

HISTORY 709
Dr. HUNTER
Spring 2008

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RIOTS AND REVELS IN EARLY AMERICA, 1600-1860
Seminar in Historical Research and Writing

Public gatherings provide an important window into social relations and level of unity or division within communities as well as the construction of individual and group identity. In this research seminar, we will examine how other historians have explicated crowd actions, political protests, parades, celebrations, spectacles, and ceremonies from 1630 to the 1860s. To guide students as they pursue their own research project, we will use primary and secondary texts to explore how historians gather and process evidence, develop interpretations, and produce a finished piece of work that contributes to the field. Students will be encouraged to select a research topic related to the theme of riots, revels, ceremonies, or public gatherings as a way of exploring a historical problem.

This course offers an opportunity to further develop the research and writing skills necessary for advanced work in history. For each of you, the paper you complete for this course may be the beginning of a published article or book. Work hard and enjoy!

TEXTS

- * Cook, James W. *Arts of Deception*. Harvard University Press, 2001
- * Nissenbaum, Stephen. *The Battle for Christmas*. New York: David McKay, 1997.
- * Waldstreicher, David, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*. U. North Carolina Press, 1997
- * Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (look for 6th ed.)

* available at the UNCG Book Store

REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation:

Research and writing are often considered solitary occupations and indeed the deep and sustained thinking needed to complete a major research paper requires much solitude. However, every scholar needs the cooperation, feedback, and support of other scholars. As class members we will try to provide that for each other. Therefore it is essential that you come to class prepared to discuss the reading assignments and also to engage in a collective analysis of your own and others research and writing. Participation in class discussion will be graded. It is up to each of us to make this an exciting,

challenging, and collaborative learning experience so bring your ideas and questions.

Shorter Writing Assignments:

You will be asked to write an occasional response paper of 2-3 pages sometimes addressing a particular question or set of questions. You will also be writing a report on a primary source. There may be additional short writing assignments throughout the semester.

Final Research Paper:

The final paper should be a well-developed research paper of 20-25 pages that presents a thesis and argument about a historical topic based on substantial evidence from primary sources. The topic must also be situated within a broad historical and historiographic context based on relevant secondary sources. The specific topic should be related to the theme of the course -- the social and cultural meaning of public gatherings or private rituals and center on events and developments that took place before the 1860s. The paper might take a public or private gathering as starting point for a detailed examination of community, class conflict, race, gender, or the cultural work of spectacle, ritual, protest, or celebration. In the paper you should aim for a skilled and imaginative analysis of primary sources to open up your specific topic.

There will be several preliminary research and bibliographic assignments along the way that should help you distribute your work load throughout the semester. Each paper must include at least three pages of supplementary material such as copies of maps, letters, images of material artifacts, paintings, drawings, or architectural plans. The paper must be typed, double-spaced with one inch margins. Endnotes or footnotes and a full bibliography are required. Consult Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, for style and format of notes and bibliography.

GRADES

Class Participation	30%	
Shorter Writing Assignments	20%	
Final Research Paper	<u>50%</u>	= 100%

COURSE SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION

Jan 15 -- Tues Introduction and Beginning research techniques

TWO EXAMPLES

Jan 22 -- Tues Class Discussion

Reading: William Link, "The Jordan Hatcher Case: Politics and 'A spirit of Insubordination' in Antebellum Virginia," *Journal of Southern History* vol. LXIV No.4 (Nov 1998):615-648 (available through JSTOR). **And** Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," (available on e-reserves thru Blackboard)

Due: Response paper – see handout.

POPULAR CULTURE AND INVERSION RITUALS

Feb 5 -- Tues Class Discussion and Group Reports on primary sources

Reading: Nissenbaum, *The Battle for Christmas*: Preface, Chaps 1 and 7; and Alfred F. Young, "English Plebian Culture and Eighteenth-Century American Radicalism," (on e-reserves)

Due: Reports on Primary Sources

CULTURE OF CELEBRATION

Feb 12 – Tues Class Discussion

Reading: Nissenbaum, *The Battle for Christmas*, Chaps 2, 3, 5 and Epilogue

Due: Written report on primary source from each class member.

INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES

Feb 19 – Tues No Class

Due: Monday by 4 PM in my box or folder outside my door: Topic Proposal and Preliminary Bibliography indicating both primary and secondary sources.

CONTESTED TERRAIN

Feb 26 – Tues Class Discussion

Reading: Parts A, B, and C from Susan Davis, *Parades and Power: Street Theater in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia* (on e-reserves)

Due: Revised Topic Proposal and Bibliography

RESEARCH AND WRITING

* Mar 4 -- Tues No Class -- Work on research and writing.

THESIS AND EVIDENCE

Mar 11 – Tues Class Discussion and reports from class members

Due: 1-2 page report on your historical problem, the evidence you are using to research and solve it, and the claim you expect (hope) to make = your thesis.

SPRING BREAK

* Mar 18 – Tues No Class -- Work on research and writing

Reading, Cook, *Arts of Deception*, Introduction and Chaps 1 - 4

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Mar 25 -- Tues Class discussion and Group work on context and outline.

Due: Outline of paper and 2 pages of historical context/historiography to your group and to Dr. Hunter by Monday at noon. Paper copy in my box please.

RESEARCH AND WRITING

* Apr 1 – Tues No Class -- Work on Draft

THESIS AND EVIDENCE -- AGAIN

Apr 8 – Tues Class Discussion and Reports

Reading: Waldstrieher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, Chaps TBA

Due: Present to Class: Thesis, argument, evidence, and 3 pages of Supplementary Materials

RESEARCH AND WRITING

* Apr 15 – Tues No Class -- Work on Draft

DRAFTS

Apr 22 – Tuesday Peer Review of Drafts

Due: Draft due to groups and Dr. Hunter by **Friday Apr. 18 at 5PM**. Paper copy in my box please.

REVISIONS

Apr 29 -- Tues Class -- Report on Progress and Discuss Problems with Revisions and Citations.

RESEARCH AND WRITING

* May 6 – Tues No Class -- Work on Final Paper

May 9 – Fri FINAL PAPER

Due: Final Paper in my office, folder, or box by 5 PM.

Enjoy your summer. You've earned a rest!