

AMST 2001 / ENGL 2999
The First American University
Spring 2011
Wednesday, 7:00 – 8:15 p.m.
1 credit
Kaufmann Aud., Goldwin Smith Hall

Instructors:
Corey Ryan Earle '07 cre8@cornell.edu
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Course Description:

Educational historian Frederick Rudolph called Cornell University “the first American university,” referring to its unique role as a coeducational, nonsectarian, land-grant institution with a broad curriculum and diverse student body. In this course, we will explore the history of Cornell, taking as our focus the pledge of Ezra Cornell and Andrew Dickson White to found a university where “any person can find instruction in any study.” The course will cover a wide range of topics and perspectives relating to the faculty, student body, evolution of campus, and important events and eras in Cornell history. Stories and vignettes will provide background on the current university and its administrative structure, campus traditions, and the names that adorn buildings and memorials throughout campus. Finally, the course will offer a forum for students to address questions on present-day aspects of the university.

Requirements:

The course grade will consist of attendance and participation (2/3) and written work (1/3).

Attendance at course meetings is required of all students. For students who choose to take the course for credit, attendance is required at every course meeting. Students may have one unexcused absence during the semester. Each subsequent unexcused absence will result in a lowered attendance and participation grade (A to A-, A- to B+, etc.). All absences should be communicated to the instructors within twenty-four hours of the course meeting or as soon as possible.

Readings will include short selections from important texts on the history of Cornell. Each week will include both required and supplemental readings. Students should come to class having read that week’s required assignment. Supplemental readings are optional and designed to allow students to explore particular topics further. Whenever possible, readings will be made available online through the Blackboard site, which students should enroll in by the second meeting of the course. For those readings not on the Blackboard site, copies are available through the Cornell University Library. Important texts will also be placed on four-hour reserve in Uris Library. Most of the texts are also available at the Flora Rose House Library, West Campus.

Written work in this course will consist of a required reading response during the first half of the semester and a final paper. The reading response (1 page) should address one week’s topic based on the required **and** supplemental readings. There will also be a short essay or research paper (4-5 pages, 2 paper copies) due at the last class meeting. Students taking the course for credit **MUST** submit the final paper to receive credit for the course. Further details on the assignment will be available later in the semester.

S/U Option:

For students who choose to take the course on an S/U basis, a total of six (6) unexcused absences will result in the automatic grade of “U” for the course. The reading response is required to receive credit for the course; however, students taking the course on an S/U basis are not required to submit the final paper, so long as they attend class regularly.

Texts (optional)

Although not required, students may also wish to purchase certain important texts in the history of Cornell University. The instructors recommend the following (both available at the Cornell Store):

Bishop, Morris. *A History of Cornell* (1962).
 Kammen, Carol. *Cornell: Glorious to View* (2003).

Students with Disabilities Statement:

In compliance with the Cornell University policy and equal access laws, the instructors are available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. Request for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except in unusual circumstances, so that arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

Academic Integrity Statement:

Absolute integrity is expected of every Cornell student in all academic undertakings. A full statement of your responsibility as a student is available at <http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>.

Note:

Because this is the first semester this course is being offered, the syllabus and readings may change during the semester. Changes will be noted during lecture and the most up-to-date version of the syllabus will be available on Blackboard.

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
Week 1: 1/27	Introduction	<u>Required:</u> Morris Bishop '13, PhD '26, “And Perhaps Cornell,” from <i>Our Cornell</i> (1939)
Week 2: 2/2	The Morrill Land Grant College Act & The Founders and the Founding	<u>Required:</u> Carl Becker, “Life and Learning in the United States,” from <i>Cornell University: Founders and the Founding</i> (1943) <u>Supplementary:</u> Ezra Cornell’s CIPHERING BOOK; The Morrill Land Grant Act (1862); Veto Message from President James Buchanan (1859);

		<p>“I Would Found an Institution” [RMC Exhibit online]; <i>The Autobiography of Andrew Dickson White</i> (1904)</p>
<p>Week 3: 2/9</p>	<p>A Struggling University & The Early Faculty</p>	<p><u>Required:</u> Morris Bishop, <i>A History of Cornell</i>, Chapters 6 (pp. 91-98); Carl Becker, “Freedom and Responsibility” (1940) <u>Supplementary:</u> Carol Kammen, <i>First Person Cornell</i> (pp. 1-28); Morris Bishop, <i>A History of Cornell</i>, Chapters 7-8 (pp. 99-142); The Great Will Case [RMC Exhibit online]</p>
<p>Week 4: 2/16</p>	<p>An Academic Pioneer: The Endowed & Contract Colleges</p>	<p><u>Required:</u> Malcolm Carron, <i>The Contract Colleges of Cornell University</i> (1958), pp. 27-47 <u>Supplementary:</u> Flora Rose, <i>A Growing College</i> (1968), pp. 10-38</p>
<p>Week 5: 2/23</p>	<p>Any Person: Gender and Ethnic Diversity at Cornell</p>	<p><u>Required:</u> Charlotte Williams Conable ‘51, <i>Women at Cornell</i> (1977), pp. 62-85. <u>Supplementary:</u> Morris Bishop, <i>A History of Cornell</i>, Chapter 9 (pp. 143-152); Carol Kammen, <i>Part & Apart</i> (2009); Early Black Women at Cornell [RMC Exhibit online]</p>
<p>Week 6: 3/2</p>	<p>The Early Campus and its Development</p>	<p><u>Required:</u> Kermit Carlyle Parsons MRP ’53, <i>Cornell Campus and its Development</i>, “Here the Great Library Will Stand,” Chapter 9 (pp. 152-175) <u>Supplementary:</u> Rebecca H. Cofer, <i>The Straight Story</i> (1990), pp 3-31</p>
<p>Week 7: 3/9</p>	<p>Wartime Cornell</p>	<p><u>Required:</u> Raymond F. Howes ‘24, <i>A Cornell Notebook</i>, “How Cornell Prepared for the Veterans,” Chapter 10 (pp.125-135) <u>Supplementary:</u> Morris Bishop, <i>A History of Cornell</i>, Chapter 27, 35, & 36 (425-442, 522-553)</p>

Week 8: 3/16	The Ivy League and the Big Red [Course Meeting at Athletics Hall of Fame; Reading responses due]	<u>Required:</u> Robert Kane '34, <i>Good Sports: A History of Cornell Athletics</i> (1992), pp. 2-7, 24-26, 40-42, 296-307 <u>Supplementary:</u> John H. Foote '74, <i>Touchdown: The Story of the Cornell Bear</i> (2008)
SPRING BREAK		
Week 9: 3/30	Unrest and Activism: The 1950s and 1960s	<u>Required:</u> Cushing Strout & David I. Grossvogel, eds, <i>Divided We Stand</i> (1970), p. 3-6, 15-33 <u>Supplementary:</u> Donald Downs '71, <i>Cornell '69</i> (1999), pp. 1-32; Daniel Margulis '72, ed., <i>A Century at Cornell</i> (1980), pp. 209-225.
Week 10: 4/6	The Later Campus and its Development [Reading responses returned; Essay topic & supplementary reading distributed in class]	<u>Required:</u> Carol Kammen, <i>Cornell: Glorious to View</i> , Chapter 11 (pp. 211-225) <u>Supplementary:</u> Lewis Roscoe, <i>Planning the Campus</i> (2000), pp. 1-8; Cornell Master Plan for the Ithaca Campus, Executive Summary (2008)
Week 11: 4/13	Student Life Then & Now	<u>Required:</u> Oscar D. Von Engeln '08, PhD '11, <i>Concerning Cornell</i> , "Student Life," Chapter 4 (pp. 226-255) <u>Supplementary:</u> Thomas Balcerski '05, <i>Acacia Fraternity at Cornell</i> (2007); Alpha Phi Alpha Centennial Celebration [RMC Exhibit online]
Week 12: 4/20	The Administration and "Big Red Tape"	<u>Required:</u> Ronald G. Ehrenberg, <i>Tuition Rising</i> (2000), pp. 104-109, 209-217, 249-255 <u>Supplementary:</u> Frederick G. Marcham PhD '26, <i>Cornell Notes: World War II to 1968</i> (2006), p. 1-7
Week 13: 4/27	The First American University [Essay due in class; 1-2 minute presentation by students]	<u>Required:</u> No required reading; work on final essays and research papers

Week 14: 5/4	Cornell in Fiction & Pop Culture	<u>Required:</u> Amanda Ann Klein '99, "Why Does Pop Culture Like to Hate on Cornell?"(2010); Brad Herzog '90, "Stranger Than Fiction" from <i>Cornell Alumni Magazine</i> (March/April 2008) <u>Supplementary:</u> Richard Fariña '59, <i>Been Down So Long</i> (1966); Robert Hennemuth '77, <i>The Big Kids</i> (2004); Matt Ruff '87, <i>Fool on the Hill</i> (1988)
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Opportunities for "Extra Credit" & Further Learning

1) House Dinner at Flora Rose House:

Students are encouraged to engage with the "living and learning" community in the West Campus House system, meeting faculty, graduate students, and other undergraduate students. Each week, students will have the opportunity to attend House Dinner at Flora Rose House on West Campus, with the instructors and supervising faculty. The dinner begins at 6:00 p.m. For those students without a meal plan, Flora Rose House has graciously agreed to cover the cost of the dinner. Sign-ups in advance (with name and CU ID number) are required. Please let the instructors one week in advance, if you are interested in attending.

2) Contribute to "This week in Cornell history" for the *Cornell Chronicle*:

"This week in Cornell history" is a feature chronicling significant events, interesting discoveries and quirky moments that occurred from the university's founding through the present. The *Cornell Chronicle* is soliciting items, and any student who contributes would get a short byline with his or her name. Check out the column at <http://www.news.cornell.edu/features/History/History.html> for more details.