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The History Of The United States, 2nd Edition



Synopsis

This comprehensive series of 84 lectures features three award-winning historians sharing their insights into this nation's past - from the European settlement and the Revolutionary War through the Civil War, 19th-century industrialization, two world wars, and the present day. While American history spans not much more than two centuries, it is filled with a wealth of leaders, wars, movements, inventions, and ideas - each of which contributed in its own unique way to America's transformation from 13 disparate colonies on the east coast of North America into a global superpower. These lectures give you the opportunity to grasp the different aspects of our past that combine to make us distinctly American, and to gain the knowledge so essential to recognizing not only what makes this country such a noteworthy part of world history, but the varying degrees to which it has lived up to its ideals. The lectures chart the five predominant themes that run throughout the chronicle of U.S. history: The American passion for freedom-including religious, political, and economic freedom. The pursuit of education, which has been the quintessential way for Americans to invent (and reinvent) themselves. The unquestioned faith in the value of popular government. The willingness of Americans to experiment with and adapt to new environments and situations. The belief that the United States is a "city on the hill," a country the likes of which the world has never seen before. Placing familiar historical events in the context of these overarching themes will help you see American history less as a series of separate events and more as a mosaic in which everything is interconnected.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Great Courses are always excellent and high quality.

Narrative style keeps your interest.

Good starting point

Thanks

The order of the professors, Guelzo then Gallagher, and then Allitt, is also the order in which this lecture series is most engaging. Guelzo is an entertaining speaker, clear in his subjects and sticking to a clear chronology. Gallagher is a less accomplished narrator, but his coverage is similarly lucid as Guelzo. The weakest of the three is Allitt, who only partially successfully shifts the lecture style from a chronology-based approach to a thematic approach, and by doing so repeats himself often. His parting piece, titled "Reflections", defines the Native American and African American experiences of America simply as "trying", which is almost comical in its misrepresentation. Overall, I would still give this 5 stars, as it knocks into a cocked hat other attempts at this scope of American history.

This series is thought-provoking and informative. It has proven to be the perfect educational opportunity for my 40 minute commute and an outstanding investment I will never regret. I highly recommend these lectures for anyone who has even a casual interest in history.

This is a good audio course, typical of the Teaching Company courses. However, I would expect a little more care in the editing of the material. Perhaps the editors (and probably the purchasers) would believe that a highly qualified professor of history (Ivy League PhD and all that) would not sprinkle his lectures with simple errors. Wrong! Right away, at the start of Lecture 2, we are told that the Catholic Kings, Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain had only one child, Juana (Joanna). In fact, they had five who survived to adulthood. (Their only son, Juan, died at age 19.) As any historian should know, one of their other daughters, Catherine of Aragon, was married to Henry VIII and her "failure" to produce a male heir was the centerpiece of the English Reformation. Come on, Teaching Company, clean up your courses! Another factor that detracts from the over-all value of the audio course is the fact that it is presented by three lecturers with three distinctly different styles. In particular, the third lecturer concentrates on social and economic issues to the detriment of understanding the political history of the period. Also, the first two lecturers have definite political

points of view which they are pushing. Well, perhaps its not too important that the first lecturer is a partisan of Alexander Hamilton and the Federalists, and spends an inordinate amount of time trashing the contributions of one Thomas Jefferson (ever heard of him?). But it's irritating nonetheless. Though perhaps not suitable for serious study, these audios are useful for casual listening when engaged in other activities.

I wish I could rate a 4.5. Nice, thorough overview of American History. Sure, some events are glossed over or forgotten in favor of others, but overall a very nice summary of the history of our great nation. The last few lectures felt a bit rushed.

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