

HIS 722: Topics in Early American History: Revolts & Rebellions in Early American History

Fall 2020

Prof. Greg O'Brien

Office: MHRA 2129

Email: wgobrien@uncg.edu

UNCG Department of History on

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UNCGDepartmentofHistory/> (Links to an external site.)

UNCG Department of History on the Web: <https://his.uncg.edu/> (Links to an external site.)

Welcome to my attempt to create a course in an online Canvas format that I have always only taught face-to-face. Inevitably, there will be hiccups along the way. Canvas cannot replicate all the aspects of my face-to-face version, and my familiarity with using Canvas is an ongoing process. Please be patient and keep me informed when something doesn't seem to be working correctly. We will have a substantive and informative class that will build on skills needed by history graduate students and history professionals.

I am available for Zoom meetings or an in-office physical meeting (with masks on), just contact me via either email or the Canvas site to set up a day & time. You can also email me or send me a message via Canvas anytime and I will respond, though be aware that depending on what time of day you send it I may not see it until the next day, and there is likely to be a delay to messages sent over the weekend.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

In this course students will develop significant skills in:

1. analyzing historical monographs for their conceptual framework, methodological approach, use of sources, and historiographic perspective
2. identifying different approaches to the study of early American rebellions
3. writing academic prose that is clear, pointed, and analytically rigorous
4. engaging in persuasive, thoughtful, and courteous discussion with academic peers

Assignments Summary

Besides reading a book each week for the first ten weeks and discussing them via Zoom during the scheduled class time, you will write a review for five of the assigned books, and write a larger research or historiographical paper that will include you writing a peer review of a classmate's paper. Class discussion is central to this course and will form a significant part of your grade.

***All written assignments submitted via Canvas must be one of the following file types: .doc / .docx / or .pdf**

***Refer to the Modules section of this Canvas site for weekly instructions and assignments.**

Required Books

(listed in the order we will read them)

All are available as e-books via the UNCG Library except the Hoffer and Lepore books. All the books are also on order at the UNCG Bookstore, but you can purchase them wherever is most convenient for you.

Rice, James D. *Tales from a Revolution: Bacon's Rebellion and the Transformation of Early America* (Oxford University Press), 2012 [UNCG Library link \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Delucia, Christine M. *Memory Lands: King Philip's War and the Place of Violence in the Northeast*. Yale University Press, 2018 [UNCG Library link \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Hoffer, Peter Charles. *Cry Liberty: The Great Stono River Slave Rebellion of 1739*. Oxford University Press, 2012 [UNCG Library link - NOT available as an e-book \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Lepore, Jill. *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2005. [UNCG Library link - NOT available as an e-book \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Archer, Richard. *As If an Enemy's Country: The British Occupation of Boston and the Origins of Revolution*. Oxford University Press, 2010 [UNCG Library link \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Egerton, Douglas R. *Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America*. Oxford University Press, 2009. [UNCG Library link \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Richards, Leonard L. *Shays's Rebellion: The American Revolution's Final Battle* University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003 [UNCG Library link \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Slaughter, Thomas P. *The Whiskey Rebellion: Frontier Epilogue to the American Revolution*. Oxford University Press, 1986 [UNCG Library link \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Calloway, Colin G. *The Victory with No Name: The Native American Defeat of the First American Army*. Oxford University Press, 2015 [UNCG Library link \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Nicholls, Michael L. *Whispers of Rebellion: Narrating Gabriel's Conspiracy*. University of Virginia Press, 2012 [UNCG Library link \(Links to an external site.\)](#)


Book Reviews

(SLOs 1, 3)

You will prepare professional-quality book reviews for five of your assigned weekly books. Professional quality means that your review could be published in an academic history journal, and, thus, the review should expose the author's thesis and main supporting points, discuss and evaluate the evidence presented by the author to prove his/her thesis, suggest how this book fits into the historiography on that subject, and tell who the author is. Do NOT tell me that the book is "interesting" for that means absolutely nothing. Do tell me why the book is important, what its flaws (if any) are, and why we must all be familiar with its thesis to better understand this series of events. Browse through the book reviews in the journals *Reviews in American History*, *Journal of the Early Republic*, *William and Mary Quarterly* (all are in the library or available online through the J-Stor database) for examples of what I am asking for. You may consult published reviews of the books you are working on, especially to help you in placing the book within the historiography, but do not copy and paste from them, as that is cheating, and I want to read your words not someone else's.

Each review should be double spaced and about 3 pages in length, no more than 4 pages and no less than 2 (500-700 words). You choose which five books you want to review. Each one is due by 5:00 p.m. on the Thursday that we will be discussing that book. Each week there is an option to submit a book review in Canvas, but I have built in to the grading system that the five lowest grades (the five zeros you receive for not submitting a book review) will not be counted in your grades. Again, you only need to submit five book reviews total.

Check out this link for further advice on writing a good book review: [How to Write a History Book Review \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

After you submit a book review, I will send you the grade via my grading rubric: [HIS 722 Book Review Grading Rubric](#) 

Class Discussion

(SLOs 2, 4)

For each of the first ten weeks we will meet via Zoom to discuss that week's readings during the regularly-scheduled class time (Thursdays, 5:30-8:20). Be prepared with notes taken from your reading. Utilizing Zoom for class discussion will take some getting used to, but I am eager to hear your thoughts about our readings, the topics, and the course. I need to hear you during discussion, but I also insist that we treat each other respectfully and let everyone have a chance to weigh in on matters under discussion. I will give you an overall discussion grade (10% of your course grade) after the first ten meetings.

Discussion Leader

(SLO 2)

Each week, at least one student will start off our Zoom discussion by telling us about the author of the book (who are they, where do they teach, what else have they written, what awards have they won, and so on) and guiding us with some broad questions that get us into that week's readings. Questions like:

What does this historian say caused this rebellion? What were the issues that led to rebellion? Do you think this historian is accurate in his/her analysis? What was the impact of this series of events on later history? And so on

You will turn in your list of questions to me, one page is usually sufficient, at the Discussion Leader section under [Assignments](#) or [Modules](#). We will select discussion leaders at the first class meeting on August 20 (via Zoom).


Research or Historiographical Paper

(SLOs 1, 2, 3)

In consultation with me, you will identify a rebellious event to write a research or historiographical paper about. It can be one of the events we are reading about in class or another one that we are not discussing. Your proposed topic is due by September 10. The bibliography is due by October 8, the roughdraft for peer review is due by November 12, your peer review of a colleague's paper is due November 19, and your final paper is due by Tuesday, December 1.

Your paper must have a title page. You must use footnotes or endnotes (your choice) but follow the Chicago Manual of Style Humanities format. Links to the Chicago style manual are here: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html (Links to an external site.). The length should be 15-20 pages of text (not counting title page, notes, and bibliography). Take advantage of the free help that the Writing Center offers to all UNCG students: <https://writingcenter.uncg.edu/> (Links to an external site.)

Given the restrictions on library and archival access caused by the Covid-19 virus, a historiographical paper is likely easier to achieve than a research paper, but if you can convince me that you have access to the sources that you need, I am willing to approve a research paper topic.

See my hints for writing a historiographical paper here: [OBrien Historiographical Essay Hints.docx](#) 

Rough draft of main paper

You will submit the rough draft of your research or historiographical paper to me via Canvas and to a classmate via email attachment. Although I do not expect that you will have finished a complete draft of your paper by the due date of November 12, a good idea of your main thesis and arguments needs to be present, along with a significant portion of the evidence / sources. Make it as close to a final draft as you can manage by this date.

Peer Review

(SLOs 3, 4)

You will send your rough draft to the alphabetically next person on the class roster. You are to analyze the draft with the goal of helping your colleague produce a better final version. Write a two (or so) page

report that accomplishes two goals: 1) explains the strengths of the paper and 2) suggests areas for strengthening the paper further (this may include, for example, refining the thesis, reorganizing the structure, strengthening the arguments, and/or making better use of sources to support the arguments, pointing out logical flaws, or other suggestions). The goal in the peer review is to be professional and helpful. You will submit your peer review to me via Canvas and to your classmate via email attachment.

Grading Summary

Written Reviews (5)	10% each	=	50%
Discussion Participation			10%
Discussion Leader			5%
Rough draft of main paper			10%
Peer Review			5%
Final Paper			20%

Schedule

Week 1 Introduction / Bacon's Rebellion (1670s)

8/20 Reading: Rice, James D. *Tales from a Revolution: Bacon's Rebellion and the Transformation of Early America* (Oxford University Press), 2012.

Week 2 King Philip's War (1670s)

8/27 Reading: Delucia, Christine M. *Memory Lands: King Philip's War and the Place of Violence in the Northeast*. Yale University Press, 2018.

Week 3 Stono Rebellion (1739-1740s)

9/3 Reading: Hoffer, Peter Charles. *Cry Liberty: The Great Stono River Slave Rebellion of 1739*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Week 4 New York City Ablaze (1740s)

9/10 Reading: Lepore, Jill. *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2005.

TOPIC FOR RESEARCH OR HISTORIOGRAPHICAL PAPER DUE

Week 5 Boston Rebels (1760s-1770s)

9/17 Reading: Archer, Richard. *As If an Enemy's Country: The British Occupation of Boston and the Origins of Revolution*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

Week 6 Slave Resistance during the American Revolution (1770s-1780s)

9/24 Reading: Egerton, Douglas R. *Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America*. Oxford University Press, 2009.

Week 7 Shays' Rebellion (1786-87)

10/1 Reading: Richards, Leonard L. *Shays's Rebellion: The American Revolution's Final Battle* University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003.

Week 8 Whiskey Rebellion (1791-1794)

10/8 Reading: Slaughter, Thomas P. *The Whiskey Rebellion: Frontier Epilogue to the American Revolution*. Oxford University Press, 1986.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SOURCES FOR PAPER DUE

'Week 9 Ohio Valley Indian Resistance to the United States (1791-1795)

10/15 Reading: Calloway, Colin G. *The Victory with No Name: The Native American Defeat of the First American Army*. Oxford University Press, 2015.

Week 10 Gabriel's Rebellion (1799-1801)

10/22 Reading: Nicholls, Michael L. *Whispers of Rebellion: Narrating Gabriel's Conspiracy*. University of Virginia Press, 2012.

Week 11 Research / Writing Week

10/29

Week 12 Research / Writing Week

11/5

Week 13 Research / Writing Week
11/12 **ROUGH DRAFT OF PAPER DUE FOR PEER REVIEW**

Week 14 Research / Writing Week
11/19 **PEER REVIEW DUE**

December 1: **FINAL PAPER DUE**

ADDENDUM

This is a unique semester for many reasons. Two major events are dominating our thoughts: the Covid-19 virus and the election on Tuesday, November 3. You should be aware of and ready to act on both subjects.

The Election

It is not my role to tell you who to vote for, but I insist that you vote and participate in the electoral process.

You can check your North Carolina registration here: <https://vt.ncsbe.gov/RegLkup/> (Links to an external site.)

You can register to vote in North Carolina online, at the DMV office, or with same-day registration: <https://www.ncsbe.gov/Voters/Registering-to-Vote> (Links to an external site.) Early voting will be available and I strongly urge you to take advantage of that opportunity to avoid the potential chaos of election day. UNCG usually has an early voting site on campus, and the department will share early voting information when it becomes available.

Covid-19

If a student has COVID-19 symptoms they should contact [Student Health Services](#) (Links to an external site.) at 336-334-5340 and self-report their health status here: <https://update.uncg.edu/> (Links to an external site.)