

HIS 722: Topics in Early American History
Spring 2014
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 and scholarly articles through class discussion and written reviews, and each student will write either a research paper based on primary and secondary sources or a historiographical paper that surveys the scholarly literature on a particular topic related to the American Revolution. I assume that you have a working knowledge of the key events arising from the American Revolution, but if you need a refresher the following books provide a solid narrative history of the entire era but they are not required for the course:

Robert Middlekauf, *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789* (Oxford, 2007).
Colin Bonwick, *The American Revolution* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).
John Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark: The Struggle to Create the American Republic* (Oxford, 2003).
Gordon S. Wood, *The American Revolution: A History* (Random House, 2003).
Edward Countryman, *The American Revolution* (Hill & Wang, 1985).

Required books:

Young, Alfred F. and Gregory H. Nobles. *Whose American Revolution Was It?* (NYU Press, 2011).
Breen, T. H. *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (Oxford, 2004).
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 Press, 2010).
Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. *This Violent Empire: The Birth of an American National Identity* (UNC Press, 2010).

Assignments:

Besides reading a book + some articles per week you will turn in a written review for three of the weeks with assigned readings. 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. All of the article readings can be found via either the JSTOR or Project MUSE database through the library website. The required books have been ordered for the UNCG Bookstore but I am fine with you acquiring the cheapest copy wherever you can or borrowing them from the library. Your final research or historiographical paper should follow

the Chicago Manual of Style, Humanities formatting of citations and the bibliography. Links to abbreviated versions of the Chicago Manual are here:

<http://uncg.libguides.com/content.php?pid=100907&sid=1040906>

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Doing the book reviews:

You will prepare professional-quality book reviews of each of your assigned weekly readings, including any articles also assigned for that week's 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 JSTOR 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 1/16	Introduction
Week 2 1/23	Ways that Historians have Interpreted the Revolution Reading: <u>Book</u> : Young and Nobles, <i>Whose American Revolution Was It?</i> pp. 1-144 <u>Article</u> : T. H. Breen, "Ideology and Nationalism on the Eve of the American Revolution: Revisions Once More in Need of Revising," <i>The Journal of American History</i> , Vol. 84, No. 1 (Jun., 1997), pp. 13-39
Week 3 1/30	A Consumer Revolution? Reading: <u>Book</u> : Breen, <i>The Marketplace of Revolution</i> (all)
Week 4 2/6	Beginnings and Causes in Virginia Reading: <u>Book</u> : Holton, <i>Forced Founders</i> (all)

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

Week 5: **No class! I am attending a conference at Florida State University.**
2/13

Week 6 **TOPIC FOR RESEARCH OR HISTORIOGRAPHICAL PAPER DUE**
2/20

Society and Fighting in New England

Reading: Book: Gross, *The Minutemen and Their World* (all)

Articles: 1. Christopher P. Magra, "'Soldiers... Bred to the Sea': Maritime Marblehead, Massachusetts, and the Origins and Progress of the American Revolution," *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 77, No. 4 (Dec., 2004), pp. 531-562
2. Richard J. Morris, "Social Change, Republican Rhetoric, and the American Revolution: The Case of Salem, Massachusetts," *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Winter, 1997), pp. 419-433

Week 7 **Fighting in Virginia**
2/27
Reading: Book: McDonnell, *The Politics of War* (all)

Week 8 **Race, Class, and Gender in Revolutionary America**
3/6
Reading: Book: Young and Nobles, *Whose American Revolution Was It?* pp. 144-end
Article: Edward Countryman, "Indians, the Colonial Order, and the Social Significance of the American Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 53, No. 2 (Apr., 1996), pp. 342-362

Week 9 **No class - SPRING BREAK!**
3/13

Week 9 **BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SOURCES FOR PAPER DUE**
3/20

American Identity and the American Revolution, Part 1

Reading: Book: Smith-Rosenberg, *This Violent Empire*, pp. Preface-249

Articles: 1. Michael McDonnell, "National Identity And The American War For Independence Reconsidered," *Australasian Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (July 2001), pp. 3-17
2. Peter S. Onuf, "American Exceptionalism and National Identity," *American Political Thought*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Spring 2012), pp. 77-100

Week 10 **American Identity and the American Revolution, Part 2**
3/27
Reading: Book: Smith-Rosenberg, *This Violent Empire*, pp. 250-end

Articles: 1. David Waldstreicher, "Rites of Rebellion, Rites of Assent: Celebrations, Print Culture, and the Origins of American Nationalism," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 82, No. 1 (Jun., 1995), pp. 37-61
2. Alfred F. Young, "George Robert Twelves Hewes (1742-1840): A Boston Shoemaker and the Memory of the American Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 38, No. 4 (Oct., 1981), pp. 561-623

Week 11 Research / Writing Week
4/3

Week 12 Research / Writing Week
4/10

Week 13 Research / Writing Week
4/17

Week 14 Research / Writing Week
4/24

Week 15 **Paper Due by 12:00 noon.**
5/1