COLLOQUIUM IN AMERICAN HISTORY TO 1865

History 701-021        Dr. Mark Elliott
TH 6:30-9:20         Office: MHRA 2125
MHRA 3209         Office Hours:
Fall 2011         MW 10:30-11:30 or by
appointment

DESCRIPTION:

This course examines the main currents of scholarship on the history of the United States from its beginnings to 1865. The purpose of this reading-intensive course is to introduce graduate students to some of the major historiographical debates and the latest trends in scholarship that fall into this period. Because the scholarship on this period is vast, it is impossible to address all of the important debates that exist. Rather than attempt to be comprehensive, this class offers a sampling of some of the most recent developments in American historiography. Students should approach this course as an opportunity to work on the skill of comprehending historiographical debates and mastering the contours of the debates that shape the field. In order to pass their comprehensive exams, Master’s and Ph.D students will need to employ the techniques learned in this class to engage with many more historiographical controversies and master many more important works of scholarship on their own.

Each class meeting is organized around the discussion of one book as the main reading for the week, with supplementary articles to enhance discussion. Each book represents important recent scholarship on a topic of broad interest in the profession. Political, social, cultural, legal, and intellectual topics are represented; regional, national and transnational approaches are sampled; categories of analysis and perspectives on the past that include labor and class, economics and consumerism, race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and other important themes are explored. For each main reading, students must be able to identify its thesis, to critically evaluate its logic and methodology, and to assess its historiographic contribution. To assist in the process of placing a book in dialogue with the historiography, students will also read short companion articles and make presentations from the supplementary reading lists. Students will share book reviews and summaries with each other and work collectively to broaden their base of knowledge. All students will be expected to treat opposing viewpoints fairly without distortion or oversimplification and engage in historiographic debates with professionalism. Students should strive not only to grasp the major debates accurately, but also to figure out where they stand personally within these debates.
There will be a cumulative final exam to mimic the conditions of the qualifying exams for MA and Ph.D students. This exam will be made up of two essay questions on which students will write for 90 minutes each.

GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES:

--Reading secondary sources efficiently, with an ability to identify main arguments, critically evaluate methodology, and assess historiographic contributions.

--Participating with professionalism in sophisticated academic debates and intellectual exchanges.

--Delivering informative and useful oral presentations to peers.

--Formal writing in specific genres of the profession, including book reviews and historiographic essays.

--Establish a foundation for scholarly expertise on pre-1865 American historiography.

--Preparation for qualifying exams on American history pre-1865.

COURSE POLICIES:

Participation:

Attendance is mandatory. Absence from class may have an adverse impact on your participation grade. You are expected to complete each week’s reading before class so that you can participate constructively in a class discussion. Your participation grade will be based on the overall quality of your contributions to the class—not the quantity of contributions you make—and the professionalism with which you conduct yourself in scholarly discussion and debate.

Presentations:

Each student will be assigned two presentations over the course of the semester. Presentations will last from 12-15 minutes (speakers will be asked to conclude at 15 minutes). One of these will be a presentation of the main reading for the week. The presenter will be responsible to introduce the author, concisely summarize the argument, discuss the scholarly reception of the book, and assesses its historiographical significance. The student must also craft 3-5 questions for discussion arising from the reading. The second presentation will be based on one of the books from the supplementary reading list. In this presentation, the student will summarize the book in more detail for the other students in the class who have not read it, and make comparisons and connections between the book and the main reading for the week. See
“Presentation Guidelines” on the “Assignments” page of the Blackboard website for a full description of the assignment.

Blackboard Discussion Forum

The Blackboard site for the course will allow for class discussion to continue beyond the normal time/place constraints of the classroom. You are required to make at least ONE substantial comment, and ONE constructive/observational reply to another student’s posting each week. A “week,” for our purposes, begins and ends at 12:00 midnight on Wednesday. Your forum postings will be read by the entire class, and you will receive a grade for the quality of your postings at the end of the semester.

Your “substantial comment” must address the course material in some way. It may address the upcoming week’s reading. It may be a comment you wanted to make in class, but did not have the opportunity to make. Otherwise, it may be a reflection on an issue discussed in class, on something you read for this class, or another class, or on your own that relates to the course material in some way. Your response to another student's posting must be a thoughtful and constructive response (such as if you were having a conversation in the same room with them). Please make your comments ORIGINAL. If someone has made a point you wanted to make find something else to say. The rules for use of the forum is as follows:

1. Your grade will be based on the substance of your posting which includes the thought and effort you put into it as well as the length. You can post more than twice a week, but make sure that you have at least one substantial posting each week of at least 200 words, and one reply.

2. You will receive a zero for the week if you fail to post before 12:00 midnight on Wednesday of each week. Therefore, you have a full week, including the weekend, to read the forum comments and respond to them or create new postings (Note: you do not have to be finished with your reading to make a substantial post. A reflection on any aspect or part of the reading will do fine). I will check the forum each Thurs. morning to record who posted an entry for that week and I will monitor the board all week.

3. Maintain academic civility, use respectful language and avoid rude remarks. Even more than in face-to-face debate, caution must be exercised in “virtual” debate to avoid insulting or offending others. Nothing derogatory may be said about any student or faculty member on the forum. Misuse of the forum will result in the removal of the offender from the forum discussion list, and a Failing grade for the assignment.

4. Do not use the forum to communicate private questions to me, or anyone else in the class (such as “When is the paper due?”). Send private e-mails for that.
Written Work:

There will be two significant papers over the course of the semester. Each paper will be a detailed review of two or more books assessing their contributions to the larger historiographic issues to which they speak. One book must be one of the main readings of the week on the syllabus, and the other(s) must come from the supplementary reading list from the same week as the main reading chosen. Detailed assignment sheets describing the expectations, length, and due dates for the writings assignment will be given out in class and posted on blackboard. Late papers will be penalized 1/3 of a grade for each day the paper is late. All written assignments must be completed and turned in through Blackboard in order to pass the class.

Final Grade:

40%  Class participation (including presentations).
15%  Blackboard Discussion
15%  Historiographic Paper #1
15%  Historiographic Paper #2
15%  Final Exam

Books  (all weekly readings not listed below will be made available on Blackboard under “Course Documents”):

Colin G. Calloway, *New Worlds for All*  
Schama, Simon.  *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves and the American Revolution*  
Joseph J. Ellis, *American Creation: Triumphs and Tragedies at the Founding of the Republic*  
Seth Rockman, *Scrapping By: Wager Labor, Slavery and Survival in Early Baltimore*  
Howe, Daniel Walker.  *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*  
McCurry, Stephanie.  *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South*  

Week 1.  INTRODUCTION

Ian Tyrell, “American Exceptionalism in the Age of International History.”

**Week 2. CONTACT AND CONQUEST**

**Sept. 1 Main Reading:** Colin G. Calloway, *New Worlds for All* (1997)


**Supplementary Reading:**


Fisher, David Hackett. *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America.*


Richter, Daniel. *Facing East From Indian Country: A Native History of Early America.*


**Week 3. PURITAN NEW ENGLAND AND AMERICAN IDENTITY**

**Sept. 8 Main Reading:** Lepore, Jill. *Name of War: King Phillip's War and the Origins of American Identity.*


**Supplementary Reading:**


Gutierrez, Ramon. *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846.*

David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England*

Demos, John. *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America*

Shorto, Russell. *The Island at the Center of the World: The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan*

White, Richard. *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes*
Week 4. GENDER AND RACE IN EARLY AMERICA


Brown, “Beyond the Great Debates: Gender and Race in Early America.”

Supplementary Reading:

Morgan, Philip. Slave Counterpoint, Black Culture in the Eighteenth Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry.

Week 5. THE ORIGINS OF INDEPENDENCE


Supplementary Reading:

Anderson, Fred. Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766.
Butler, Jon. Becoming America: The Revolution before 1776
Isaac, Rhys. The Transformation of Virginia 1740-1790.
Meier, Pauline. *From Resistance to Revolution*
Nash, Gary. *The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America*
Ulrich, Laurel T., *The Age of Homespun*

**Week 6. SLAVERY AND THE TRANSNATIONAL REVOLUTION**

**Sept. 29 Main Reading:** Schama, Simon. *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves and the American Revolution*


**Supplementary Reading:**

Bailyn, Bernard. *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours*
Frey, Silvia, *Water from the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age.*

Linebaugh, Peter, and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: The Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*
Rediker, Marcus. *The Slave Ship: A Human History*
Wood, Peter. *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1760 through the Stono Rebellion*

**Week 7. THE CULT OF THE “FOUNDING FATHERS”**

**Oct. 6 Main Reading:** Ellis, Joseph. *American Creation: Triumphs and Tragedies in the Founding of the Republic*


**Supplementary Reading:**

Beeman, Richard, *Plain, Honest Men. The Making of the American Constitution*
Berkin, Carol. *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence*
Holton, Woody. *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution*
Nash, Gary. *The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America*


Young, Alfred. *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution*


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**Week 8. THE EARLY REPUBLIC**

**Oct. 13**  
**Main Reading:** Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wager Labor, Slavery and Survival in Early Baltimore*  

**Supplementary Reading:**


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**Week 9. MIDTERM**

**Oct. 20**  
PAPERS DUE no later than 9:30 pm on Blackboard. (No Class).

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**Week 10. ECONOMICS AND POLITICS IN THE JACKSONIAN AGE**

**Oct. 27**  
**Main Reading:** Howe, Daniel Walker. *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*  

**Supplementary Reading:**

Week 11.  THE CULTURE OF SLAVERY

Nov. 3.  Main Reading:  Johnson, Walter. Soul by Soul: Life inside the Antebellum Slave Market.

Supplementary Reading:

Franklin, John Hope and Loren Schweninger, Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation.
Faust, Drew G. James Henry Hammond and the Old South
Parish, Peter. Slavery: History and Historians.
Stampp, Kenneth. The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Antebellum South.
White, Deborah Gray. Aren’t I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South

Week 12.  CAUSES OF THE CIVIL WAR


Supplementary Reading:

Gary J. Kornblith, “Rethinking the Coming of the Civil War: A Counterfactual Exercise.”.
Ford, Lacy. *Deliver Us From Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South.*
Freehling, William. *The Road to Disunion: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854.*
Freehling, William. *The Road to Disunion: Secessionists Triumphant, 1854-61.*

**Week 13. LINCOLN AND THE REPUBLICAN PARTY**

Nov. 17 **Main Reading:** Foner, Eric. *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery*

Zarefsky, “The Continuing Fascination with Lincoln.”

**Supplementary Reading:**

Gallagher, Gary. *The Union War*
Glatthaar, Joseph. *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers*
Manning, Chandra. *What this Cruel War was Over: Soldiers, Slavery and the Civil War* (2007).

Nov. 25 **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**Week 14. THE CONFEDERACY AND THE CIVIL WAR**

Dec. 1 **Main Reading:** McCurry, Stephanie. *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (2010)

Gallagher, “Disaffection, Persistence, and Nation: Some Directions in Recent Scholarship on the Confederacy.”

**Supplementary Reading:**

Boritt, Gabor S., ed. *Why the Confederacy Lost.*
Escott, Paul. *After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate Nationalism*. 
Faust, Drew Gilpin. *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War*. 
Gallagher, Gary. *The Confederate War* 
Levine, Bruce. *Confederate Emancipation: Southern Plans to Free and Arm Slaves during the Civil War* 
Thomas, Emory M. *The Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience*. 

**Week 15.** FINAL PAPER  
Dec. 4 PAPERS DUE no later than 9:30 pm on Blackboard. 

**Week 16.** FINAL EXAM  
Dec. 13 Final Exam, 6:30-9:20 pm. (TUESDAY)