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:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Analysis Papers</td>
<td>10% each or 50% of your overall grade</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Leadership</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</tbody>
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Total: 100%

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

**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:

**WEEK TWO (Sept. 5)**

Colonial America: an Atlantic World?


**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:
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.
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
WEEK SIX (Oct. 3)

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*

*WEEK SEVEN (Oct. 10)*

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

The American Revolution: Historiography


Articles:

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:

http://www.common-place.org/vol-08/no-01/ulrich/

**WEEK NINE (Oct. 24)**

**Jacksonian America & Market Revolutions**


**Articles:**


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:

**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:**

WEEK TWELVE (Nov. 14)

Causes of the Civil War


Article:


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

The Perils of American History and Historians

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

Articles:

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


Nov. 28: No Class: Thanksgiving Break

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