Interpretations of events, ideas, forces, and persons in history change all the time. Historiography is the study of those differing interpretations by professional historians and their development over time. In this class you will be exposed to various schools of thought on major themes in American history through the Civil War. You must read a large amount of material in order to begin to master the literature on our selected topics. You will read the equivalent of roughly a book and a half each week, a normal load for history graduate students. I strongly urge you to take notes on your readings and familiarize yourself with the notes. As a matter of course, you will be exposed to “facts” and “content knowledge” in this course, but we are more interested in historical interpretations and how and why historical interpretations have changed over time.

When doing history, it helps to keep in mind that there are many different ways of determining how history happens. One of the key things to remember is that historians can disagree very much over why almost any event happened. You will not agree with all interpretations that you encounter in this course. However, you must know the major differing interpretations in order to understand historians and to become one yourself.

**Grading:** I expect that you will attend every class meeting, complete all readings, and participate in discussions. Your grade will be reduced for non-participation or absences.

You will complete five (5) analysis papers throughout the semester. Each paper of 5 or more pages will take that week’s readings and search for a crucial fact, process, question, idea, or approach to history that has caused historians to disagree about that topic. Analyze that particular item: why is it so critical to debate on this topic? Should it be the main focus of historians, or are there other facts, processes, questions, ideas, or approaches that could open up new understandings? Perhaps one of the week’s readings makes such a case? In addition, you should briefly tell me and the class about the authors of the readings for each week that you write about. You choose the five topics/weeks to complete your papers – they are due the day we discuss that particular topic, though **everyone must complete a paper on the Week 7 topic on October 18.**

At one meeting you will lead the discussion of that week’s readings. Prepare a one-page, single-spaced outline of key ideas and questions you will use to guide the discussion to turn in at the end of that class. It is obviously helpful if you are also completing an analysis paper for the same week.
Finally, there will be a take-home exam that will require you to discuss some of the key trends we identify over the course of the semester.

**Grading summary:**
- 5 Analysis Papers    10% each or  50% of your overall grade
- Final Exam          20%
- Class Participation  20%
- Discussion Leadership 10%

100%

**Required books** (available in the UNCG campus bookstore):
- Donald Fixico, ed., *Rethinking American Indian History* (1997)

**SCHEDULE:**
Nearly all of the articles listed in the schedule are available on the J-STOR or Project MUSE databases through the UNCG Library webpages or via the general internet. Others will be handed out by me.

**August 23:** Introduction

**WEEK ONE (Aug. 30)**

**Colonial America - generally speaking**


Articles:

WEEK TWO (Sept. 6)

Colonial America: an Atlantic World?


WEEK THREE (Sept. 13)

American Indians, Ethnohistory, and the “New Indian History”

Book: Donald Fixico, ed., Rethinking American Indian History (1997)

Articles:
Colin Calloway, “2008 Presidential Address: Indian History from the End of the Alphabet; And What Now?” Ethnohistory vol. 58, No. 2 (Spring 2011), pp. 197-211.

WEEK FOUR (Sept. 20)

Early American Environmental History

Book: Steven Stoll, Larding the Lean Earth: Soil and Society in Nineteenth-Century America (2002)

Articles:
Mart A. Stewart, “Environmental History: Profile of a Developing Field,” The History Teacher, Vol. 31, No. 3 (May, 1998), pp. 351-368. JSTOR
Katherine A. Grandjean, “New World Tempests: Environment, Scarcity, and the Coming of the Pequot War,” The William and Mary Quarterly Vol. 68, No. 1 (January 2011), pp. 75-100. JSTOR
WEEK FIVE (Sept. 27)

Women in Colonial America


Articles:

WEEK SIX (Oct. 4)

Religion in Early America


Articles:
Philip Goff and Alan Heimert, “Revivals and Revolution: Historiographic Turns since Alan Heimert’s ‘Religion and the American Mind,’” Church History vol. 67, no. 4 (Dec. 1998), pp. 695-721. JSTOR

October 11: No Class: Fall Break Use the time to read, comprehend, and write about all of the material for October 18.

*WEEK SEVEN (Oct. 18)
*All students must write an analysis paper for this topic/week.

The American Revolution: Historiography


Articles:
WEEK EIGHT (Oct. 25)

The Early Republic


Articles:

WEEK NINE (Nov. 1)

Historical Memory and Myth-Making in Early America


Articles:

WEEK TEN (Nov. 8)

Jacksonian America & Market Revolutions


Articles:


WEEK ELEVEN (Nov. 15)

Slavery


Articles:

Nov. 22: No Class: Thanksgiving Break

WEEK TWELVE (Nov. 29)

Causes of the Civil War


Article:

Final Exam due in my office or office mailbox by 12:00 p.m., NOON, Tuesday, December 6.