

*History 499 (Spring2016)*  
***Senior Research Seminar on Revolutionary America***

Dr. Zagari

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. and by appointment

This course is the capstone of the History major. Students are required to do a major research paper on a topic dealing with the era of the American Revolution. The paper requires students to demonstrate that they have mastered the skills of historical research, analysis, oral presentation, and written communication. Papers must be 20-25 typed, doubled-spaced pages, plus bibliography. This course is an RS-designated course, \* fulfills the Writing Intensive requirement for the History major, \*\* and is a Synthesis course \*\*\* for the university's General Education requirement.

**Books:**

William Kelleher Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students*, 4th ed.

Gordon S. Wood, *The American Revolution: A History*

*Suggested References for Historiographical Background and Bibliography:*

Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole, eds., *Blackwell Companion to the American Revolution* (2000)

Edward G. Gray and Jane Kamensky, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the American Revolution* (2013)

**Date:                      Topic/Assignment:**

Jan. 19                      **Introduction: Researching the Revolutionary Era**  
*Reading and Discussion:* Gordon Wood, *The American Revolution*

Jan. 26                      **Sources and Methods in Researching Revolutionary America—MEET AT FENWICK LIBRARY. Room 1014B (Please bring your laptops.)**

*Reading and Discussion:* Wood, *American Revolution*; Storey, *Writing History*, pp. 5-30. **BRING BOOKS TO CLASS.**

*Written Assignment:* Turn in *two* possible research topics for your paper. You may choose either from a topic at from the list at the end of the syllabus, get ideas from Wood's *American Revolution*, or devise a topic of your own.

**INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS TO DISCUSS YOUR TOPICS WILL BE SCHEDULED FOR WITHIN THE NEXT WEEK.**

Feb. 2                      **Reading Primary Sources/Using Secondary Sources**  
*Reading and Discussion:* Samuel S. Wineburg, "Probing the Depths of Students' Historical Knowledge," (Blackboard); Storey, *Writing History*, pp. 31-38. **BRING BOOK TO CLASS**

*Written Assignment:* Turn in a short description (1 paragraph) of your proposed paper topic, along with three questions you hope to answer in the course of doing the paper.

**Also turn in Research Log #1. YOU WILL BE EXPECTED TO TURN IN A RESEARCH LOG AT EACH CLASS FOR EACH OF THE NEXT SEVEN WEEKS. THIS IS NOT AN OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENT. YOU MUST TURN IN THE LOGS IN ORDER TO PASS THE COURSE.**

Feb. 9                    **In-Class Research**—MEET AT FENWICK LIBRARY, Room 1014B  
(Please bring your laptops.)

*Written Assignment:* **Turn in Research Log #2.** Be sure to submit in-class research assignment.

Feb. 16                  **Historiography/Framing an Argument**

*Written Assignment:* **Turn in Research Log #3.**

**Also submit an annotated bibliography.** The Bibliography should have three sections: Representative Primary Sources; Secondary Source Books (at least ten); Scholarly Articles (at least three). Write one-to-two sentences describing each work. Be sure to use the Chicago Manual of Style format (Turabian) for Bibliographies, found in Storey, *Writing History*, pp. 57-58.

Feb. 23                  **Historical Texts and Context**

*Reading:* Storey, *Writing History*, pp. 59-74, 93-98.

*Written Assignment:* **Turn in Research Log #4. Bring one or more of your primary sources to class in order to do an in-class writing assignment. (Please bring your laptops.)**

March 1                  **Individual Meetings**—**Turn in Research Log #5.** Be prepared to discuss where you are in your research and where you need to go.

March 15                **Organization/Writing Strategies**

*Reading and Discussion:* Storey, *Writing History*, 75-91, 99-11

*Written Assignment:* **Turn in Research Log #6.**

March 22                **Oral Presentations**

*Written Assignment:* Submit a three-to-five page Introduction for your paper. The Introduction should describe your historical subject/topic, establish the historical context, explain why it is historically significant, and discuss the relevant historiography. **Turn in Research Log # 7.**

*Oral Presentations (Group A):* Prepare a **5-minute oral report** in which you **BRIEFLY** summarize your topic. Provide a Powerpoint outline of your talk along with a few relevant images. In your presentation, be sure to explain what your subject is, the chronological boundaries of your project, the kinds of primary sources you are using, and your research questions, and your hypothesis or tentative conclusions. **Practice your presentation. Time limits will be strictly enforced.**

INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WILL BE SCHEDULED for within the next week. Students are expected to bring their thesis statement along with a brief outline of the entire paper to the meeting.

March 29            **Plagiarism/Peer Review**  
*Reading and Discussion:* Storey, *Writing History*, 39-58, 119-123.  
*Written Assignment:* **Turn in your final Research Log #8.**  
*Oral Presentations:* Group B

April 5            **Independent Writing--No class**  
(I will be available in my office during classtime for optional individual meetings.)

April 12           **PAPERS DUE--No class**  
This is **NOT** a draft. This is the first version of the entire paper complete with proper footnotes (though you need not include a formal bibliography with this version). Send an email copy to the person assigned to read your paper AND put a hard copy of the paper in my mailbox in the History Office. **Papers are due by classtime.**

April 19           **Critiques/Discussion of Papers**  
*Written assignment:* Write a one-to-two page critique of the paper assigned to you. Provide one hard copy for me and one copy for the author.  
*Oral presentation:* The reviewer should prepare a short presentation (NO MORE than three minutes) which summarizes the paper's thesis, discusses the paper's major primary source base, and mentions the paper' single greatest strength and single greatest area in need of improvement. Focus should be on the author's research, evidence, and analysis, not on writing style.

April 26           **Historical Research and Lifelong Learning**

Students are encouraged to make an appointment to meet with the professor as they prepare the final versions of their papers.

**FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE BY noon on May XXXX???**

Papers should be 20-25 pages in length, plus Bibliography, typed, double-spaced. Papers **MUST** use the Chicago Manual of Style citation format (Turabian), also discussed in Storey, *Writing History*, pp. 51-58. In the **Bibliography**, secondary sources should be listed under three headings: ***Primary Sources; Secondary Source Books (at least ten); Scholarly Articles (at least three)***. Online sources/databases/websites should be listed under the appropriate category listed above.

Please turn in **ONE** hard copy in my mailbox along with the first version of your paper containing my comments. **IN ADDITION**, send me an email with your paper as an attachment.

***Grading:***

Oral presentations and discussion:	10%
Preliminary writing assignments (including Research Logs):	24%
Research paper (60% first version/40% second):	66%

**Students MUST turn in all preliminary written assignments in order to receive a passing grade in the course.**

*Criteria for evaluating Research Papers:*

- \* States an original thesis or historical interpretation
- \* Uses primary sources effectively
- \* Relates work to existing secondary literature in the field
- \* Synthesizes and analyzes diverse sources
- \* Links the subject to broader historical questions or historiography
- \* Integrates skills and knowledge acquired in other disciplinary contexts
- \* Writing is clear and grammatical; essay is well-organized, coherent, and follows citation norms of the field

*Criteria for evaluating Oral Presentations:*

- \* Demonstrates ability to present one's work in a clear and organized manner
- \* Completes the essential elements within the allotted time
- \* Engages and maintains the audience's attention
- \* Demonstrates ability to handle questions from the audience
- \* Demonstrates ability to synthesize elements from different disciplines

***Drop Deadlines***

The last day to drop a class with 33% tuition penalty is Feb. 2. **THE FINAL DROP DATE** is Feb. 19, when there is a 67% tuition liability.

***Statement on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity***

All GMU students are bound to abide by the Honor Code (<http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>). One of the most common honor code violations is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a broadly defined term that includes a wide spectrum of violations. Put most simply, it is appropriating another person's words or ideas as if they were your own. It includes, but is not limited to, the use of another person's words without attribution or proper citation; submission of work that is not one's own, whether the work is stolen, purchased, or used with the author's permission; the too-close paraphrasing of another person's words or ideas. If you don't know if something constitutes plagiarism, ask the instructor. Students suspected of Honor Code violations will be turned over to the university Honor Board for disciplinary action.

***Students with Disabilities***

If you are a student with a disability and need academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

**History 499 is:**

**\*RS-Designated course:** This class is designated as a Research and Scholarship Intensive Course, which means that students are given the opportunity to actively participate in the process of scholarship. Students will make a significant contribution by creating an original research paper that synthesizes the student's reading and analysis of primary and secondary sources into a coherent historical essay.

**\*\*Writing Intensive course.** This class is designated as a Writing Intensive course and fulfills the Writing Intensive requirement in the History major. It does so through the completion of a 20-25 page original historical research paper. The paper will be completed through a draft/feedback/revision process. The first version is due on Nov. 9 or 16. I will provide suggestions for revision. The revised paper is due on Dec. 14.

**\*\*\*Synthesis course.** This course is designated a Synthesis course. The purpose of a Synthesis course is to provide students with the opportunity to synthesize the knowledge, skills, and values gained from the general education curriculum. Synthesis courses strive to expand students' ability to master new content, think critically, and develop life-long learning skills across the disciplines.

## FINDING A TOPIC

The purpose of this research paper is to explore a specific, **NARROWLY** defined topic relating to the American Revolutionary Era, defined as the entire period from 1760-1820, using primary sources and the relevant secondary literature. Your interests may guide you in choosing a topic, but you **MUST** restrict the scope of your project in order to pursue a manageable topic, doable within one semester. In other words, you should not seek to answer a research question such as: "What were the causes of the American Revolution in Virginia?" but rather: "Why did elite planters in Fairfax County, Virginia, come to support the American Revolution between 1765 and 1776?" And then you need to figure out if the primary sources exist to answer your question .

**FINDING AN ADEQUATE PRIMARY SOURCE BASE IS THE FIRST STEP TOWARD WRITING A GOOD RESEARCH PAPER.** These sources can include: newspapers, pamphlets, letters and correspondence, magazines and periodicals, legislative records, laws, novels and poetry, petitions, court records, church records, political cartoons, maps, wills, etc. These sources may be available through online databases, in printed volumes, or at particular libraries and archives (Library of Congress, Fairfax County Courthouse, Society of the Cincinnati, Virginia Historical Society, Massachusetts Historical Society, etc. etc.). You can find many primary source databases for early American history in the Fenwick Library online catalogue reference section at:

[http://infoguides.gmu.edu/primary\\_colonial-1820s](http://infoguides.gmu.edu/primary_colonial-1820s).

Here are some examples of good topics. You may choose one of these topics or define your own topic, in consultation with me.

1. Use the manuscript collections at the Society of the Cincinnati Library in Washington, DC to examine George Washington's role in the creation of the Society.
2. Go to the Virginia Room at the Fairfax Library to look at materials related to the Fairfax Resolves passed prior to the American Revolution.
3. Use manuscripts at Holy Trinity Church in Washington, DC to study the relationship between Catholics and slavery during the Revolutionary era.
4. Use the online Papers of the War Department from the 1780s and 1790s to examine American policies toward Native Americans immediately after the American Revolution,
5. Use the online version of the *Pennsylvania Gazette* newspaper to understand the experiences of indentured servants during the American Revolution.
6. Use the printed and online debates of the ratifying conventions to understand why some Virginians opposed the ratification of the U.S. Constitution.
7. Use pamphlets available online from the Early American Imprint Series (Evans) to understand why people like Andrew Oliver, Samuel Seabury, and Thomas Hutchinson opposed the American Revolution.

8. Using their published writings, compare and contrast the experience of women such as Mercy Otis Warren, Judith Sargent Murray, and Abigail Adams during the American Revolution.
9. Look at Broad­sides available in American Memory collection online through the Library of Congress to understand the importance of boycotts against Britain prior to the American Revolution.
10. Look at the American Periodicals Series online to examine connection between the American Revolution and either the Haitian Revolution or the French Revolution.
11. Examine the *Virginia Gazette* online to explore the impact of the American Revolution on runaway slaves.
12. Use the printed papers of General Nathanael Greene and the online Papers of George Washington to explore the relationship between Washington and Greene.
13. Look at the printed papers of John and Abigail Adams to understand the effects of the American Revolution on their marriage and family life. .
14. Use newspapers on Historical Newspapers database to study responses in colonies outside of Massachusetts to the Boston Massacre or Boston Tea Party.
15. Use the online Peter Force/American Archives collection to examine the response of colonial legislatures to British policies from 1764-1776.