

History 722-01

Historiography of the American Revolution

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Tuesday 6:30-9:20, MHRA 1209

Fall Semester 2007

Office hours: Monday 10am-12pm

Scope and Purposes of the Course:

Over the course of the semester, we will explore emergence of patriotism in early American society and how nationalism was employed during the War for Independence. Namely, how and why did individuals of varying ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds come to choose their respective loyalties during the mid-to-late eighteenth century? Did Britain's thirteen mainland colonies experience a "crisis of allegiance" during the 1760s and 70s? If so, what were the repercussions of that crisis, not only for the founding fathers, but also for women, blacks, Native-Americans and poor whites? Did notions of freedom "trickle down" from the white elite, as countless scholars have suggested? Or, did those deprived of their liberty force a reluctant ruling class into permanently severing ties with the crown? How and when did a distinct "American" national identity emerge? And why was that identity readily embraced by some, yet vigorously challenged by others? Which sectors of the American populace stood to gain or lose the most by declaring allegiance to the "cause of liberty"?

Required Reading:

Ray Raphael, *A People's History of the American Revolution*

Pauline Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution*

Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*

Woody Holton, *Forced Founders*

Claude Halstead Van Tyne, *Loyalists in the American Revolution*

Gregory E. Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance*

Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters*

Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic*

Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution*

Alfred F. Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party*

Course Schedule:

August 21 introduction to the course

August 28 A Revolution for all? submit 750 word paper on Raphael

September 4 A Restrained Revolution? submit 750 word paper on Maier

September 11 Radical Revolutionaries? submit 750 word paper on Wood

September 18 A Revolt from Below? submit 750 word paper on Holton

September 25 Loyalists and Pacifists; submit 750 word paper on Van Tyne

October 2 Native Americans and the War for Independence; submit 750 word paper on Dowd

October 9 Women and the Revolution; submit 750 word paper on Norton

October 16 no class

October 23 Female Patriotism; submit 750 word paper on Kerber

October 30 Blacks and the Revolution; submit 750 paper on Quarles

November 6 Memory and the Revolution; submit 750 word paper on Young

Guidelines for Weekly Papers:

Students may approach the writing of papers on individual required books in any way they choose; however, in preparing each paper, students *must* situate the book historiographically: where did the book fit into scholarly interpretation; who did it challenge, who challenged it? How did wider forces in the academic world, in politics, and in culture shape the author's approach? Papers must, in some way, reflect historiography. Students should therefore read reviews of the book, essays by and about the author, excerpts from historiographically related books and articles.

This class will be based on weekly discussions of the secondary readings. Each week, students will be expected to write 750 word reaction essays and post them to the Blackboard site (by Sunday at 5 p.m. before the next Tuesday class). The quality of the reaction essays and the questions raised by them will heavily influence the class participation grade. The reaction essays are especially important as they will become the starting point for Tuesday's discussion. The dialogue will be largely self-generated. Attendance is, therefore, mandatory. Missing more than 2 classes will have drastic consequences on participation grade.

The "breakdown" for grades is quite simple: 40% based on the quality of your class participation/ 60% based on the quality of your final essay.

November 13 Just for fun, read quickly two books on the current political situation in the U.S. and be prepared to discuss the role of nationalism in post 9/11 America.

November 20 In the light of the class readings and discussions, each student should submit a 2-3 page proposal for a longer (1,200 word) paper on a cluster of five to ten related books in American history before 1865. Share the paper with three other class members. Each "jury" of evaluators should present criticism of the strengths and weaknesses of each proposal and each proposal writer should respond.

November 27 and December 4 Presentation of longer papers.
December 15 Longer papers due.

Resources and Bibliography:

For models of longer book reviews see *Reviews in American History*, *William and Mary Quarterly*, and Jack P. Greene, *Interpreting Early America: Historiographical Essays*. For a cultural interpretation of American historiography over the past one hundred years, see Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession*. Current issues of *Reviews* and the *WMQ* are in the Serials Room, Jackson Library, recent issues available from the Serials Dept. desk, and bound volumes are in the stacks at E171 R480 and F221 W71 respectively.

"Historiographical Discipline":

Staying abreast of recent of recent scholarship and critical opinion in the field of History requires systematic attention. Historians develop a list of 5-10 quarterly journals to consult regularly. Read the reviews that interest you and use the publishers' ads as a shortlist of

important new books. In American History such a list of journals should include the two national journals, *American Historical Review* and the *Journal of American History*; next in importance are the *William and Mary Quarterly* for early American history and two regional journals, the *Journal of Southern History* and the *New England Quarterly*. Most American historians have a special interest in a particular state, and every state has its own historical journal, some published by the state historical agency and some by a privately endowed historical society. Pennsylvania has one of each as did New York for many years. Keeping a notebook on book reviews is an excellent way to prepare for graduate comprehensive and general examinations