

HIS 722: Topics in Early American History
Spring 2012
The American Revolution

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The purpose of this course is to introduce graduate students to some of the most significant scholarly works and topics on the American Revolution. Students will critically analyze historical monographs through class discussion and written reviews and will write either a research paper based on primary and secondary sources or a historiographical paper.

Required books:

- Breen, T. H. *American Insurgents, American Patriots: The Revolution of the People* Hill & Wang, 2010
- Holton, Woody. *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* UNC, 1999.
- Gross, Robert A. *The Minutemen and Their World* Hill and Wang, 2001
- McDonnell, Michael A. *The Politics of War: Race, Class, & Conflict in Revolutionary Virginia* UNC, 2010
- Egerton, Douglas R. *Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America* Oxford, 2011
- Calloway, Colin G. *The American Revolution in Indian Country* Cambridge, 1995
- Bouton, Terry. *Taming Democracy: The People, the Founders, and the Troubled Ending of the American Revolution* Oxford University Press, 2009
- Zagarri, Rosemarie. *Revolutionary Backlash: Women and Politics in the Early American Republic* Pennsylvania, 2007
- Purcell, Sarah J. *Sealed with Blood: War, Sacrifice, and Memory in Revolutionary America* Pennsylvania, 2002, 2010

Assignments:

Besides reading a book a week (or more) you will turn in a written review for three of the assigned books. In addition, one week you will lead discussion of the weekly readings in class. Class discussion is central to this course and will form a significant part of your grade. Finally, you will write a ~20 page research OR historiographical paper due at the end of the semester.

Doing the book reviews:

You will prepare professional-quality book reviews of each of your assigned weekly readings. 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 in order to better understand the American Revolution. 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, 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.

Grading:

Written Reviews (3):	10% each	30%
Discussion Leadership		10%
Discussion Participation		10%
Topic and Bibliography for Paper	.05% each	10%
Final Paper		<u>40%</u>
		100%

Schedule:

Week 1 Introduction

1/11 Reading:

Gordon S. Wood, “Rhetoric and Reality in the American Revolution,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (Jan., 1966), pp. 3-32

Gary B. Nash, “Also There at the Creation: Going beyond Gordon S. Wood,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 44, No. 3, *The Constitution of the United States* (Jul., 1987), pp. 602-611

T. H. Breen, “Ideology and Nationalism on the Eve of the American Revolution: Revisions Once More in Need of Revising,” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 84, No. 1 (Jun., 1997), pp. 13-39

Woody Holton and Michael A. McDonnell, “Patriot vs. Patriot: Social Conflict in Virginia and the Origins of the American Revolution,” *Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Aug., 2000), pp. 231-256

Week 2 Beginnings and Causes in New England

1/18 Reading: Breen, *American Insurgents*, *American Patriots*

Week 3 Beginnings and Causes in Virginia

1/25 Reading: Holton, *Forced Founders*

Week 4 The War in New England

2/1 Reading: Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World*

Week 5 TOPIC FOR RESEARCH OR HISTORIOGRAPHICAL PAPER DUE

2/8

The War in Virginia

Reading: McDonnell, *The Politics of War*

Week 6 **African Americans and Revolutionary America**

2/15 Reading: Egerton, *Death or Liberty*

Week 7 **Indians and the American Revolution**

2/22 Reading: Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country*

Week 8 **The Political Battle Within America**

2/29 Reading: Bouton, *Taming Democracy*

3/7 **SPRING BREAK!**

Week 9 **BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SOURCES FOR PAPER DUE**

3/14

Women and the Impact of the American Revolution

Reading: Zagari, *Revolutionary Backlash*

Week 10 **The Contested Memory of the American Revolution**

3/21 Reading: Purcell, *Sealed with Blood*

Week 11 Research / Writing Week

3/28

Week 12 Research / Writing Week

4/4

Week 13 Research / Writing Week

4/11

Week 14 Research / Writing Week

4/18

Week 15 **Paper Due by 5:00 p.m.**

4/25