

# HIS 701 Colloquium in American History before 1865

Fall 2017: W nights, 6:30-9:20, MHRA 3204

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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 **seven (7) analysis papers** throughout the semester. Each paper of 5 or so 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 or that seems to dominate historical approaches to that topic. Analyze that particular item: why is it so critical to debate and research 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 about each of the authors of the readings for each week that you write

about. You choose the seven topics/weeks to complete your papers – they are due the day we discuss that particular topic, though **everyone must complete a paper on the American Revolution topic on October 4.**

At one meeting you will **lead the discussion** of part 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. Also prepare to tell me and the class about each author for that week’s reading: who are they, where do/did they teach, what are they known for, etc.?

**Grading summary:**

7 Analysis Papers	10% each or	70% of your overall grade
Class Participation		20%
Discussion Leadership		<u>10%</u>
		100%

**Required Books** (listed in the order that we will read them):

Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (2001)

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

Colin Calloway, *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America* (**2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2013**)

Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America* (2004)

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

Joan R. Gunderson, *To Be Useful to the World: Women in Revolutionary America, 1740-1790* (2006)

Alfred F. Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution* (1999)

John Lauritz Larson, *The Market Revolution in America: Liberty, Ambition, and the Eclipse of the Common Good* (2010)

Edward E. Baptist, *The Half has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (2014)

Anne F. Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families: A New History of the North American West, 1800-1860* (2011)

Chandra Manning, *What this Cruel War was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (2007)

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 journal 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 Canvas site for this course.

**August 16: Introduction****Aug. 23: Colonial America – interpretations and approaches**

Articles:

- 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 Canvas*
- 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 Canvas*
- Gary J. Kornblith and Carol Lasser, "More Than Great White Men: A Century of Scholarship on American Social History," in *A Century of American Historiography* James M. Banner, Jr., ed. (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010), 11-20. *Provided via pdf on Canvas*
- Nancy Isenberg, "'Make 'Em Laugh': Why History Cannot be reduced to Song and Dance," *Journal of the Early Republic*, Volume 37, Number 2, Summer 2017, pp. 295-303. *Project MUSE*

**Aug. 30: Colonial America: broadly conceived**

Book: Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (2001)

**Sept. 6: Colonial America: an Atlantic World?**

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

**Sept. 13: American Indians & Ethnohistory**

Book: Colin Calloway, *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2013)

Articles:

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

Ned Blackhawk, "American Indians and the Study of U.S. History," in *American History Now* Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, eds., (Temple University Press, 2011). *E-book or on Canvas*

### **Sept. 20: Early American Environmental History**

Book: Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America* (2004)

Articles:

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*

Donald Worster, "The Rise of Environmental History," in *A Century of American Historiography* James M. Banner, Jr., ed. (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010), 114-123. *Provided via pdf on Canvas*

Sarah T. Phillips, "Environmental History," in *American History Now* Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, eds., (Temple University Press, 2011). *E-book or on Canvas*

### **Sept. 27: No class! Read for the October 4 class ....**

### **\*Oct. 4: The American Revolution: Historiography**

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

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

Articles:

"The American Revolution: Moderate or Radical?" with excerpts of essays from T. H. Breen and Gary B. Nash in *Interpretations of American History: Patterns and Perspectives: Volume One: Eighth Edition* Francis G. Couvares et. al., eds., (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009), 127-164. *Provided via pdf on Canvas*

Woody Holton, "American Revolution and Early Republic," in *American History Now* Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, eds., (Temple University Press, 2011). *E-book or on Canvas*

### **Oct. 11: Gender & Sex in Early America**

Book: Joan R. Gunderson, *To Be Useful to the World: Women in Revolutionary America, 1740-1790* (2006)

Articles:

- Kathleen Brown, "Brave New Worlds: Women's and Gender History," *William and Mary Quarterly* vol. 50, (1993) pp. 311-328. *JSTOR*
- Richard Godbeer, "'The Cry of Sodom': Discourse, Intercourse, and Desire in Colonial New England," *William and Mary Quarterly* vol. 52, (1995) pp. 259-286. *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*

### **Oct. 18: Historical Memory and Myth-Making in Early America**

Book: Alfred F. Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution* (1999)

Articles:

- Robert E. Cray, Jr., "Major John André and the Three Captors: Class Dynamics and Revolutionary Memory Wars in the Early Republic, 1780-1831," *Journal of the Early Republic* 17 (Fall 1997) 371-397. *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/>

### **Oct. 25: Jacksonian America & Market Revolutions**

Book: John Lauritz Larson, *The Market Revolution in America: Liberty, Ambition, and the Eclipse of the Common Good* (2010)

Articles:

- 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 Canvas*
- Seth Rockman, "Jacksonian America," in *American History Now* Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, eds., (Temple University Press, 2011). *E-book or on Canvas*

### **Nov. 1: Slavery**

Book: Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (2014)

Articles:

Hugh Tulloch, "Slavery," in *The Debate on the American Civil War Era* Hugh Tulloch, ed., (Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 33-70. Available as a pdf on Canvas

### Nov. 8: The West

Book: Anne F. Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families: A New History of the North American West, 1800-1860* (2011)

Article:

Stephen Aron, "Frontiers, Borderlands, Wests," in *American History Now* Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, eds., (Temple University Press, 2011). E-book and on Canvas

### Nov. 15: Causes of the Civil War

Book: Chandra Manning, *What this Cruel War was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (2007)

Articles:

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

Adam Rothman, "Slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction," in *American History Now* Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, eds. (Temple University Press, 2011) E-book and on Canvas

### Nov. 22: No Class! (Thanksgiving Holiday)

### Nov. 29 (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 Canvas

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 Canvas

Jon Wiener, "The Denmark Vesey 'Trial Record': A New Verdict," *Historians in Trouble*, 119-135. Provided via pdf on Canvas

More dirt on Ambrose: Richard Rayner, "Channelling IKE," *The New Yorker* (April 26, 2010)

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/04/26/channelling-ike>