



## Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

The [California Open Educational Resources Council](http://www.cool4ed.org) has designed and implemented a faculty review process of the free and open etextbooks showcased within the California Open Online Library for Education ([www.cool4ed.org](http://www.cool4ed.org)). Faculty from the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California were invited to review the selected no/low cost and open etextboks using a rubric. Faculty received a stipend for their efforts and funding was provided by the State of California, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Textbook Name:

### Sage American History: A Survey of America's Past



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Find it: [eTextbook Website](#)

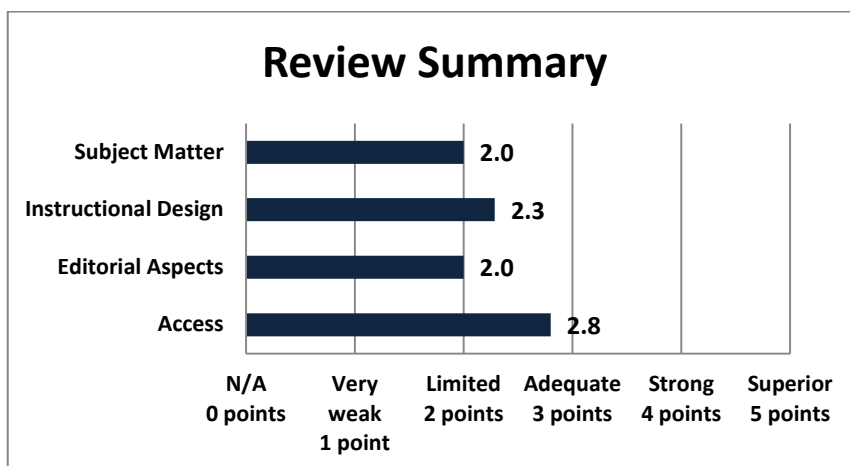
Textbook Author:  
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Title/Position:  
Instructor,  
History  
Format Reviewed:

[Online](#)

A small fee may be associated with various formats.

Date Reviewed:  
August, 2014.



### California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: [HIST 130](#)

Subject Matter (30 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the content accurate, error-free, and unbiased?			X			
Does the text adequately cover the designated course with a sufficient degree of depth and scope?		X				
Does the textbook use sufficient and relevant examples to present its subject matter?			X			
Does the textbook use a clear, consistent terminology to present its subject matter?				X		
Does the textbook reflect current knowledge of the subject matter?			X			
Does the textbook present its subject matter in a culturally sensitive manner? (e.g. Is the textbook free of offensive and insensitive examples? Does it include examples that are inclusive of a variety of races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?)			X			

Total points: 12 out of 30

Please provide comments on any aspect of the subject matter of this textbook:

- There are some simplifications that should be corrected. For examples, the statement that “The oldest settlement in North America is the city of St. Augustine in Florida” is not technically true. Also, the author identifies New Amsterdam as a Dutch colony, but it should read “New Netherland” (for both references, see <http://www.sageamericanhistory.net/colonial/topics/colonialintro.html>)
- Multiple “Resources” link to Wikipedia pages. Since the content of Wikipedia pages is not properly vetted, this could have an impact on the quality of the subject matter that is being presented to students. Refer to the “Resources” links at <http://www.sageamericanhistory.net/colonial/index.html>; Six of the twelve resources are Wikipedia pages.
- At times the text assumes a nationalist stance, which can be construed as biased. For example, there are references to the American character as “bold, adventurous... determined to prosper” (<http://www.sageamericanhistory.net/colonial/topics/colonialintro.html>) and the Constitution as “the most profound political document ever produced by man” <http://www.sageamericanhistory.net/colonial/topics/amhistintro.htm>
- Some of the primary sources used and historians cited are quite dated. Some primary sources date to the 1950s or earlier.

Instructional Design (35 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Does the textbook present its subject materials at appropriate reading levels for undergrad use?				X		
Does the textbook reflect a consideration of different learning styles? (e.g. visual, textual?)					X	
Does the textbook present explicit learning outcomes aligned with the course and curriculum?		X				
Is a coherent organization of the textbook evident to the reader/student?		X				
Does the textbook reflect best practices in the instruction of the designated course?			X			
Does the textbook contain sufficient effective ancillary materials? (e.g. test banks, individual and/or group activities or exercises, pedagogical apparatus, etc.)		X				
Is the textbook searchable?					X	

Total points: 16 out of 35 points

Please provide comments on any aspect of the subject matter of this textbook:

- It was particularly effective to include links to primary sources in the text but the links should be periodically reviewed to ensure that they are still active. For example, all the links on <http://www.sageamericanhistory.net/colonial/topics/colonialsociety.html#slavery> are broken. Other broken links include [http://www.sageamericanhistory.net/expansion\\_antebellum/docs/senecafallsdec.html](http://www.sageamericanhistory.net/expansion_antebellum/docs/senecafallsdec.html) and <http://www.sageamericanhistory.net/economicgrowt&reform/womensrights.htm>

Editorial Aspects (25 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the language of the textbook free of grammatical, spelling, usage, and typographical errors?		X				
Is the textbook written in a clear, engaging style?				X		
Does the textbook adhere to effective principles of design? (e.g. are pages laid out and organized to be clear and visually engaging and effective? Are colors, font, and typography consistent and unified?)			X			
Does the textbook include conventional editorial features? (e.g. a table of contents, glossary, citations and further references)		X				
How effective are multimedia elements of the				X		

Editorial Aspects (25 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
textbook? (e.g. graphics, animations, audio)						

Total points: out of 25 points

Please provide comments on any aspect of the subject matter of this textbook:

- There are numerous errors throughout the text. Here are just a few of them:
  - The phrase “This course is not include” should read “This course does not include” (in second paragraph of subsection “American Southwest” in “Colonial America” section); in the same section, the first letter in the sentence that begins “we should keep in mind” ought to be capitalized.
  - I think that a word or two is missing from the phrase “we would mere chronology” (see subsection “What Is American History About?” on page <http://www.sageamericanhistory.net/colonial/topics/amhistintro.htm>)
  - A space is needed between “Itwould” in the subsection titled “Prehistory: The Origins of the Age of Discovery” (same URL as above).
  - The phrase “The Enlightenment, which we have Lori discussed, have generated new ways of thinking,” has a few errors in it ([http://www.sageamericanhistory.net/colonies\\_empire/topics/amrevooverview.html](http://www.sageamericanhistory.net/colonies_empire/topics/amrevooverview.html))
  - This quote by Franklin is incorrect: “As Ben Franklin said, ‘We had best hang together, or we shall surely hand separately.’ ” (same page as above).
  - The phrase “Washington held the shaky revolutionary was together long enough” needs to be corrected (<http://www.sageamericanhistory.net/revolution/topics/washington.htm>)
  - The phrase “The created a dangerous situation” should be fixed ([http://www.sageamericanhistory.net/jeffersonian/topics/america\\_europe.html](http://www.sageamericanhistory.net/jeffersonian/topics/america_europe.html))
  - The following paragraph that begins “Many southerners who were opposed to slavery stuck with it because of large amounts of invested capital in land and cotton and slaves” is duplicated on page <http://www.sageamericanhistory.net/jeffersonian/topics/monroeadmin.html>.

Access (25 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the textbook compatible with standard and commonly available hardware/software in college/university campus student computer labs?					X	
Is the textbook accessible in a variety of different electronic formats? (e.g. .txt, .pdf, .epub, etc.)			X			
Can the textbook be printed easily?					X	
Does the user interface implicitly inform the reader how to interact with and navigate the textbook?				X		
How easily can the textbook be annotated by students and instructors?		X				

Total points: 14 out of 25 points

Please provide comments on any aspect of the subject matter of this textbook:

- The online version of the text cannot be annotated, but there is a PDF version of the text available at [http://textbookequity.org/oct/Textbooks/Sage\\_USHistoryI.pdf](http://textbookequity.org/oct/Textbooks/Sage_USHistoryI.pdf). Although the PDF version is somewhat different than its online counterpart, it can be annotated.

Overall Ratings	Not at all (0 pts)	Very Weak (1 pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3 pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
What is your overall impression of the textbook?			X			
	Not at all (0 pts)	Strong reservations (1 pt)	Limited willingness (2 pts)	Willing (3 pts)	Strongly willing (4 pts)	Enthusiastically willing (5 pts)

Overall Ratings						
How willing would you be to adopt this book?	X					

Total points: 2 out of 10 points.

## Overall Comments

If you were to recommend this textbook to colleagues, what merits of the textbook would you highlight?

- The primary sources that are linked/embedded throughout the pages are quite useful when the links function. Portions of the text could be used to supplement other materials.

What areas of this textbook require improvement in order for it to be used in your courses?

- In its current state, this resource lacks the breadth of coverage that is necessary for a lower division, general education course. The text also does not seem to take alternate points of view into consideration. This resource would have to be expanded – especially the sections on Native Americans and women –and vetted in order to be considered appropriate for use as a textbook.

We invite you to add your feedback on the textbook or the review to [the textbook site in MERLOT](#).  
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