

HIS 701 Colloquium in American History before 1865

Fall 2021: Thursdays, 2:00-4:50, MHRA 3204

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"The past itself is not a narrative. In its entirety, it is as chaotic, uncoordinated, and complex as life. History is about making sense of that mess, finding or creating patterns and meanings and stories from the maelstrom."

— John H. Arnold, History: A Very Short Introduction

"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 and the changing approaches to historical understanding 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 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 approaches and how and why those have changed over time.

When doing history, it helps to keep in mind that there are many 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 and the most recent interpretations 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 unexcused absences.

You will complete **seven (7) analysis papers** throughout the semester. For each paper, analyze the book's arguments and interpretations and compare the book with the article/historiographical readings included with that week's readings (if applicable that week). Some weeks we will read a collection of essays that reflect the latest scholarship on a particular topic. For essay collections, focus on the overall thrust of the entire book rather than summarizing every essay. What do the essays collectively tell us about the state of that historical field? For all papers, tell me how this field has developed over time, how and why interpretations have changed. In addition, you should briefly tell me about each of the authors of the readings for each week that you write about (for essay collections you only need to do this for the editors of the book, not for every chapter author). You choose the seven topics/weeks to complete your papers – they are due by class time the day we discuss that topic, uploaded to Canvas.

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 and upload to Canvas before class starts. 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 Discussion Participation		20%
Discussion Leadership		<u>10%</u>
		100%

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

Andrew Lipman, *The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast* (2015)

Margaret Ellen Newell, *Brethren by Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and the Origins of American Slavery* (2016)

Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (2007)

Serena Zabin, *The Boston Massacre: A Family History* (2020)

Thomas A. Foster, ed., *Women in Early America* (2015)

Michael A. McDonnell et. al. eds., *Remembering the Revolution: Memory, History, and Nation Making from Independence to the Civil War* (2013)

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

Claudio Saunt, *Unworthy Republic: The Dispossession of Native Americans and the Road to Indian Territory* (2020)

Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman, eds. *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development* (Pennsylvania, 2016)

Anne F. Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families: A New History of the North American West*,

1800-1860 (2011)

Amy S. Greenberg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1846 U.S. Invasion of Mexico* (2012)

Elizabeth R. Varon, *Disunion! The Coming of the American Civil War, 1789-1859* (2008)

SCHEDULE:

Nearly all the journal articles listed in the schedule are available on the J-STOR, Project MUSE, or other 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.

Aug. 19: Introduction

Aug. 26: American Indians/Ethnohistory

Book: Andrew Lipman, *The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast* (2015)

Article:

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. 2: Early North American Colonization and Indian Enslavement

Book: Margaret Ellen Newell, *Brethren by Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and the Origins of American Slavery* (2016)

Articles:

Denise I. Bossy, "Indian Slavery in Southeastern Indian and British Societies, 1670-1730," in *Indian Slavery in Colonial America* Alan Galloway, ed. (University of Nebraska Press, 2009), pp. 207-250. *Provided via pdf on Canvas*

Sept. 9: African Enslavement in the early Atlantic World

Book: Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (2007)

Article:

John Wood Sweet, "The Subject of the Slave Trade: Recent Currents in the Histories of the Atlantic, Great Britain, and Western Africa." *Early American Studies* 7, no. 1 (2009): 1-45.

Sept. 16: New Directions in the History of the American Revolution

Book: Serena Zabin, *The Boston Massacre: A Family History* (2020)

Article:

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*

Sept. 23: Women's and Gender History in early America

Book: Thomas A. Foster, ed., *Women in Early America* (2015)

Article:

Rebecca Edwards, "Women's and Gender History," in *American History Now* Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, eds., (Temple University Press, 2011). *E-book or on Canvas*

Sept. 30: Historical Memory of the American Revolution

Book: Michael A. McDonnell, et. al. eds., *Remembering the Revolution: Memory, History, and Nation Making from Independence to the Civil War* (2013)

Article:

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. 7: Jacksonian America & Market Revolutions

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

Articles:

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

Oct. 14: Indian Removals

Book: Claudio Saunt, *Unworthy Republic: The Dispossession of Native Americans and the Road to Indian Territory* (2020)

Article:

Donna L. Akers, "Removing the Heart of the Choctaw People: Indian Removal from a Native Perspective." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 23, no. 3 (1999): 63-76 (pdf on Canvas).

Oct. 21: Slavery in the United States: New Understandings

Book: Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman, eds. *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development* (Pennsylvania, 2016)

Article:

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

Oct. 28: The West before the Civil War

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. 4: The U.S. Invasion of Mexico

Book: Amy S. Greenberg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1846 U.S. Invasion of Mexico* (2012)

Article:

Brian Delay, "Independent Indians and the U.S.-Mexican War." *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 1 (2007): 35–68.

November 11: No Class: Ethnohistory Conference

Nov. 18: Causes of the Civil War (Last Class!)

Book: Elizabeth R. Varon, *Disunion! The Coming of the American Civil War, 1789-1859* (2008)