instructor at a major Midwestern university examines in one class period, “The Rise of Jim Crow, Social Darwinism & Women’s Place.”

In a course offered at one of the most prestigious liberal arts colleges in the country, students enrolled in the second half of the introductory course learn that the progressive era and the 1920s was largely about immigration restriction, racism, and homophobia. Prohibition, one of the main issues in the 1920s, is given far less attention in the syllabus, which is typical. In the course, students are required to read over a three-week period about “the reconstruction of race in immigration law” in the progressive era, deportation policy in the 1920s, and a chapter from George Chauncey’s *Gay New York*: specifically, chapter seven: “Privacy Could Only Be Had in Public: Forging a Gay World in the Streets.”

Prison incarceration provides an avenue for showing the persistence of exclusion and is a major theme in many courses. At a prestigious private university in Texas, an instructor requires two books: Howard Zinn’s *Voices of a People’s History of the United States* and Jordan T. Camp’s *Incarcerating the Crisis: Freedom Struggles and the Rise of the Neoliberal State*.

Students reading Camp’s book will learn that the “United States currently has the largest prison population on the planet. Over the last four decades, structural unemployment, concentrated urban poverty, and mass homelessness have also become permanent features of the political economy. These developments are without historical precedent, but not without historical explanation. In this searing critique, Camp traces the rise of the neoliberal carceral state through a series of turning points in U.S. history including the Watts insurrection in 1965, the Detroit rebellion in 1967, the Attica uprising in 1971, the Los Angeles revolt in 1992, and events in post-Katrina New Orleans in 2005.

Only one syllabus of those reviewed mentioned American exceptionalism. The instructor at a small Southern university states in the syllabus, “there are no expedient and simple answers to the complex problems in a global world. Our heritage is unique. The political, economic, and cultural institutions that serve us, the material things we covet, and the rights and liberties we have come to cherish have been handed down to us from past generations, many of which have made the ultimate sacrifice for us.”

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation


The second half of introduction to American history provides an opportunity for instructors to give a greater emphasis to sexuality and sex identity. As a consequence, many instructors give great attention to these topics, including radical feminism, homosexuality, and gay liberation. One course offered at a prestigious New York university ends with a week long discussion of feminism in which students read solely radical feminists.

Another professor offering an introductory course at a Western college follows a similar path with a class section, “Feminism’s Many Waves,” in which students focus on “radical feminists’ departure from moderate-liberal tradition in the 1970s and 1980s, and the wave of feminist activism sweeping American colleges today.” This is followed the next week by a section called “Final Frontiers: The Cultural War, LBGTQ Rights, and the Fight against Ableism.”

Anti-market

No syllabus reviewed found any discussion of America's industrial and financial success in the post-war period. Business leaders such as Andrew Carnegie and J. P. Morgan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and technological innovators such as Steve Jobs or Bill Gates, are not mentioned in the syllabi or outside readings.

More importantly, rise of standards of living including better housing, health, education or other indications of how economic growth and technological advancement produced better lives for average Americans.



Typical of how instructors discuss the rise of industrial America is to discuss **labor protest, class division, or the inequality of women.**

An instructor at a large state university in California represents a common approach to the economic advancement in late 19th century America by requiring students to read radical feminist Lucy Parson.

Conservatism and the Decline of America

Most students enrolled in the second half of American history find little opportunity to learn about politics in the late 19th century. Presidents, elections, civil service reform, and ethnic voting patterns are generally overlooked. In the 20th century, more attention is given to FDR's New Deal and Johnson's Great Society. Conservative critics of the New Deal or the Great Society are not mentioned unless to point out the loss of Barry Goldwater in 1964 as a rejection of political "extremism."

Students enrolled in the second half of introduction to American history will not read writings of conservative critics of the modern welfare or regulatory state. Anti-feminist authors and activists are required readings in a few classes within the context of opposition to woman's suffrage or the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Anti-ERA activist Phyllis Schlafly is assigned


reading in only three courses reviewed by the commission, even though the ERA is covered in many classes. In another course taught at the main campus of a Western state, a writing by Christian evangelist Jerry Falwell is instead assigned.

The topic of the rise of the New Right or the Populist Right is often linked to the decline of America as a nation. Many instructors end their courses with the theme of the “Decline of America” or the “End of the American Empire.” Representative of this perspective is a professor at a California public university who ends the course with a week of discussion examining “Conservatism and the New Right” in which students are required to read a Hispanic activist’s account of his mother’s deportation. The following class session the students read about the AIDS Crisis.

A professor at the main campus of a Western state university concludes the course on “Globalization and the Decline of American Dream,” and “Is America a Democracy or a Plutocracy?” For this course section, students are assigned articles titled, “Trickle-up Economics,” “The World will have 11 Trillionaires,” “The Triumph of Occupy Wall Street,” “Plutocrats turning America into a Predator Nation,” “Plutocracy in America,” and “The Rise of the New Global Elite.”

An instructor at a large Midwestern University focuses three weeks on the postwar period exploring “Civil Rights for All” in the course’s examination of the Cold War, before turning to “Nixon and 1970s Disillusionment.” The last week of the course is spent on “The New Right,” and “Globalization the New American Imperialism.”

The focus of the decline of America is replicated in many other courses. At a private Eastern university, one instructor invites students in the last two weeks of the course to examine, “De-Industrialization and Malaise,” “Liberalism in Retreat,” and concludes with “The New World Order.”



An inordinate number of instructors frame post-World War II America as **decades of decline, greed, and racism.**

A course at a prestigious liberal arts college spends 10 class periods on such topics as “Hollow Prize: The Urban Crisis and the Limits of Civil Rights,” “The Sexual Revolution,” “Walmart,” “Crisis of Confidence,” the Limits of Liberalism,” a lecture on the Reagan Revolution, “NAFTA and the New Economy,” and “Petro-politics.”

Climate change becomes an avenue for discussing the decline of America. The topic provides also a proxy for a political agenda, the Green Revolution. An introductory to the second half of an introduction to American history at an Eastern university spends the final weeks of the course focused on climate change in which students are required to read or watch “Al Gore Explains Why Global Warming is a Global Crisis,” reading the “Copenhagen Accord on Change,” watching a film by Bill Kibben, “The End of Nature,” and finally reading House Resolution 109, “Recognizing the Duty of the Federal Government to Create a Green New Deal” (2019). This course concludes with an assigned news article by journalist Elizabeth Day, “#BlackLivesMatter: The Birth of a New Civil Rights Movement,” *The Guardian* (2015).

An instructor at one of the major Kansas universities offers two lectures on conservatism in the 1970s in which students are assigned, Kim Philips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Moral Majority*, which argues that the conservative movement was about corporate protection and low corporate taxes promoted by big business and used to mislead religious conservatives voters concerned about cultural issues.

A notable exception of assigned conservative writings and speeches occurs in a course taught at a private Catholic university in the East in which students are assigned, Jerry Falwell [sic] “Homosexual Revolution” and “Pat Buchanan on the Cultural War,” which are balanced with “Statements of Aids [sic] Patients.”

Legal History Neglected

Major Supreme Court decisions are ignored uniformly on courses reviewed by the commission, even critical civil rights cases including *Brown v. Board of Education*. Cases involving civil liberties and free speech were totally absent in topics addressed or readings assigned. The only mention of a Supreme Court case appeared in a course taught at a Catholic university in New York in which students were assigned to read *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015).

Not a single syllabus mentions any free speech Supreme Court decision, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, or *Roe v. Wade* (1973).

Military History without War or Diplomacy

Students enrolled in the second half of American history encounter little, if any, military history. Indeed, only one syllabus discussed the actual war in Europe and the Pacific during World War II.


Instructors who discussed World War I or World War II in their courses – not all instructors did – focused on the home front, especially the suppression of civil rights in the First World War and the exclusion of blacks and women in industry at home in the Second World War.

Those discussing the home front during World War I give great attention to the Palmer Raids in 1919 in which radical anarchists and socialists were arrested and deported. Domestic opposition to the First World War is the focus of those instructors who do focus on this topic. Representative of this domestic focus on the war is an instructor at a private Eastern university who, in the week discussing Progressivism the War to End All Wars, requires student to read “George Norris Opposing the U.S. in World War I.”

More typical is to focus on the home fronts during World War I and World War II. Many examples of this approach are revealed in syllabi lecture topics such as “Imperialism, Markets, the Great War,” in which the students read “Donald Trump’s American History and the Politics of Race” and “The Second World War: Political Intercourse with the Addition of Other Means.”

Of those syllabi collected over the course of the commission’s research, one instructor who discussed the actual conflict during the Second World War frames the discussion as “A ‘Just’ War without Mercy: The War in Europe and the Pacific,” followed by a discussion of “Who Started It? Debating the Origins of the Cold War,” and a discussion of “Race and the Cold War: The Civil Rights Movement.” An instructor at a large public university in the South has students view documentary films on the “double war” faced by blacks during the Second World War and a documentary, “The Army’s First Black Nurses Were Relegated to Caring for Nazi POWs.”

Another instructor at a New York university provides two lectures on World War II as a domestic issue involving Japanese internment in which the only reading assignment for two class periods is an essay by Connie Y. Chiang titled “Imprisoned Nature: Toward an Environmental History of World War II Japanese American Incarceration” from *Environmental History*.



Most students enrolled in the second half of introduction to American history **learn little about diplomatic history** in the Second World War or afterwards.

U.S.-Soviet agreements for planning the postwar world reached at Yalta and Tehran are given no attention by instructors, if their syllabi are any indication.

Most instructors approach the Cold War as primarily a domestic issue involving race and sexuality. Representative of this neglect is seen in a course taught at a public university in the South in which the assigned reading about the Cold War covered the Hollywood blacklist, the lavender scare, and how redlining, a topic connected to the administrative state rather than the Cold War, had “racist effects lasted for decades.”

Religious History

Few instructors discuss religion in their courses. Students enrolled in the second half of introduction to American history will not learn about a deeply religious people; the role of religion in voting behavior in the late 19th and early 20th centuries or in the post-World War II period; religious motivation of reformers in the prohibition movement, women’s suffrage, or civil rights; or the development of religious toleration in the 20th century.

Students find some hint of the importance of religion in American history by reading Martin Luther King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” which is an assigned reading in a few classes.

Conclusion



Conclusion


Teachers of introductory courses in American history have a professional and moral responsibility to their students to provide an education that is not driven by a present-day political agenda. The Commission recognizes tensions between our nation's ideals and fulfillment of these ideals.

Introductory American history courses need to explore without bias the foundational principles of our nation embodied in the Bill of Rights and the Constitution, the origins and nature of citizen rights, and the knowledge of basic institutions within a democracy. An over-emphasis on racial, ethnic and gender identity, as currently manifested in American survey courses, unnecessarily distorts the nation's vibrant religious, economic, and political past, and the progress that the nation has achieved in fulfilling these ideals.

The Commission recommends greater educational transparency in what is being taught in the classroom; the need for intellectual diversity among history faculties; and the need for more comprehensive civic education in universities and colleges. Our recommendations are specific in calling for university faculties, university administrators, regents, and university donors and funders to act on the recommendations.

These recommendations do not infringe upon academic freedom by imposing a uniform curriculum in teaching American history. College instructors have the freedom to design courses and create syllabi that produce the best learning outcomes for their students. Student bodies are diverse and unique to each institution.

Students, parents, university governing bodies, and those funding our colleges and universities also have expectations and a right to confirm that today's college students receive the best education possible to ensure career success and to become well-informed citizens in a vibrant American democracy.



Introductory American history courses need to explore without bias the **foundational principles of our nation** embodied in the Bill of Rights and the Constitution, the origins and nature of citizen rights, and the knowledge of basic institutions within a democracy.

Biographies



Scott Walker

Former Governor of Wisconsin

Governor Scott Walker was raised with a heart for public service, patriotism, and hard work. He moved to the small town of Delavan, Wisconsin, when he was in third grade. There, his father was a minister and his mother worked part time as a bookkeeper and secretary. Scott was active in school, sports, church, Scouts, and American Legion's Badger Boys State and Boys Nation programs.

In June 1993, Scott was elected to the state assembly, where he helped lead the way on welfare reform, public safety, and educational opportunities. In 2002, he was elected to the Milwaukee County executive office. In this position, Scott worked to reform the scandal-ridden county government and faithfully kept his promise to spend taxpayer money as if it were his own.

In 2008, he won re-election with nearly 60 percent of the vote. On November 2, 2010, Scott was elected the 45th Governor of Wisconsin. Inheriting a \$3.6 billion budget deficit, \$800 million worth of unpaid bills, and an eight percent unemployment rate, he immediately implemented reforms to renew economic revival, fiscal order, and government accountability in Wisconsin. Scott became the only governor in American history to survive a recall election on June 5, 2012. He was re-elected in 2014 and sworn into a second term on January 5, 2015.

Scott is currently president of Young America's Foundation. He serves on the boards of Students for Life Action, American Federation for Children, and the Center for State-led National Debt Solutions. Scott and his wife, Tonette, have two adult sons.



Mary Fallin

Former Governor of Oklahoma

Mary Fallin became the first female governor of Oklahoma on January 10, 2011, and was sworn in for her second term on January 12, 2015.

During her first session as governor, Fallin saw many of her legislative priorities signed into law including lawsuit reform, workers' comp reform, comprehensive education reform and government modernizations. Fallin launched an initiative to increase the number of college graduates in Oklahoma to help the state attract and retain jobs. She also put forward a road and bridge plan to eliminate nearly all of the deficient bridges on the state's highway system.

She served two terms in the Oklahoma House before becoming the first woman to be elected lieutenant governor of Oklahoma in 1994. In 2006, she was elected to the U.S. Congress. She was the chair of the National Governors Association from August 4, 2013 to July 13, 2014.

Fallin is married to Wade Christensen, Oklahoma's former first "First Gentleman," and the couple has six children between them. Governor Fallin is currently serving on three corporate boards and several nonprofit boards.



Newt Gingrich

Former House Speaker

Speaker Newt Gingrich is Chairman of Gingrich 360, a multimedia production and consulting company based in Arlington, Virginia. As former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Gingrich is well known as the architect of the "Contract with America" that led the Republican Party to victory in 1994, creating the first conservative majority in the House in 40 years. He was a Republican candidate for President of the United States in 2012.

Gingrich is a Fox News contributor, podcast host (Newt's World), and syndicated columnist. He is the author of 43 books, including 18 fiction and nonfiction New York Times bestsellers. His latest books include *March to the Majority: The Real Story of the Republican Revolution* and *Beyond Biden: Rebuilding the America We Love*.

Gingrich and his wife, Ambassador Callista L. Gingrich, host and produce historical and public policy documentaries. Recent films include "The First American" and "Divine Mercy: The Canonization of John Paul II."

Recognized internationally as an expert on world history, military issues, and international affairs, Newt Gingrich is the longest-serving teacher of the Joint War Fighting course for Major Generals. He also teaches officers from all six services as a Distinguished Visiting Scholar and Professor at the National Defense University. In addition, Newt Gingrich served as a Member of the Defense Policy Board. He was a member of the Terrorism Task Force for the Council on Foreign Relations, and he co-chaired the Task Force on United Nations Reform, a bipartisan congressional effort to modernize and improve the United Nations.

The Gingrich's reside in McLean, Virginia, and have two daughters and two grandchildren.

Appendix A: Detailed Regression Analysis for “Introduction to American History from Settlement to 1877”



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Data Collection and Coding

Throughout the fall of 2022, the syllabi for survey courses in American history (pre-1865) were collected. Syllabi were collected only for courses taught at one of the top 150 “National Universities” as ranked by the *U.S. News and World Report* in 2022. We collected syllabi from 2019 and later years. These were found primarily on course catalog websites and faculty websites. Unfortunately, syllabi were not publicly available for most courses. In total, 36 syllabi were collected from 33 universities.

The syllabi were coded according to their topics and terms. Research assistants were tasked with determining how many weeks each course examined each of the following topics:

- Pre-Columbian Societies
- Early Institutions (religious, governmental, and otherwise)
- American Revolution
- State Government
- The Constitution
- Jacksonian Era
- Indian Removal or Conflict
- Antebellum South and Abolitionism
- Industrial Revolution
- Religion (e.g., Second Great Awakening, LDS Church)
- Women’s Movement and other Voluntary Associations
- Mexican War and Westward Expansion
- Civil War Events
- Reconstruction

Researchers were also tasked with counting the number of instances in which each of the following phrases appeared in each syllabus:

- “White supremacy”
- “Inclusion”
- “Imperialism”
- “Social Exclusion”
- “Diversity”
- “Tolerance”
- “Gender”
- “Racism”
- “Liberty”
- “Freedom”
- “Federalism”
- “Western tradition”
- “Capitalism”

From the coding efforts, a data set consisting of 36 syllabi was compiled. In addition to numbers of classes spent on each topic, as well as numbers of instances for each phrase, syllabi were measured in terms of length. An assistant measured both the number of total words appearing in each syllabus, and the total number of *substantive* (i.e., course specific) words appearing in each syllabus.

In addition, the data set included university traits such as ranking, total enrollment, and status as a private institution. These data were collected from the *U.S. News and World Report*.

From the data, four new variables were generated. These include variables for numbers of classes that focus on institutions-related topics, numbers of classes that focus on identity-related topics, numbers of phrases related to institutions that appeared in each syllabus, and numbers of phrases related to identity that appeared in each syllabus.

Institution topics:

- Early Institutions
- American Revolution
- State Government
- The Constitution
- Jacksonian Era
- Industrial Revolution
- Civil War Events
- Reconstruction

Identity topics:

- Pre-Columbian Societies
- Indian Removal or Conflict
- Antebellum South, Slavery, Abolition
- Religion
- Mexican War and Westward Expansion
- Women's Movement

Institution phrases:

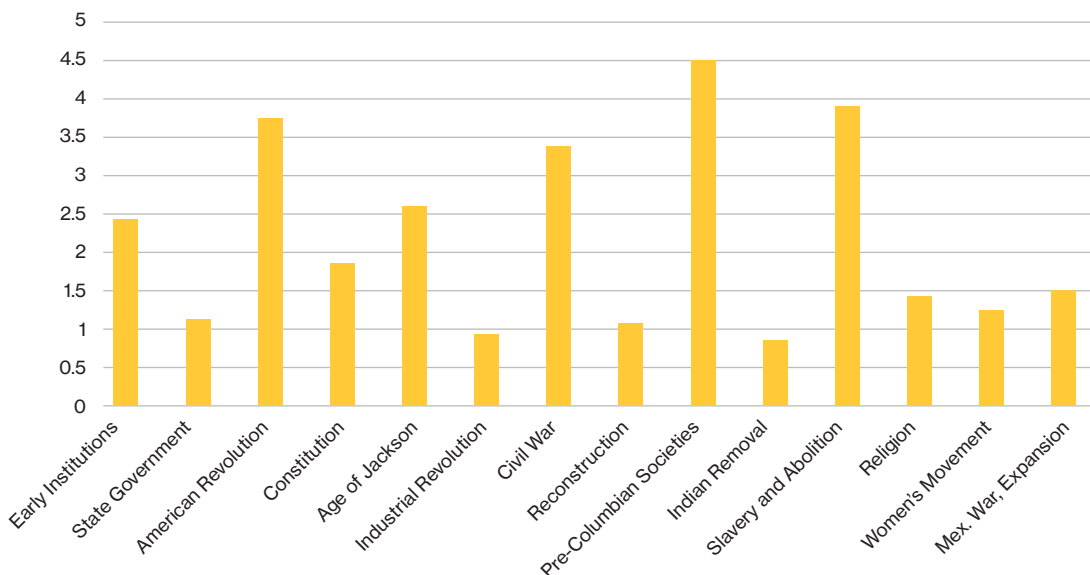
- "Liberty"
- "Freedom"
- "Federalism"
- "Rule of Law"
- "Western Tradition"
- "Capitalism"

Identity phrases:

- "White supremacy"
- "Oppression"
- "Inclusion"
- "Genocide"
- "Cultural Hegemony"
- "Imperialism"
- "Social Exclusion"
- "Diversity"
- "Religious Tolerance (Liberty)"
- "Gender"
- "Racism"

We begin by presenting descriptive statistics regarding the prevalence of the various topics and phrases in the 36 syllabi. Figure 1 reports the average numbers of class meetings devoted to each of the 14 topics we examined. Institution topics are clustered on the left-hand side of the chart. From the figure, Pre-Columbian societies and slavery are the most frequently covered topics in survey courses on American history. The syllabi contained averages of 4.5 and 3.9 class meetings for these topics, respectively.

Figure 1: Average Classes per Topic across Syllabi



A.1 Regression Analysis: Institutions vis-à-vis Identity Topics

Table 1 reports the results of two regression analyses that predict the number of institution topics included in each syllabus. These analyses consist of ordinary least-squares (OLS) regressions and are labeled “Model 1” and “Model 2.” Both analyses estimate the effect of each explanatory variable on the appearance of institution themes (the dependent variable) in the syllabi. (In other words, these results indicate which factors are most correlated with institution themes.) Huber-White standard errors are provided and used to calculate p -values.

In Model 1, we estimated the number of institution topics appearing in each topic while controlling only for the number of identity topics also in the syllabi and the length of each syllabus in terms of substantive (i.e., course-specific) words. For each explanatory variable, our null hypothesis is that the variable is not correlated with institution themes. From Model 1, we can reject one null hypothesis: every additional identity topic included in a syllabus is associated with roughly 0.372 more institution topics on average, *ceteris paribus*. This relationship is significant at the 0.1 level: there is less than a 10-percent chance (but greater than 5-percent chance) that this pattern is due to random chance. Syllabus length was not correlated with themes.

Model 2 includes additional explanatory variables: it controls for university-related factors such as numbers of students (in thousands), each university's status as a public institution (or not), and its rank according to the *U.S. News and World Report (USNWR)*. Huber-White standard errors are also reported for this model. With the inclusion of additional explanatory variables, the relationship between institution and identity topics remains practically unchanged. None of the three university-related variables explain the number of institutions topics appearing in syllabi except for student population. For every additional 1,000 students enrolled in a university, there were roughly 0.187 more institution topics included in the syllabus for the survey history course on average, *ceteris paribus*. This relationship is statistically discernible at the $p = 0.05$ level. Course syllabi at public universities did not include more or fewer institution topics than syllabi at private universities, and university rank was not correlated with institution topics, either.

Table 1: Regression Models Predicting Institution Topics

Exp. Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Identity Topics	0.372* (0.202)	0.384* (0.212)
Syllabus Length	-0.0017 (0.0017)	-0.0018 (0.0017)
Students (1000s)		0.187** (0.0705)
Public University		-1.099 (2.477)
<i>USNWR Rank</i>		-0.0063 (0.0240)
Constant	13.98*** (3.347)	11.01*** (3.861)
Observations	36	36
R-squared	0.113	0.248

Note: robust standard errors in parentheses.

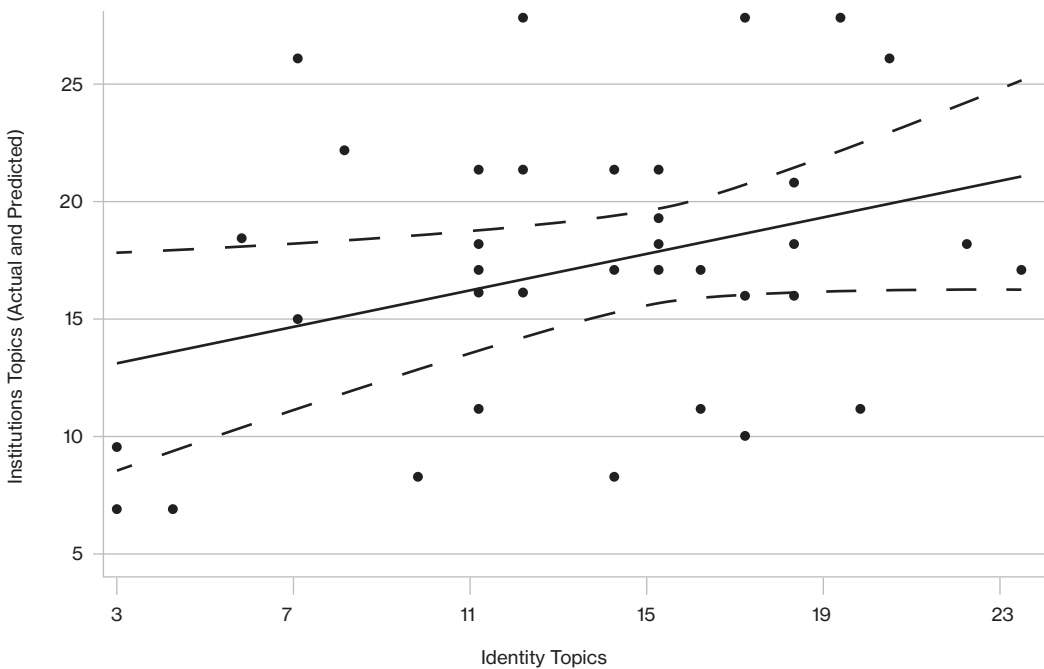
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$; all on two-tailed tests.

The estimates provided by Models 1 and 2 fulfill Gauss-Markov assumptions for statistical inference such that the estimates are efficient and unbiased. Jarque-Bera tests indicate that we cannot reject the null hypothesis that the residuals associated with both models are normally distributed. Park tests and visual diagnoses suggest that residuals for both models are also homoscedastic.

In addition, the model results all remain substantively the same when estimated with bootstrapped standard errors using 1,000 replications (these results are not presented).

Figure 2 presents the results of Model 2 in visual form. The solid line represents the positive relationship between numbers of identity topics appearing in syllabi and numbers of institution topics in those syllabi, when all other variables are held at their mean values. The dashed lines provide 95-percent confidence intervals. The dots represent actual (not predicted) values of identity and institution topic totals found in each syllabus. The bottom axis covers the range of values for identity topics found in syllabi.

Figure 2: Regression Results in Graph Form



A.2 Factor Analysis: Institutions vis-à-vis Identity Topics

In this section, we conduct a descriptive factor analysis to determine if syllabi may be categorized roughly as institutions- or identity-focused documents, or if another categorization scheme is appropriate. The factor analysis helps to reveal latent dimensions that help to structure syllabi topics.

Table 2: Pairwise Correlation Coefficients

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
(1) Early Insti.	1.000													
(2) State Gov't	0.321	1.000												
(3) Amer. Rev.	0.021	-0.107	1.000											
(4) Constitution	-0.023	0.289	0.037	1.000										
(5) Age of Jackson	-0.258	-0.073	0.362	-0.002	1.000									
(6) Industrial Rev.	-0.077	0.290	-0.035	0.243	0.097	1.000								
(7) Civil War	-0.062	0.059	0.017	0.044	0.624	0.090	1.000							
(8) Reconstruction	0.081	0.153	-0.110	-0.027	-0.013	0.093	0.472	1.000						
(9) Pre-Columbian	-0.153	0.246	0.332	-0.008	0.373	0.098	-0.020	-0.221	1.000					
(10) Indian Removal	-0.118	-0.097	0.015	-0.245	0.292	0.121	0.286	0.180	0.140	1.000				
(11) South, Slavery	-0.261	0.116	0.002	0.005	0.239	0.190	0.179	-0.008	0.446	0.415	1.000			
(12) Religion	0.243	0.003	-0.186	0.173	0.088	0.200	-0.005	-0.141	-0.081	-0.038	0.057	1.000		
(13) Women's Mvt.	0.022	-0.130	0.174	0.075	0.059	-0.153	-0.038	-0.197	-0.169	0.149	0.109	-0.090	1.000	
(14) Westward Exp.	-0.124	0.292	-0.194	0.208	0.237	0.272	0.486	0.420	0.177	0.493	0.284	0.144	-0.159	1.000

Before turning to the factor analysis, we present a correlation matrix of institution and identity topics. Both these variables are normally distributed and there are no outlier observations. The matrix of pairwise correlations includes several coefficients presented in bold text (for relationships that are statistically discernible at the 0.1 level). The matrix is presented in Table 2.

For our factor analysis, we use principal-components factoring. We then implemented a varimax orthogonal rotation. According to the eigenvector criterion, seven factors help explain variance in syllabus topics. The seven factors collectively account for slightly more than 80 percent of variance in topics. Our computed factor weights are presented in Table 3.

Certain kinds of topics are highly associated with one another. We describe or interpret each of these dimensions as war-centric, identity-focused, a focus on early events, a focus on middle institutions, a focus on early institutions, a focus on women, and a focus on religion. The first factor is war-centric and accounts for roughly 20.53 percent of the variance in topics. The topics “Civil War,” “Reconstruction,” and “Mexican War and Westward Expansion” all load heaviest on this dimension. The second dimension explains an additional 14.52 variation in syllabus topics and consists of syllabi that focus primarily on “Pre-Columbian Societies,” “Indian Removal,” and “Antebellum South, Slavery, and Abolition.”

From the factor analysis, we may conclude that the course syllabi we examine may not be cleanly partitioned into two categories (i.e., “institutions” or “identity”) but that, instead, there are contingents or clusters of syllabi with similar topics. Three of the seven clusters (factors 1, 4, and 5) prioritize institution topics, three other clusters (factors 2, 6, 7) prioritize identity topics, and one cluster (factor 3) spans institutional and identity-based topics.

Table 3: Factor Analysis of History Syllabi Topics

Topics	Factor 1 War- centric	Factor 2 Purely Identity	Factor 3 Early Events	Factor 4 Middle Institution	Factor 5 Early Institution	Factor 6 Women's Syllabi	Factor 7 Religion Syllabi
(1) Early Insti.	0.0087	-0.2265	-0.0254	-0.1383	0.8884	0.098	0.2367
(2) State Gov't	0.0783	0.1962	-0.0231	0.5209	0.6523	-0.2157	-0.1835
(3) Amer. Rev.	-0.0917	-0.0743	0.8174	-0.0362	0.0698	0.1552	-0.1844
(4) Constitution	0.0189	-0.1687	0.0522	0.8772	-0.0151	0.1792	0.0609
(5) Age of Jackson	0.3937	0.2139	0.7354	0.0069	-0.2732	-0.006	0.2507
(6) Industrial Rev.	0.1017	0.2635	-0.0635	0.5564	-0.011	-0.2072	0.1923
(7) Civil War	0.853	0.0757	0.2918	0.0427	-0.0946	0.0193	0.1107
(8) Reconstruction	0.7898	-0.058	-0.2185	-0.0067	0.1626	-0.1198	-0.2575
(9) Pre-Columbian	-0.2391	0.5553	0.5618	0.1049	0.0762	-0.3929	-0.1359
(10) Indian Removal	0.3792	0.7136	-0.0209	-0.2789	-0.051	0.211	0.0555
(11) South, Slavery	-0.0089	0.8233	0.0846	0.1216	-0.1044	0.0484	0.0092
(12) Religion	-0.0479	0.0221	-0.0827	0.1487	0.1193	-0.0532	0.9299
(13) Women's Mvt.	-0.1159	0.113	0.0936	0.0106	0.0068	0.9351	-0.0598
(14) Westward Exp.	0.6268	0.4788	-0.1199	0.2976	0.0228	-0.1373	0.0912
Explained Variance	20.53	14.52	11.97	9.15	8.74	7.89	7.59

Using regression analyses, we examine the relationship between university characteristics and each of the seven factors listed in Table 4. In other words, we seek to determine which clusters of topics appeared most often depending on university characteristics. As with earlier analyses, we used Huber-White standard errors to calculate p values.

From the analyses, university size was not correlated with any of the syllabi clusters but there may have been fewer religious topics in syllabi at smaller schools. We find that public universities more often contained syllabi that included identity-based topics primarily and syllabi that spanned institutions and identities, but that these schools contained syllabi with fewer religious topics. The *USNWR* rank is not correlated with most kinds of syllabi but those with more classes on religious topics were found at lower-ranking, private institutions.²

Table 4: Syllabus Topics Across Universities

Exp. Variables	Model 1 War-centric	Model 2 Purely Identity	Model 3 Early Events	Model 4 Middle Institution	Model 5 Early Institution	Model 6 Women's Syllabus	Model 7 Religious Syllabus
Students (1000s)	0.0224 (0.016)	-0.026 (0.016)	0.015 (0.009)	-0.015 (0.012)	0.026 (0.025)	0.002 (0.017)	0.017* (0.01)
Public University	-0.344 (0.411)	0.972** (0.381)	0.888*** (0.260)	-0.047 (0.405)	-0.419 (0.596)	-0.294 (0.487)	-0.577* (0.327)
<i>USNWR</i> Rank	0.006 (0.005)	0.002 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.003)	-0.010* (0.005)	0.004 (0.004)	-0.002 (0.004)	0.012*** (0.004)
Constant	-0.693 (0.583)	-0.121 (0.648)	-0.587** (0.261)	1.001** (0.403)	-0.570 (0.581)	0.237 (0.392)	-0.875** (0.396)
Observations	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
R-squared	0.063	0.144	0.380	0.138	0.057	0.022	0.211

Note: robust standard errors in parentheses.
 *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$; all on two-tailed tests.

² Recall that our variable for *USNWR* ranking is the raw rank such that higher values indicate lower-ranked universities.

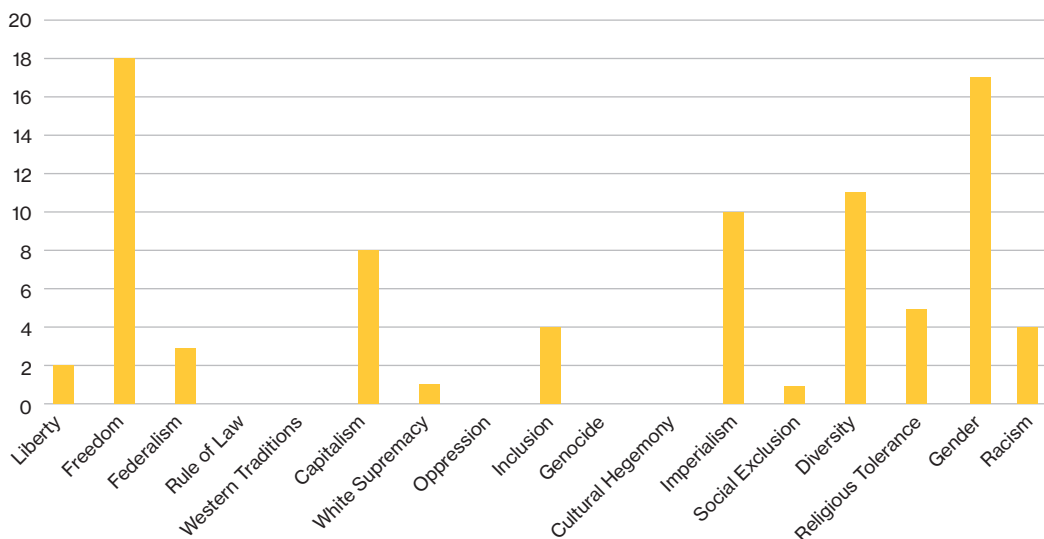
A.3 Regression and Factor Analyses: Institutions vis-à-vis Identity Terms

Figure 3 presents information like that presented in Figure 1, but for terms or phrases that appeared in syllabi. Among institutions-related phrases, roughly half of the syllabi mentioned the word “freedom.” Eight syllabi used the word “capitalism.” “Gender,” “diversity,” and “imperialism” were the leading identity-related phrases found in syllabi.

To analyze the appearance of institutional or identity terms that appeared in syllabi, we conduct analyses like those conducted earlier for syllabi topics. The results are presented in Table 5. Huber-White errors are used to generate p values. Unlike our analysis of syllabus topics, we find that institutions terms are not correlated with identity terms. Instead, the appearance of institution terms is largely explained by syllabus length or how many substantive (i.e., course-specific) words are included in each syllabus. We do find, however, that institutions terms appear less often in syllabi from lower-ranking universities: for every additional ranking (1 to 150) of an institution, there were 0.005 fewer institutions terms in its syllabus on average, *ceteris paribus*.

For syllabus terms, we conduct a factor analysis like the one we conducted for syllabi topics. Five terms were dropped since they did not appear in any syllabus: “oppression,” “genocide,” “cultural hegemony,” “rule of law,” and “western tradition.” As before, we implement a varimax orthogonal rotation. The analysis suggests that five latent factors or dimensions help to explain variation in the terms that appear in syllabi. The factor weights are presented in Table 6.

Figure 3: Number of Syllabi Containing Each Term



From the analysis, we define the five underlying dimensions governing syllabi terms as “white guilt syllabi,” “group conflict,” “gender syllabi,” “race and economics,” and “libertarian syllabi.” The first three categories make extensive use of identity-based terms, while the fourth category consists of syllabi that mention “racism” and “capitalism.” The final category consists of syllabi that stress “liberty” and “freedom,” but not “federalism.” Collectively, the five factors explain 72.4 percent of the variance in terms.

Table 5: Regression Models Predicting Institution Terms

Exp. Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Identity Terms	-0.022 (0.107)	-0.022 (0.111)
Syllabus Length	0.001*** (0.0002)	0.001*** (0.0002)
Students (1000s)		-0.009 (0.009)
Public University		0.090 (0.240)
<i>USNWR</i> Rank		-0.005* (0.003)
Constant	-0.143 (0.197)	0.365 (0.368)
Observations	36	36
R-squared	0.415	0.478

Note: robust standard errors in parentheses.
 *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$; all on two-tailed tests.

Table 6: Factor Analysis of History Syllabi Terms

Topics	Factor 1 White Guilt	Factor 2 Group Conflict	Factor 3 Gender Syllabi	Factor 4 Race and Economics	Factor 5 Libertarian Syllabi
(1) White Supremacy	0.965	0.0221	-0.0361	0.0517	0.033
(2) Inclusion	-0.0868	-0.2718	0.6803	0.1854	-0.0329
(3) Imperialism	0.3078	0.79	-0.0251	0.0341	0.2185
(4) Social Exclusion	0.965	0.0221	-0.0361	0.0517	0.033
(5) Diversity	0.3942	0.0512	0.6429	-0.1309	0.1155
(6) Tolerance	-0.1594	0.8522	-0.014	-0.0555	-0.1203
(7) Gender	-0.1806	0.1357	0.8362	-0.0325	0.0395
(8) Racism	-0.1515	-0.1577	0.0621	0.823	-0.0021
(9) Liberty	-0.132	0.2997	-0.0097	-0.3203	0.5299
(10) Freedom	0.1892	0.1527	0.071	0.1016	0.7891
(11) Federalism	0.0171	0.2943	-0.029	-0.1712	-0.6979
(12) Capitalism	0.3239	0.1718	-0.0428	0.8091	0.1665
Explained Variance	21.72	15.53	13.79	11.59	9.75

As with our analysis of syllabi topics, we turn to the university traits that may predict or be correlated with the various clusters of syllabi terms. The results of these regressions are presented in Table 7. We do not find any trends that are statistically discernible at the 0.05 level.

Table 7: Syllabus Terms Across Universities

Exp. Variables	Model 1 White Guilt	Model 2 Group Conflict	Model 3 Gender Syllabi	Model 4 Race and Economics	Model 5 Libertarian Syllabi
Syllabus Length	0.0009 (0.0007)	0.0007* (0.0004)	0.0002 (0.0004)	0.0007* (0.0004)	0.0003 (0.0003)
Students (1000s)	0.0193* (0.0106)	-0.0157 (0.0169)	0.0013 (0.0165)	-0.0231 (0.016)	-0.00531 (0.0164)
Public Uni.	-0.173 (0.155)	0.463 (0.357)	0.248 (0.434)	0.244 (0.296)	0.621 (0.386)
<i>USNWR</i> Rank	0.0000 (0.0024)	-0.0083* (0.0048)	0.005 (0.0052)	-0.0002 (0.0054)	-0.0027 (0.0056)
Constant	-1.332 (0.816)	-0.129 (0.671)	-0.763 (0.635)	-0.383 (0.789)	-0.423 (0.609)
Observations	36	36	36	36	36
R-squared	0.284	0.264	0.071	0.189	0.128

Note: robust standard errors in parentheses.
 *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$; all on two-tailed tests.

Appendix B: **“American History from 1877 to the Present”**



A.1 Data Collection and Coding

Throughout the spring of 2023, 39 syllabi for survey courses in American history (Reconstruction until present times) were collected from 37 universities. Syllabi from all institutions except community colleges were collected. The syllabi were not limited to a particular semester or year. They were found primarily on course catalog websites and faculty websites. In total, 39 syllabi were collected from 37 universities. The syllabi were coded according to their topics and terms. Research assistants were tasked with determining how many classes each course included for each of the following topics:

- Reconstruction
- Second Industrial Revolution
- Westward Expansion
- Progressivism
- Homefront, WWI and WWII
- First World War
- Twenties
- Great Depression
- Second World War
- Fifties
- Civil Rights Movement
- Feminism
- Sixties Countercultures
- Seventies (Watergate, Stagflation)
- Age of Reagan
- Nineties (NAFTA, Internet, Clinton)
- War on Terror
- Age of Obama
- Age of Trump

Researchers were also tasked with counting the number of instances in which each of the following phrases appeared in each syllabus:

Identity-based terms:

- “White supremacy”
- “Racism”
- “Inclusion”
- “Exclusion”
- “Equity”
- “Diversity”
- “Masculinity”
- “Gender”
- “Black National”
- “LGBT”

Events or figures (historical terms):

- “Plessy v. Ferguson”
- “Versailles”
- “Truman” or “Marshall”
- “Brown v. Board”
- “Vietnam”
- “Schlafly”
- “Falwell”
- “Martin Luther King”
- “Neoliberal”
- “Conservatism”
- “Capitalism”

Anti-establishment terms:

- “Incarceration”
- “Radicalism”
- “Socialism”
- “Decline”
- “Imperialism”
- “Insurgency” or “Riot”
- “Climate Change”

Pro-establishment terms:

- “Prosperity”
- “Freedom”
- “Religion”

From the coding efforts, a data set consisting of the 39 syllabi was compiled. In addition to numbers of classes spent on each topic, as well as numbers of instances for each term, syllabi were measured in terms of length in words. An assistant measured both the number of total words appearing in each syllabus, and the total number of substantive (i.e., course specific) words appearing in each syllabus.

In addition, the data set included university traits such as total enrollment, status as a private institution, and status as a religious institution.

From the data, four new variables were generated. These include variables for numbers of classes that focus on identity-related topics (“Feminism” and “Civil Rights Movement” combined), numbers of classes that focus on the other topics, and numbers of anti- and pro-establishment terms that appeared in each syllabus.

A.2 Descriptive Statistics and Regression Analyses

We begin by presenting descriptive statistics regarding the prevalence of the various topics and phrases in the 39 syllabi. Figure 1 reports the average numbers of class meetings devoted to each of the 19 topics we examined. From the figure, the two topics related to identity (Feminism and the Civil Rights Movement) were the focus of 0.9 and 1.9 total classes, each on average, respectively.

Figure 1: Average Classes per Topic Across Syllabi

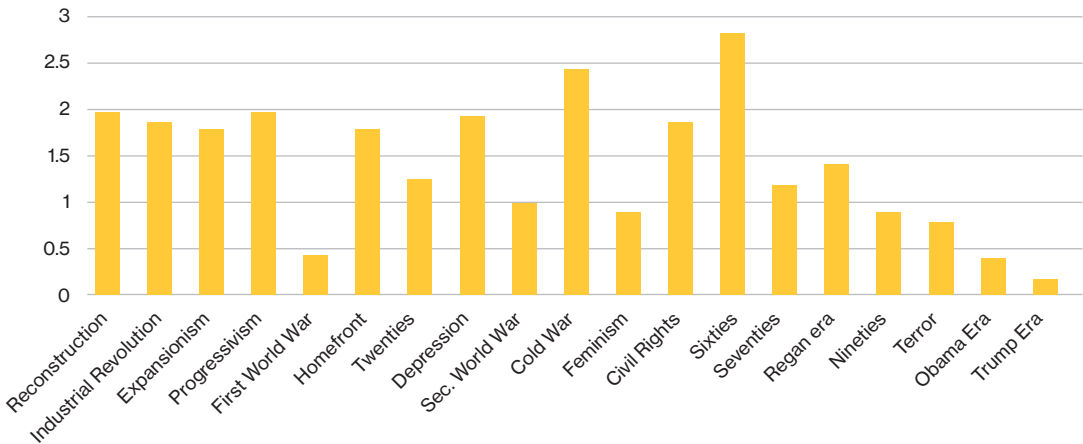


Table 1 reports descriptive statistics regarding numbers of identity, historical, anti-establishment, and pro-establishment terms that appeared in the syllabi. The table reports average totals, standard deviations, and minimum and maximum values for each category of terms. A paired t test indicates that syllabi generally include more anti- than pro-establishment terms, and more historical than identity terms.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Terms by Category

Category	Average	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Identity	1.85	1.73	0	7
Historical	2.46	1.48	0	6
Anti-establishment	1.46	1.39	0	6
Pro-establishment	0.95	0.89	0	2

Table 2 reports the results of two regression analyses that predict the numbers of class meetings focused on First-wave Feminism or the Civil Rights Movement in college courses. The analyses consist of ordinary least-squares (OLS) regressions and are labeled “Model 1” and “Model 2.” Both analyses estimate the effect of each explanatory variable on the appearance of identity topics (the dependent variable) in the syllabi. (In other words, these results indicate which factors best predict or are correlated with identity themes.) Huber-White standard errors are provided and used to calculate p -values.

In Model 1, we estimated the number of identity class sessions while controlling for numbers of terms from each category that appeared in syllabi. For each explanatory variable, our null hypothesis is that the variable is not correlated with institution themes (i.e., $\beta_i = 0$). From Model 1, we can reject one null hypothesis: every additional identity term included in a syllabus is associated with roughly 0.447 more identity-focused class sessions on average, *ceteris paribus*. This relationship is significant at the 0.05 level: there is less than a 5-percent chance (but greater than 1-percent chance) that this pattern is due to random chance. Moreover, for every additional historical term, there were 0.378 more identity-focused class sessions as well. Other variables were not correlated with such class sessions.

Model 2 includes additional explanatory variables: it controls for course- or university-related factors such as numbers of essential words in the syllabi, each university’s status as a public institution (or not), each university’s status as a religious institution (or not), and numbers of students in thousands. Huber-White standard errors are also reported for this model. With the inclusion of additional explanatory variables, the relationship between identity course meetings and identity terms remains practically unchanged.

Table 2: Regression Analyses of Identity Class Meetings

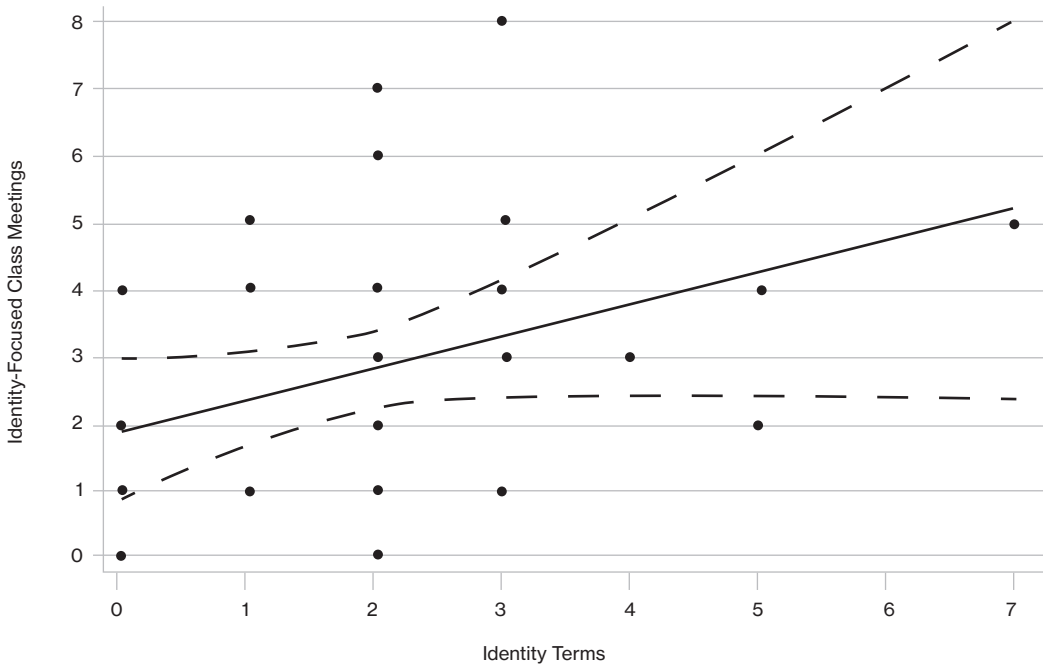
Exp. Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Identity Terms	0.447** (0.198)	0.468* (0.247)
Historical Terms	0.378* (0.200)	0.478** (0.215)
Anti-Establishment Terms	-0.161 (0.231)	-0.115 (0.203)
Pro-Establishment Terms	0.220 (0.362)	0.132 (0.333)
Total Meetings	0.037 (0.065)	0.040 (0.070)
Syllabus Length		-0.323 (0.559)
Private University		1.189 (1.004)
Religious University		-0.768 (0.878)
Enrollment		0.006 (0.027)
Constant	-0.025 (1.90)	-0.317 (2.207)
Observations	39	39
R-squared	0.309	0.389

Note: robust standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.01$

The estimates provided by Models 1 and 2 fulfill Gauss-Markov assumptions for statistical inference: they are efficient and unbiased. Jarque-Bera tests indicate that we cannot reject the null hypothesis that the residuals associated with both models are normally distributed. Park tests and visual diagnoses suggest that residuals for both models are also homoscedastic, even without the use of robust standard errors.

Figure 2 presents the results of Model 2 in visual form. The solid line represents the positive relationship between numbers of identity terms appearing in syllabi and numbers of identity-focused class meetings in those syllabi, when all other variables are held at their mean values. The dashed lines provide 95-percent confidence intervals. The dots represent actual (not predicted) values of identity terms and meeting totals found in each syllabus. The bottom axis covers the range of values for identity terms found in syllabi.

Figure 2: Regression Results in Graph Form



A.3 Factor Analysis of Class Meetings

In this section, we conduct a descriptive factor analysis to determine if groups of syllabi may be categorized as identity-focused documents. The factor analysis helps to reveal latent dimensions that structure syllabi topics. For our factor analysis, we use principal-components factoring. We then implemented a varimax orthogonal rotation. According to the eigenvector criterion, eight factors help explain variance in syllabus topics. The factors collectively account for slightly more than 75 percent of variance in topics. Our computed factor weights are presented in Table 3.

Certain kinds of topics are highly associated with one another. We ascribe titles to each dimension based on the topics that are most strongly reflected in those categories. The titles are found in the first row in Table 5. For example, the first factor is ascribed as “economic” and accounts for roughly 18 percent of the variance in topics. The topics “Second Industrial Revolution,” “Westward Expansion,” “Twenties,” “Economic Depression,” “Second World War,” “Fifties,” “Seventies,” and “Age of Reagan” all load heavily on this dimension. The second dimension explains an additional 11.5 variation in syllabus topics and consists of syllabi that focus primarily on national growth or presidents (i.e., “Westward Expansion,” “Fifties,” and “Age of Reagan” and “Age of Obama”).

From the factor analysis, we may conclude that the course syllabi we examine may not be cleanly partitioned into two or three categories but that, instead, there are contingents or clusters of syllabi with similar topics. Two of the eight factors (numbers 3 and 4) prioritize identity-related topics.

Table 3: Factor Analysis of History Syllabi Topics

Topics	Factor 1 Economic and Milit.	Factor 2 Expan- sion and Pres.	Factor 3 Civil Rights	Factor 4 Femi- nism and Obama	Factor 5 Civil Liberties	Factor 6 War Home- front	Factor 7 Second World War	Factor 8 Progres- sive Era
(1) Reconstruction	-0.396	-0.062	0.306	-0.578	-0.228	0.151	-0.197	-0.010
(2) Sec. Indus. Rev.	0.610	-0.396	0.146	0.185	0.118	-0.061	-0.099	0.117
(3) Westward Exp.	0.402	0.537	-0.108	-0.239	-0.306	0.333	0.067	-0.083
(4) Progressivism	0.169	-0.149	0.126	0.029	-0.464	-0.087	0.276	0.761
(5) War Homefront	-0.220	0.282	0.384	0.007	0.401	0.498	0.456	0.071
(6) World War I	0.355	-0.257	-0.606	0.186	-0.246	-0.095	0.070	-0.116
(7) Twenties	0.669	-0.059	0.236	0.098	0.067	0.259	-0.207	0.141
(8) Economic Depression	0.628	-0.363	0.194	-0.002	0.219	0.382	-0.09	0.044
(9) World War II	0.450	-0.182	-0.170	-0.347	0.354	-0.031	0.401	0.143
(10) Fifties	0.500	0.579	0.130	-0.147	-0.299	-0.207	-0.087	0.074
(11) Feminism	-0.133	0.142	0.125	0.815	-0.100	0.030	0.263	-0.011
(12) Civil Rights	-0.601	0.013	0.653	0.091	-0.070	-0.003	-0.059	0.069
(13) Sixties	0.279	0.371	0.509	0.116	-0.146	-0.453	0.152	-0.082
(14) Seventies	0.575	0.252	-0.030	0.265	-0.226	0.193	0.205	-0.414
(15) Age of Reagan	0.481	0.572	0.154	-0.381	0.280	-0.111	-0.164	0.092
(16) Nineties	-0.287	0.333	-0.566	-0.328	0.242	-0.133	0.237	0.169
(17) War on Terror	-0.085	0.358	-0.327	0.351	0.042	0.246	-0.491	0.353
(18) Obama	-0.269	0.524	-0.245	0.401	0.230	0.090	-0.057	0.110
(19) Trump	0.227	0.036	0.173	0.240	0.609	-0.426	-0.116	-0.036
Explained Variance	18.0	11.5	10.7	10.3	8.0	6.2	5.5	5.4

Using regression analyses, we examine the relationship between university characteristics and each of the eight factors listed in Table 4. In other words, we seek to determine which clusters of topics appeared most often depending on university characteristics. As with earlier analyses, we used Huber-White standard errors to calculate p values.

From the analyses, we find only that larger universities tended to have syllabi that focused less often on westward expansion and recent decades. No other university characteristics were correlated with the characteristics of various syllabi. In other words, syllabi that prioritize the Civil Rights Movement and Feminism are found at all types of universities.

Table 4: Syllabus Topics Across Universities

Exp. Variables	Model 1 Economic Syllabus	Model 2 Expansion and Pres.	Model 3 Civil Rights	Model 4 Feminism and Obama	Model 5 Civil Liberties	Model 6 War Homefront	Model 7 Second World War	Model 8 Progressive Era
Students (1000s)	0.013 (0.009)	-0.020** (0.008)	0.007 (0.012)	-0.003 (0.010)	0.016 (0.010)	-0.008 (0.011)	-0.013 (0.008)	0.013 (0.013)
Private University	-0.610* (0.354)	-0.064 (0.349)	0.225 (0.520)	0.460 (0.379)	-0.0891 (0.452)	-0.173 (0.479)	-0.205 (0.437)	0.180 (0.521)
Religious University	0.650 (0.526)	-0.425 (0.305)	-0.645 (0.498)	-0.408 (0.543)	0.389 (0.626)	-0.259 (0.365)	-0.479 (0.511)	0.092 (0.441)
Constant	-0.151 (0.298)	0.516* (0.270)	-0.154 (0.423)	-0.0497 (0.370)	-0.365 (0.299)	0.264 (0.396)	0.408 (0.309)	-0.366 (0.445)
Observations	39	39	39	39	39	39	39	39
R-squared	0.150	0.094	0.043	0.046	0.071	0.019	0.049	0.035

Note: robust standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$; all on two-tailed tests.

A.4 Regression and Factor Analyses: Identity Terms

Figure 3 reports the percentages of syllabi in our sample that included each of the identity-based terms. For example, none of the syllabi included the terms “oppression” or “marginalized,” but nearly 50 percent mentioned “gender” (at least once), and more than 30 percent mentioned “white supremacy” at least once. Other common terms include “LGBT” (or variants thereof), “Black National,” and “Diversity.”

Figure 3: Percentages of Syllabi with Each Identity Term

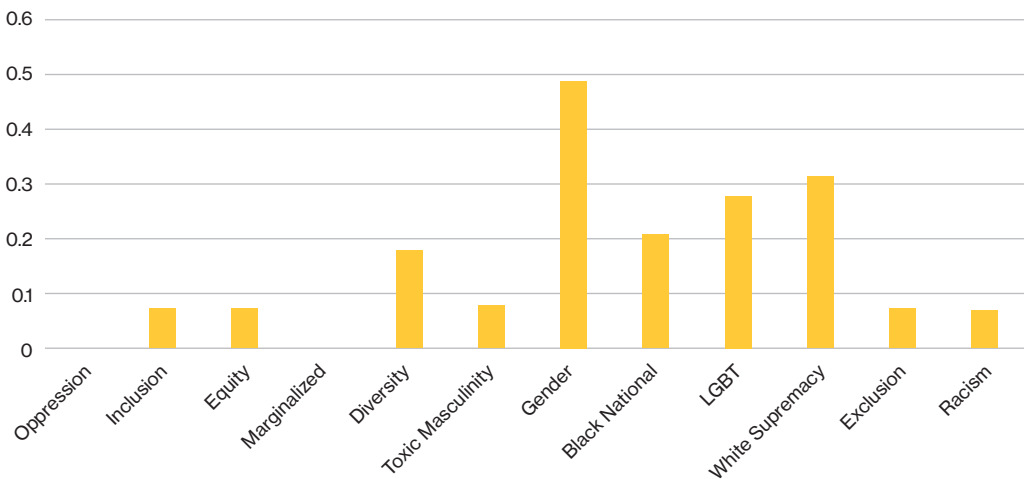


Table 5 presents a correlation matrix of different groups of terms found in the syllabi. Correlations that are statistically discernible at the $p \leq 0.05$ threshold appear in bold. From the table, identity terms appear more often in syllabi with historical and anti-establishment terms (but are not correlated with pro-establishment terms).

Table 5: Correlation Matrix of Terms

Terms	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(1) Identity	1.000			
(2) Historical	0.442	1.000		
(3) Pro-Establishment	-0.091	0.478	1.000	
(4) Anti-Establishment	0.512	0.479	0.062	1.000

To analyze the appearance of identity terms, we conducted regression analyses like those that appeared earlier. The results appear in Table 6. These regressions predict the numbers of identity-based terms that appear in syllabi. The results closely mirror those presented in Table 2: more identity terms appear in syllabi with more class meetings focused on identity topics. This relationship is not altered when the effects of university-level traits are held constant.

We then sought to determine if latent factors may explain the appearance of terms in syllabi. We conducted an additional factor analysis for the four categories of terms. As before, we use principal-components factoring. We also implemented a varimax orthogonal rotation. According to the eigenvector criterion, only two factors help explain variance in syllabus topics. The factors collectively account for slightly more than 80 percent of variance in term categories.

Our computed factor weights are presented in Table 7. From the table, two latent factors help to explain the categories of terms that appear in syllabi: one factor based on identity and anti-establishment terms, and another based more so on historical and pro-establishment terms. In regression results not presented, syllabi that received high scores along either the dimensions we labeled “identitarian” or “traditional” were no more or less likely to appear at large, private, or religious institutions.

Table 6: Regression Analyses of Identity Terms

Exp. Variables	Model 1	Model 2
Identity Meetings	0.316*** (0.0937)	0.301*** (0.0793)
Syllabus Length	0.789** (0.346)	0.754** (0.359)
Students		-0.013 (0.012)
Private University		-0.097 (0.627)
Religious University		-0.564 (0.766)
Constant	-0.267 (0.590)	0.207 (0.683)
Observations	39	39
R-squared	0.397	0.414

Note: robust standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table 7: Factor Analysis of History Syllabi Terms

Term Categories	Factor 1 Identitarian	Factor 2 Traditional
(1) History	0.594	0.691
(2) Identity	0.879	-0.074
(3) Pro-Establishment	-0.100	0.952
(4) Anti-Establishment	0.828	0.133

