

George Mason University  
Department of History and Art History

Fall 2016  
MW, 12:00-1:15 PM  
East Building, Room 122  
Office Hours: M 2-3 PM, W 5-6 PM

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## HISTORY 391: HISTORY OF VIRGINIA TO 1800

The history of Virginia provides an ideal point of entry into the larger history of colonial and revolutionary America. Virginia was England's first permanent settlement in the New World, and by the eighteenth century it was the largest, wealthiest, and most powerful British mainland colony. It produced both a powerful, educated elite who helped lead the nation towards independence and liberty and a brutal system of chattel slavery that denied human independence and liberty at their most fundamental levels. This class will trace that complex and often contradictory history from the first contact between Europeans and native peoples, through the American Revolution, and into the early decades of the nineteenth century.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Class Participation and Preparation: This course is heavily based on discussion—your attendance and active participation are crucial to its success. Not coincidentally, participation is a significant portion of your grade. Evidence of preparation (i.e. having done and thought about the reading and any discussion questions), quality of discussion, engagement with other students' ideas, and appropriate behavior all factor into the class participation grade. Obviously, if you are not in class, you are not participating.

Preparation also includes bringing a copy of the reading, something to write with, and paper to write on in order to be ready for any in-class writing or exercises we may do. (This is subject to accommodation for students with documented disabilities that may interfere with their ability to write using traditional media.)

Short Assignments: These are written assignments based on the readings or other exercises (in or out of class) used to encourage thought and discussion. Often these will simply be reactions to the reading; other times they might be explorations of primary sources available through various databases; sometimes they might be brief thought pieces asking you to reflect on what we've done so far. They don't usually require much sustained writing, but they should be the result of significant consideration and effort. These will be graded on a check-plus, check, or check-minus scale, with a check-plus being the equivalent of an A, a check the equivalent of a B, and a check-minus the equivalent of a C. Work that falls short of that standard will only receive nominal credit.

*Please note:* Short assignments may not be turned in late—they are due at class time on the day for which they are assigned. I will drop the one lowest grade on these (or the two

lowest grades if we end up having more than 10 total short assignments), so there is a bit of a built in cushion for unavoidable, unplanned absences. If you know ahead of time you will be absent on a day when a short assignment is due, you may email the completed assignment *before* class.

*Also note:* When assigned ahead of time, these must be word processed and printed. In-class exercises may be hand-written. In both cases, make sure to put your name on it.

Essays: You will write two five- to six-page essays based on the course readings, one in the first half of the semester and one in the second half. *Details of these assignments will be distributed in class.*

Final Exam: There will be a final exam on Monday, December 19 from 10:30 AM to 1:15 PM.

Grading:

Class Participation	20%
Short Assignments	20%
Essays	40%
Final	20%

## **A FURTHER WORD ON IN-CLASS BEHAVIOR AND LAPTOPS:**

Behaviors such as frequent tardiness, leaving early or packing up to leave before class is over, sleeping, eating, talking when others are speaking, texting, checking email, Facebook, or other social media, and doing work for other classes are signals to me and to the rest of the class that you do not take the course seriously. Recent research also suggests that taking notes on a computer is less effective in terms of understanding and retention than listening and writing notes by hand. Take some time to consider whether that laptop is absolutely necessary or if it will prove a hard-to-resist distraction. I reserve the right to ask people to switch seats or turn off their computers if they prove distracting to you, me, or your classmates.

## **LATE PAPER POLICY:**

All assignments are officially due at the beginning of class on the day they are due. Late papers turned in later the same day are subject to a penalty of three (3) points (out of 100). Papers turned in the following day are subject to a five-point (5) penalty. Each subsequent day, a similar 5 point penalty will accrue, which means eventually the penalty would outweigh the total value of the assignment. Don't let this happen.

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE SURE I GET THE PAPER. If you do not turn in the paper in class, you assume all risk of any mischance. Papers are not considered to be turned in until I hold them in my hands, or, in the case of electronic submissions, when I email you to confirm trouble-free receipt. Please save and send your paper as a Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx), PDF, or Rich Text Format (.rtf) document. You assume all risk of unopenable or missing attachments.

Extensions will be granted at my discretion in appropriate circumstances IF YOU CONSULT WITH ME BEFORE THE DUE DATE. In appropriate circumstances and entirely at my discretion, I will negotiate a new due date for papers that are already late, assessing a fixed penalty rather than the daily one outlined above. BUT, failure to meet the new deadline will result in failure (no credit) of the assignment.

**In general, if you have any kind of problem that interferes with your work for the class, please consult with me as soon as possible.**

## HONOR CODE STATEMENT

All work in the course is governed by the George Mason University honor code: *To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code:* **Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.**

More information can be found at the GMU [Office of Academic Integrity](#).

## OTHER POLICIES AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

### Administrative Dates

Last day to add & to drop with no tuition penalty: Tuesday, September 6

Last day to drop with 33% tuition penalty: Tuesday, September 20

Final Drop Deadline, with 67% tuition penalty: Friday, September 30

### Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services ([ods.gmu.edu](http://ods.gmu.edu)) at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

### GMU Email Accounts

Students must use their MasonLive email accounts to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See [masonlive.gmu.edu](http://masonlive.gmu.edu) for more information.

### Useful Resources

Writing Center ([writingcenter.gmu.edu](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu)): A114 Robinson Hall, (703) 993-1200.

Counseling and Psychological Services ([caps.gmu.edu](http://caps.gmu.edu)): SUB I, Room 3129, (703) 993-2380.

University Catalog: [catalog.gmu.edu](http://catalog.gmu.edu).

Other university policies: [universitypolicy.gmu.edu](http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu).

## REQUIRED TEXTS

The following books are required reading for this class, and are available for purchase at the GMU Barnes and Noble in the Johnson Center:

- Camilla Townsend, *Pocahontas and the Powhatan Dilemma*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2004.

- John Ruston Pagan, *Anne Orthwood's Bastard: Sex and Law in Early Virginia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Lorri Glover, *The Fate of the Revolution: Virginians Debate the Constitution*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016.

Additional required readings listed on the syllabus are available via Blackboard, freely online, or through GMU's subscriptions to various online databases, which can be accessed via the GMU Library's homepage ([library.gmu.edu](http://library.gmu.edu)).

Other readings may be handed out in class or distributed electronically, and those will also be considered part of the required reading.

**You should always bring a paper copy of the reading to refer to in class.**

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

(NOTE: this syllabus is subject to change due to a variety of possible factors—weather, illness, class interests, newly announced discoveries, etc... Any changes will be announced multiple times in class, and an updated syllabus will be uploaded to Blackboard. Please make sure to keep informed about any changes.)

### WEEK ONE: TSENACOMOCO

**M, Aug. 29:** Course Introduction; Virginia Before Virginia

**W, Aug. 31:** Native Americans and Early Contacts

**Reading**

- Townsend, *Pocahontas*, ch. 1.

### WEEK TWO: THE BEGINNINGS OF ENGLISH COLONIZATION

**M, Sept. 5:** No Class—Labor Day

**W, Sept. 7:** English Colonization: Expectations and Realities

**Reading**

- Townsend, *Pocahontas*, chs. 2-4.

### WEEK THREE: “THE JAMESTOWN FIASCO”

**M, Sept. 12:** Struggle and Survival at Jamestown

**W, Sept. 14:** Pocahontas and the Jamestown Project

**Reading**

- Townsend, *Pocahontas*, chs. 5-9.

### WEEK FOUR: LIFE IN A TOBACCO COLONY

**M, Sept. 19:** A Boom for Whom?

**Reading**

- Edmund S. Morgan, “The First American Boom: Virginia 1618 to 1630,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 28:2 (April 1971): 169-198.

**W, Sept. 21:** Society in the Early Chesapeake

- John Hammond, *Leah and Rachel, or, the Two Fruitfull Sisters Virginia and Maryland: Their Present Condition, Impartially stated and related* (London, 1656).

### WEEK FIVE: COMMUNITY AND CONFLICT IN EARLY VIRGINIA

**M, Sept. 26:** Servants and Masters

**Reading**

- Pagan, *Anne Orthwood’s Bastard*, chs. 1-5.

**W, Sept. 28:** Community

**Reading**

- Pagan, *Anne Orthwood's Bastard*, chs. 6-10 and Conclusion.

**WEEK SIX: REBELLION**

**M, Oct. 3:** The Challenges of Governing in Mid Seventeenth-Century Virginia

**W, Oct. 5:** Bacon's Rebellion

**Reading**

- Brent Tarter, "Bacon's Rebellion, the Grievances of the People, and the Political Culture of Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 119:1 (2011): 2-41.

**WEEK SEVEN: THE RISE OF SLAVERY IN VIRGINIA**

**T, Oct. 11 (Tuesday meeting due to Columbus Day holiday):** Labor and Politics

**Reading**

- John C. Coombs, "The Phases of Conversion: A New Chronology for the Rise of Slavery in Early Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68:3 (2011): 332-360.

**W, Oct. 12:** Making Race

- Kathleen M. Brown, "Engendering Racial Difference, 1640-1670," chap. 4 in *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, & Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 107-136.

**WEEK EIGHT: THE RISE OF THE VIRGINIA GENTRY**

**M, Oct. 17:** Landscapes, Occasions, and Community

**Reading**

- Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), pp. 58-138.

**W, Oct. 19:** Exploring Sources and Evidence

**Reading**

- *Virginia Gazette* selections TBA

**WEEK NINE: TENSIONS**

**M, Oct. 24:** Anxious Patriarchs

**Reading**

- Paula A. Treckel, " 'The Empire of My Heart': The Marriage of William Byrd II and Lucy Parke Byrd," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 105:2 (1997): 125-156.

**W, Oct. 26:** Frontiers

**Reading**

- Warren R. Hofstra, “‘A Parcel of Barbarian’s and an Uncooth Set of People’: Settlers and Settlements of the Shenandoah Valley,” in *George Washington and the Virginia Backcountry*, ed. Warren R. Hofstra (Madison, WI: Madison House, 1998), pp. 87-114.

**WEEK TEN: THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION IN VIRGINIA**

**M, Oct. 31:** Slavery and Revolution

**Reading**

- Woody Holton, “Rebel Against Rebel: Enslaved Virginians and the Coming of the American Revolution,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 105:2 (1997): 157-192.
- Dunmore’s Proclamation (1775)
- Deleted section on slavery from Declaration of Independence (1776)
- Selections from Landon Carter’s Diary (1776, 1777)

**W, Nov. 2:** The Strains of War

**Reading**

- Michael A. McDonnell, “Class War? Class Struggles during the American Revolution in Virginia,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 63:2 (2006): 305-344.

**WEEK ELEVEN: SETTTLING THE REVOLUTION IN VIRGINIA**

**M, Nov. 7:** Virginia and the Constitution

**Reading**

- Glover, *The Fate of the Revolution*, Prologue, Chs. 1-2.
- George Mason’s Objections to the Constitution (1787)

**W, Nov. 9:** Jeff Broadwater Lecture (location TBA)

**WEEK TWELVE: DEBATING THE CONSTITUTION IN VIRGINIA**

**M, Nov. 14:** The Debate

**Reading**

- Glover, *The Fate of the Revolution*, chs. 3-4.

**W, Nov. 16:** Ratification & Its Aftermath

**Reading**

- Glover, *The Fate of the Revolution*, ch. 5, Epilogue.

**WEEK THIRTEEN: THANKSGIVING**

**M, Nov. 21:** No Class—Out of Town

**W, Nov. 23:** No Class—Thanksgiving Break

**WEEK FOURTEEN: INTERNAL ISSUES: RELIGION AND SLAVERY****M, Nov. 28:** The Fight for Religious Freedom in Virginia**Reading**

- A Bill Establishing a Provision for Teachers of the Christian Religion (1784)
- Richard Henry Lee to James Madison, 26 November 1784.
- James Madison, “Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessments” (1785)
- An Act for Establishing Religious Freedom (1786)

**W, Nov. 30:** Debating Slavery in the 1780s**Reading**

- 1782 Manumission Act
- Examples of Deeds of Manumission (1782, 1784)
- Methodist Petition Against Slavery in Virginia (1785)
- Amelia County Proslavery Petition (1785)

**WEEK FIFTEEN: THE MAKING OF ANTEBELLUM VIRGINIA****M, Dec. 5:** Gabriel’s Rebellion and the Fate of Virginia

- Phillip Hamilton, “Revolutionary Principles and Family Loyalties: Slavery’s Transformation in the St. George Tucker Household of Early National Virginia,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 55:4 (October 1998), 531-556.
- Gabriel’s Conspiracy Documents from Library of Virginia

**W, Dec. 7:** Make-up and Review Day