HIS 722: Vast & Deep Early American History

Fall 2022
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UNCG History Department Facebook page
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In this graduate seminar, students will read works and write papers that expand their concept of how old and how vast early American history is. Humans enacted history in North America for at least 15,000 years before Europeans arrived and that deep history impacted the trajectory of post-contact history. Likewise, the thirteen British colonies along the Atlantic coast comprised only one of many theaters of historical action in early America. Early America was a diverse place of many languages, religions, ethnicities, and experiences. We will examine a wide selection of topics to gain a more holistic understanding about early America and its peoples.

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 history
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 during class, you will lead class discussion once, write a review for five of the assigned books, and write a larger research or historiographical paper. Class discussion is central to this course and will form a significant part of your grade.
Required Books

Listed in the order we will read them, live links are to free e-book versions via the UNCG Library catalog. All the books are on order at the UNCG Bookstore, but you can purchase them wherever is most convenient for you.


William C. Foster, *Climate and Culture Change in North America, AD 900-1600* (Texas, 2012)


Andres Resendez, *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016)


Book Reviews

(SLOs 1, 3)

You will prepare professional-quality book reviews for five of your assigned weekly books. On weeks when there is more than one book listed, see the instructions for that week. 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 and Project MUSE databases) 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 2:00 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 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](#)

Here is a guide for how to use punctuation in quotations and with parenthetical citations, like you might use in a book review: [Punctuation in Citations](#)

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

*You may submit up to six book reviews and the lowest score will be dropped. Each review = 10% of the course grade (50% total).

### Class Discussion

(SLOs 2, 4)

I expect you to participate in every class discussion of the readings and issues presented each week. Professional disagreement about the readings or issues is fine and encouraged, though I insist that you be respectful and allow everyone to state their interpretations. 10% of the course grade that I will assign at the end of the semester.

### Discussion Leader

(SLO 2)
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(s): who are they, where do/did they teach, what are they known for, etc.?

You will turn in your list of questions to me, one page is usually sufficient, at the Discussion Leader section under [Assignments](#). We will select discussion leaders at the first class meeting on August 18. 5% of the course grade.

**Research or Historiographical Paper**

(SLOs 1, 2, 3)

In consultation with me, you will identify a "Vast Early America" topic to write a research or historiographical paper about. It can be one of the topics we are reading about in class or another one that we are not discussing. **Your proposed topic is due by September 15. The bibliography is due by October 13, the roughdraft is due by November 17, and your final paper is due by Monday, December 5.** Roughdraft = 10% of course grade, Final paper = 20% of the course grade.

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](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html). 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/](https://writingcenter.uncg.edu/)

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. Although I do not expect that you will have finished a complete draft of your paper by the due date of November 17, 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. I will read it and comment on it before Thanksgiving. Roughdraft = 10% of the course grade.

**Grading Summary**
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<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Written Reviews (5)</td>
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<td>Discussion Participation</td>
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<td>Discussion Leader</td>
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<td>Rough draft of main paper</td>
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Total = 50%