

COLLOQUIUM IN AMERICAN HISTORY TO 1865

History 701-02
TH 6:30-9:20
MHRA 1210
Fall 2016

Dr. Mark Elliott
Office: MHRA 2125
Office Hours:
Tues 2-4 pm,
or by appointment

DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this reading-intensive course is to introduce graduate students to some of the major historiographical debates and latest trends in scholarship in this period. Because the scholarship is vast, it is impossible to address all of the important debates that exist in the field of pre-1865 American history. Rather than cover a “greatest hits” of historical works, this class highlights the most recent developments in American historiography. Political, social, cultural, economic, and intellectual history approaches are represented; regional, national, transnational, and global approaches are sampled; categories of analysis and perspectives on the past that include labor and class, race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and other important themes are explored.

Students should approach this course as an opportunity to work on the skills required of professional historians. These include the ability to read a book for its thesis/argument, understand the historiographical debates that each book engages, and develop one’s own critical perspective on the work of other historians. 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. The techniques learned in this class will enable students to explore many more historiographical debates beyond what is covered in this foundational course on their own.

Each class meeting is organized around the discussion of one book as the main reading for the week, and supplementary readings. To place 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. 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:

You are expected to complete each week's reading before class so that you can participate constructively in a class discussion. Participation includes both listening and speaking. 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. You can earn up to 6 points per class. Points are awarded as follows: No constructive contributions to discussion = 0 points. Minimal participation = 1-2 points. Strong participation = 3-4 points. Outstanding participation = 5-6 points.

Attendance is mandatory. One missed class will not affect your grade, other than lost participation points. Each class missed after the first one will lower your participation grade by 10 points (in addition to the lost participation points).

Presentations:

Each student will be assigned three 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 on the main reading for the week, and a second one will be on book chosen from the supplementary reading list. For these presentations, 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. In the supplementary book 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 supplementary reading and the main reading for the week. The third presentation will be based on one of the articles assigned for the week. This presentation will be shorter, roughly 5 minutes, and will not require a discussion of the author or the article's reception.

Written Work:

There will be two significant papers over the course of the semester. Each paper will be a comparative review of two 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 for each day the paper is late. All written assignments must be completed and turned in through Canvas in order to pass the class.

“Book Club” Discussion Forum

The Canvas 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. You will receive up to 3 points based on the quality of your posts for that week.

Students will be assigned to a small “book club” made up of 3-4 students. Each week, all students will post a “substantial comment” that must address the weekly reading. You need not have finished the reading when you post—in fact, you are encouraged to post early in the week! It must be an observation, reaction, or comment of substance. For instance, you may post your reaction to the thesis of the book and whether you find it original and provocative or not. Then, you must read the other posts in your “book club

and respond to one of them. 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.
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 personally derogatory may be said about anyone on the forum.

Ask the Professor:

This Canvas Discussion forum is for questions that students might normally address to the professor in class or via e-mail. Instead of taking up class time, and for the benefit the rest of the class who might also have the same question, you should post your question here. An example of such a question is "I cannot find this week's article on the canvas page. Did you forget to post it?" I will respond on the discussion board with a reply such as "Sorry, I forgot to turn on the availability button for that one. Try again now."

Before posting your question, be sure to check the syllabus or the appropriate assignment sheet for the answer. You should check the previous questions to make sure yours

had not already been asked and answered. If you write directly to me, I will re-direct you to this discussion board.

Resources for Students with Disabilities:

Students with recognized disabilities should register with the Office of Accessibility Resources & Services (OARS). OARS is located on the second floor of the Elliott University Center (EUC) in Suite 215 and maintains a webpage at <http://ods.uncg.edu/>. The mission of OARS is to provide, coordinate, and advocate for services which enable undergraduate and graduate students with disabilities to receive equal access to a college education and to all aspects of university life

Academic Integrity Policy:

All work submitted in your name must be your own original work for this class with proper citation or credit given to all sources. All papers will be turned in using the “Turn It In” function on Canvas which automatically scans your paper for plagiarism. Each student should be familiar with the Academic Integrity Policy, and the penalties for plagiarism. Refer to this address on the UNCG website for more details: <http://studentconduct.uncg.edu/>

Final Grade:

78 Points	Participation in class discussion. (You can earn up to 6 points per week, and we meet 13 times).
30 Points	Main Reading Presentation
30 Points	Supplementary Reading Presentation
8 Points	Article Presentation
78 Points	Blackboard Posts (You can earn up to 3 points per post. You are required to post twice per week).
100 Points	Comparative Book Review #1
100 Points	Comparative Book Review #2
76 Points	Final Exam

Final Grade Scale:

500 Points Possible

A 465-500; **A-** 450-464; **B+** 435-449; **B** 415-434; **B-** 400-414; **C+** 385-399; **C** 365-384; **C-** 350-364; **F** 350 or less.

REQUIRED READING (available at UNCG's Bookstore):

Books Marked with * are available as e-books through library.

1. Shorto, Russell. *The Island at the Center of the World: The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan*
2. Demos, John. *The Unredeemed Captive: A Family Story from Early America*
3. Brown, Kathleen. *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia.*
4. David, David Brion. *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*
5. T.H. Breen, *Insurgents and Patriots: The Revolution of the People*
6. *Wood, Gordon. *Empire of Liberty*
7. *Beckert, Sven. *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*
8. *Parsons, Lynn Hudson. *The Birth of Modern Politics*
9. *Volk, Kyle. *Moral Minorities and the Making of the American Democracy*
10. Amy S. Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire*
11. Oakes, *Freedom National: the Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861-1865.*
12. *Quigley, Paul. *Shifting Grounds: Nationalism and the American South, 1848-1865.*
13. Jenkins and Stauffer, *The State of Jones*
14. *Foner, Eric and Lisa McGirr, eds, *American History Now*

Week 1. INTRODUCTION

Aug. 25 Main Reading: Couvares, *Interpretations of American History*, 1-24.
Willam Cronon, "Storytelling."

Week 2. CONTACT AND CONQUEST

Sept. 1 Main Reading: Shorto, Russell. *The Island at the Center of the World: The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan*
Taylor, "Squaring the Circle" from *American History Now*.

Supplementary Reading:

Ned Blackhawk., *Violence over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West*
Colin G. Calloway, *New Worlds for All* (1997)
Greene, Jack. *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture.*
Fisher, David Hackett. *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America.*
Nash, Gary. *Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early North America.*
Taylor, Alan. *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (2001).
Weber, David J. *The Spanish Frontier in North American Region, 1650-1815.*

Week 3. CULTURES IN CONFLICT IN COLONIAL AMERICA