**IDH2930: Alexander Hamilton**

Professor Mark Law

Wednesdays, Period 10 (5:10-6:00)

Hume Hall 0119

# Course Introduction and Objectives

This course focuses on the unforgettable career of Alexander Hamilton, a rags to riches story set in the context of Revolutionary America. Born in 1755 in the British West Indies, and growing up poor in New York City might be setback to most, but Hamilton was able to secure an education and during the American Revolution he rose up to serve as General George Washington’s aide de camp. After the war, we went back to New York and became a successful lawyer and a strong advocate of the new Constitution. In 1789, his old boss, George Washington, appointed Hamilton to be the nation’s first secretary of the treasury and he held this position until 1796. Hamilton was mortally wounded in a duel with the sitting Vice President of the United States, Aaron Burr, in 1804.

Hamilton’s service in the Continental Army, his prominent place among the Founding Generation, and his role in the creation of the early American economic system marks him as an important historical figure; his enduring impact on American political economy and, most recently, in Broadway fame, makes him a legend. This class will use the 2005 award-winning biography of Hamilton, written by Ron Chernow, as its central text, but will also use clips from stage, film, and the web in order to understand how Alexander Hamilton’s legacy still lives in American popular culture.

# Required Reading

There are two (2) required texts in this course:

Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005). ISBN 0143034758

Miranda and McCarter, *Hamilton: An American Musical* (Grand Central Publishing 2016). ISBN 1455539740

# Grading, Attendance, and Accommodations Policies

Students will be evaluated on three major components of this class. Most important will be the weekly discussion of the book. This will be evaluated based on attendance, participation in class, and online discussion posts.

Students will also complete three (3) brief (500-750 word) reaction papers that link the events in Hamilton to current issues (although not necessarily in song and dance) spread out across the seminar.

The breakdown of the final grades in this course is as follows:

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| **Grade Calculation** |
| Participation 40% |
| First Brief Essay 15% |
| Second Brief Essay 20% |
| Third Essay / Presentation 25% |

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendence.aspx>

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed. Students with disabilities requiring accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352- 392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class, as it constitutes intellectual theft and academic dishonesty. If you turn in the work of others and try to pass it off as your own, you will fail that assignment and risk expulsion from the University of Florida. I will give you the guidelines, expectations, and other information regarding the written work in this course, so you really have no reason to cheat. I take these matters very seriously and will prosecute vigorously if provoked. Any possible rewards derived from plagiarism simply don’t justify the risk! All students must conform to UF’s Honesty Code regarding cheating, plagiarism, and the use of copyrighted materials, which you can find at:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>

Your written assignments will be monitored with the Turnitin Anti-Plagiarism Service, so please keep in mind that cheating on the assignments in this course will be much more difficult than actually doing the work!

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at [http://evaluations.ufl.edu](http://evaluations.ufl.edu/). Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <http://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

# Seminar Schedule (Subject to Revision by Instructor and Very Rough!)

January 10 Introductions, Discussion of Course Expectations,

Musical Construction – Is Hamilton An American Musical?

January 17 West Indian

**Reading**: Chernow, *Hamilton*, pp. 1-61

January 24 Patriot

**Reading:** Chernow, *Hamilton*, pp. 62-106

January 31 Hero

**Reading:** Chernow, *Hamilton*, pp. 107-166

February 7 New Yorker

**Reading:** Chernow, *Hamilton*, pp. 167-218

February 14 Constitutionalist

**Reading:** Chernow, Hamilton, pp. 219-290

February 21 Treasurer

**Reading:** Chernow, *Hamilton*, pp. 291-361

February 28 Rival

**Reading:** Chernow, *Hamilton*, pp. 362-418

March 7 Spring Break—No Class Today

March 14 Federalist

**Reading**: Chernow, *Hamilton*, pp. 419-481

March 21 Retirement?

**Reading:** Chernow, *Hamilton*, pp. 482-545

March 28 Partisan

**Reading:** Chernow, *Hamilton*, pp. 546-602

April 4 Counter-Revolutionary

**Reading:** Chernow, *Hamilton*, pp. 603-656

April 11 Duelist

**Reading:** Chernow, *Hamilton*, pp. 657-731 April 18 Presentations

April 25 Presentations