

# HIS 701-01 Colloquium in American History before 1865

## Fall 2013: TH, 3:30-6:20, MHRA 3207

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*The historian is perforce a critic; the historian of history is a critic of critics . . . .  
History is always written because history is always made. Historiography is always revised  
because history is constantly remade.*

*–Bert James Loewenberg,  
American History in American Thought*

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 10.**

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		<u>10%</u>
		100%

**Required books** (available in the UNCG campus bookstore):

- Alan Taylor, *Colonial America: A Very Short Introduction* (2012)  
Jack P. Greene, ed., *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (2009)  
Daniel Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country* (2001)  
Clare Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender & Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730-1830* (2006)  
Chris Beneke, *Beyond Toleration: The Religious Origins of American Pluralism* (2006)  
Gwenda Morgan, *The Debate on the American Revolution* (2008)  
Sarah J. Purcell, *Sealed with Blood: War, Sacrifice, and memory in Revolutionary America* (2002)  
Harry L. Watson, *Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America* (rev. ed., 2006)  
David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (2006)  
Hugh Tulloch, *The Debate on the American Civil War Era* (1999)  
Peter Charles Hoffer, *Past Imperfect: Facts, Fictions, Fraud—American History from Bancroft and Parkman to Ambrose, Bellesiles, Ellis, and Goodwin* (2008)

## **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 made available as a pdf on the Blackboard site for this course.

### **August 22: Introduction**

#### **WEEK ONE (Aug. 29)**

##### **Colonial America - generally speaking**

Book: Alan Taylor, *Colonial America: A Very Short Introduction*

##### Articles:

Joyce Appleby, "A Different Kind of Independence: The Postwar Restructuring of the Historical Study of Early America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. Ser., Vol. 50, (Apr., 1993), pp. 245-267. *JSTOR*

Alfred F. Young, "An Outsider and the Progress of a Career in History," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 52, No. 3 (Jul., 1995), pp. 499-512. *JSTOR*

John M. Murrin, "Beneficiaries of Catastrophe: The English Colonies in America," in *The New American History* Eric Foner, ed., (Temple University Press, 1997), 3-30. *Provided via pdf on Blackboard*

T. H. Breen, "Creative Adaptations: Peoples and Cultures," in *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era* Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds., (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 195-232. *Provided via pdf on Blackboard*

#### **WEEK TWO (Sept. 5)**

##### **Colonial America: an Atlantic World?**

Book: Jack P. Greene, ed., *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (2009)

#### **WEEK THREE (Sept. 12): No Class: Ethnohistory Conference**

#### **WEEK FOUR (Sept. 19)**

##### **American Indians, Ethnohistory, and Environmental History**

Book: Daniel Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country*

Articles:

James Axtell, "Colonial America Without the Indians: Counterfactual Reflections," *Journal of American History* 73 (1987) 981-96 *JSTOR*

Neal Salisbury, "The Indians' Old World: Native Americans and the Coming of Europeans," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 53, No. 3, Indians and Others in Early America (Jul., 1996), pp. 435-458 *JSTOR*

Greg O'Brien, "The Conqueror Meets the Unconquered: Negotiating Cultural Boundaries on the Post-Revolutionary Southern Frontier," *Journal of Southern History* Vol. 67, No. 1 (Feb., 2001), pp. 39-72. *JSTOR*

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.

Ted Steinberg, "Down, Down, Down, No More: Environmental History Moves beyond Declension," *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Summer, 2004), pp. 260-266. *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*

Karen Halttunen, "Grounded Histories: Land and Landscape in Early America," *William and Mary Quarterly* Vol. 68, no. 4 (October 2011), pp. 513-532. *JSTOR*

## **WEEK FIVE (Sept. 26)**

### **Gender & Sex**

Books: Clare Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender & Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730-1830*

Articles:

Kathleen Brown, "Brave New Worlds: Women's and Gender History," *William and Mary Quarterly* vol. 50, (1993) pp. 311-328. *JSTOR*

John M. Murrin, "Things Fearful to Name": Bestiality in Colonial America," *Pennsylvania History* Vol. 65, (1998), pp. 8-43. *JSTOR*

Albert L. Hurtado, "When Strangers Met: Sex and Gender on Three Frontiers," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* , Vol. 17, No. 3 (1996), pp. 52-75. *JSTOR*

Colin L. Talley, "Gender and Male Same-Sex Erotic Behavior in British North America in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* , Vol. 6, No. 3 (Jan., 1996), pp. 385-408. *JSTOR*

## **WEEK SIX (Oct. 3)**

### **Religion in Early America**

Book: Chris Beneke, *Beyond Toleration: The Religious Origins of American Pluralism* (2006)

Articles:

Charles L. Cohen, "The Post-Puritan Paradigm of Early American Religious History," *William and Mary Quarterly* vol. 54, no. 4 (Oct. 1997), pp. 695-722. *JSTOR*

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*

John M. Murrin, "No Awakening, No Revolution? More Counterfactual Speculations," *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Jun., 1983), pp. 161-171. *JSTOR*

## **\*WEEK SEVEN (Oct. 10)**

**\*All students must write an analysis paper for this topic/week.**

### **The American Revolution: Historiography**

Books: Gwenda Morgan, *The Debate on the American Revolution* (Palgrave, 2008)

Articles:

Colin Gordon, "Crafting a Usable Past: Consensus, Ideology, and Historians of the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 46, No. 4 (Oct., 1989), pp. 671-695. *JSTOR*

Alfred F. Young, "Afterword: How Radical Was the American Revolution?" Young, ed., *Beyond the American Revolution* (1993) 317-364. *Provided via pdf on Blackboard*

## **WEEK EIGHT (Oct. 17)**

### **Historical Memory and Myth-Making in Early America**

Book: Sarah J. Purcell, *Sealed with Blood: War, Sacrifice, and memory in Revolutionary America*

Articles:

Robert M. S. McDonald, "Thomas Jefferson's Changing Reputation as Author of the Declaration of Independence," *Journal of the Early Republic* 19 (1999) 169-95. *JSTOR*

Carla Mulford, "Figuring Benjamin Franklin in American Cultural Memory" *New England Quarterly* 72 (1999) 415-43. *JSTOR*

Mitch Kachun, "From Forgotten Founder to Indispensable Icon: Crispus Attucks, Black Citizenship, and Collective Memory, 1770–1865," *Journal of the Early Republic* 29 (Summer 2009) 248-286. *Project Muse*

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "How Betsy Ross Became Famous: Oral tradition, nationalism, and the invention of history," *Common-Place* vol. 8, no. 1, (October 2007):  
<http://www.common-place.org/vol-08/no-01/ulrich/>

## **WEEK NINE (Oct. 24)**

### **Jacksonian America & Market Revolutions**

Book: Harry L. Watson, *Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America* (rev. ed., 2006)

Articles:

Forum on Charles Seller's *The Market Revolution* in the *Journal of the Early Republic* vol. 12, no. 4 (1992) 445-476. *JSTOR*

Sean Wilentz, "Society, Politics, and the Market Revolution, 1815-1848," in *The New American History* Eric Foner, ed., (Temple University Press, 1997), 61-84. *Provided via pdf on Blackboard*

See also the excellent review of Daniel Walker Howe's *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* by Jill Lepore, "How America Came of Age," in *The New Yorker*, October 29, 2007:

[http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2007/10/29/071029crbo\\_books\\_lepore?printable=true](http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2007/10/29/071029crbo_books_lepore?printable=true)

## **WEEK TEN: October 31: No Class: Halloween**

## **WEEK ELEVEN (Nov. 7)**

### **Slavery**

Book: David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (2006)

Articles:

Walter Johnson, "On Agency," *Journal of Social History* - Volume 37, Number 1, Fall 2003, pp. 113-124. *Project MUSE*

Peter Kolchin, "Eugene D. Genovese: Historian of Slavery," *Radical History Review* - Issue 88, Winter 2004, pp. 52-67. *Project MUSE*

## **WEEK TWELVE (Nov. 14)**

### **Causes of the Civil War**

Book: Hugh Tulloch, *The Debate on the American Civil War Era* (1999)

Article:

Gary J. Kornblith, "Rethinking the Coming of the Civil War: A Counterfactual Exercise," *Journal of American History*, 90 (June 2003), pp.76-105. *JSTOR*

"The Flag Controversy and the Causes of the Civil War, a Statement by Historians," *Callaloo*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (Winter, 2001), pp. 196-198. *JSTOR*

## **WEEK THIRTEEN (Nov. 21) (Last class!):**

### **The Perils of American History and Historians**

Book: Peter Charles Hoffer, *Past Imperfect: Facts, Fictions, Fraud—American History from Bancroft and Parkman to Ambrose, Bellesiles, Ellis, and Goodwin*

Articles:

Another view on the Bellesiles case: Jon Wiener, "Arming America and 'Academic Fraud'," in *Historians in Trouble: Plagiarism, Fraud, and Politics in the Ivory Tower* Jon Wiener, ed., (The New Press, 2005), 73-93. *Provided via pdf on Blackboard*

Other Mis-Behaviors by Historians: Jon Wiener, "Feminism and Harrassment: Elizabeth Fox-Genovese Goes to Court," *Historians in Trouble*, 13-30. *Provided via pdf on Blackboard*  
Jon Wiener, "The Denmark Vesey 'Trial Record': A New Verdict," *Historians in Trouble*, 119-135. *Provided via pdf on Blackboard*

**Nov. 28: No Class: Thanksgiving Break**

**Final Exam** due in my office or office mailbox by 5:00 p.m., Monday, December 2.