

HIST-499-001
Senior Seminar: World of the Founders
Fall 2016

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Robinson B343 ~~ Office Hours: M 11-1, or by appointment

Course Description and Objectives: Senior seminar is the capstone course for the History major. In this seminar, each student will conduct research on a specialized historical topic that is in some way related to the "World of the Founders" (ca.1763-1800). Acceptable topics could address virtually any aspect of the history of the late colonial, revolutionary, or early republican era.

This course meets the Synthesis requirement of the University General Education program, which aims to encourage students to draw on knowledge and skills they have attained through their General Education courses and to demonstrate advanced skills in their written work and oral presentations. In other words, this seminar offers you the opportunity to pull together the results of your educational experience by demonstrating mastery of research, analytical, and communication skills by applying those skills to a particular historical project. This course also counts toward the writing-intensive requirement for the History major.

Finally, because HIST-499 is part of Mason's Students as Scholars initiative, students are encouraged to present their projects in the spring at CHSS Undergraduate Research Symposium.

Course Requirements: Students are expected to adhere to the course schedule, below. As the schedule indicates, sometimes the class will meet as a group, while other days are set aside for self-directed research or individual meetings with the instructor. We will have two guest speakers--both published historians working in our field--as well as a class trip to George Mason's Gunston Hall. Please note that because this class meets infrequently and because it uses a participatory seminar/workshop format, missing class more than once will lower your grade significantly.

Written work: Each student will write a major research paper (20-25 pages, double-spaced, plus endnotes and bibliography), which will be the end product of a multi-stage process that includes several graded written assignments, all of which are detailed in the course schedule below. Research papers will be graded according to the following criteria:

- Clarity and originality of the paper's research question and thesis
- Use of primary sources in support of thesis statement
- The degree to which the work is situated appropriately in the existing literature of secondary sources (i.e., historiography)
- Use of diverse sources
- Sophistication of historical analysis
- Organization and quality of writing

Students must submit all written work electronically via Blackboard. Late submissions will be penalized a minimum of one letter-grade.

Oral work: Students will do one formal oral report, besides participating regularly in class workshops and discussions. Because discussion and in-class work are integral to this course, attendance will be taken.

At the last two class meetings, students will do oral presentations (10-15 minutes) on their research projects, using the poster format that is sometimes featured at scholarly conferences

(http://oscar.gmu.edu/students/Creating-Posters.cfm?_ga=1.78785108.1561746964.1471437376).

Templates for making posters are posted in the Course Content section of this course's Blackboard site.

Students will be graded on their oral presentations according to the following criteria:

- Clarity and organization
- Ability to respond to questions from the audience
- Completion of presentation's essential elements within the allotted time
- Ability to engage and maintain the audience's attention
- Quality and completeness of the poster

Grading: Course grades will be determined as follows:

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| ○ Secondary source analysis (due Monday 12 September) | 10% |
| ○ Research reports (2) | 5% (total) |
| ○ Research proposal (due Monday 3 October) | 15% |
| ○ Historiography (due Monday 14 November) | 10% |
| ○ Participation | 10% |
| ○ Oral poster presentation | 10% |
| ○ Complete draft of final paper (due Monday 21 November) | 20% |
| ○ Final research paper (due Wednesday 7 December) | 20% |

Finally, please note that all students are subject to the George Mason University Honor Code (see

<http://jju.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/honor.htm>). The penalty for cheating or plagiarism on any assignment will be—at a minimum—a grade of F for this course.

Required Texts: There are no required texts to purchase for this course. Required reading is available on eReserve via Blackboard or in academic journals (in both print and digital formats) from Fenwick library, as noted below.

Course Schedule:

Mon. 29 Aug.: Introduction to Course and "[Top Five Research Resources.](#)" Read H.W. Brand, "Founders Chic: Our Reverence for the Fathers has Gotten Out of Hand," *The Atlantic*, Sept. 2003 (pre-circulated link; link also available via course Blackboard site).

Mon. 5 Sept.: Labor Day—no class

Mon. 12 Sept.: Library Orientation and Info Session with Dr. George Oberle, Fenwick 1014B. This action-packed class meeting is essential. After our library orientation, we will meet to discuss this week's assigned reading and writing, as well as some parameters for choosing paper topics. Students will also choose time slots for their individual meetings, which will occur the following week.

Common reading:

- Joseph J. Ellis, "Preface: The Generation," from *Founding Brothers* (eReserve)
- Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael, "Introduction: 'To Begin the World Over Again,'" from *Revolutionary Founders* (eReserve)

Additional reading: Choose one of the article pairs below. Ideally, you should pick the reading that fits most closely to the time period and/or topic you think you will choose for your paper.

Imperial crisis, 1765-76

- Pauline Maier, "Popular Uprisings and Civil Authority in Eighteenth-Century America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 27 (1970): 3-35.
- Benjamin H. Irvin, "Tar, Feathers, and the Enemies of American Liberties, 1768-1776," *New England Quarterly*, 76 (2003): 197-238.

War and society

- Michael A. McDonnell, "Class War?: Class Struggles during the American Revolution in Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 63 (2006): 305-44.
- Alan Taylor, "The Divided Ground: Upper Canada, New York, and the Iroquois Six Nations, 1783-1815," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 22 (2002): 55-75.

Liberty and equality

- Joan R. Gundersen, "Independence, Citizenship, and the American Revolution," *Signs*, 13 (1987): 59-77.
- Michael L. Nicholls, "'The Squint of Freedom': African-American Freedom Suits in Post-Revolutionary Virginia," *Slavery and Abolition*, 20 (1999): 47-62.

Origins and implementation of the U.S. Constitution

- Woody Holton, "'Divide et Impera': 'Federalist 10' in a Wider Sphere," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 62 (2005): 175-212.
- Lance Banning, "Republican Ideology and the Triumph of the Constitution," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 31 (1974): 167-88.

Historical memory and commemoration

- Alfred F. Young, "George Robert Twelves Hewes (1742-1840): A Boston Shoemaker and the Memory of the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 38 (1981): 561-23.
- Robert E. Cray, Jr., "Commemorating the Prison Ship Dead: Revolutionary Memory and the Politics of Sepulture in the Early Republic, 1776-1808," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 56 (1999): 565-90.

World of the Founders in global context

- David Armitage, "The Contagion of Sovereignty: Declarations of Independence since 1776," *South African Historical Journal*, 52 (2005): 1-18.
- Maya Jasanoff, "The Other Side of Revolution: Loyalists in the British Empire," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 65 (2008): 205-32.

Student's choice: If you already have a topic in mind and none of the article pairs are relevant to it, you may choose your own readings. You must choose two articles from peer-reviewed scholarly journals and submit your *broadly conceptualized* topic and articles (full citations only) for my approval by Friday 2 September at noon. For instance, if you want to write a paper on Virginians' opposition to the Alien and Sedition Acts, your "broadly conceptualized" topic might be party politics in the early American republic or the history of civil liberties or press freedom.

Writing: Complete and submit via Blackboard by noon "Secondary Source Analysis" for both of your paired articles. For directions, consult the Course Content section of Blackboard.

Mon. 19 Sept.: Individual meetings to formalize student topics. Submit your preliminary topic and the research question you are asking (and attempting to answer) in writing to me via email before we meet.

****Some good advice for picking a topic:** At least initially, your topic should be as narrow as possible. (Hint: If someone has written an entire book on a subject, that subject is far too broad for a 25-page paper.) For instance, you cannot write a paper on the Alien and Sedition Acts, but you could write a paper on popular response to the Alien and Sedition Acts in Virginia. Similarly, women in the American

Revolution is far too big a topic, but the experiences of one woman (or one family) would be viable, as would an analysis of writing by and about women in the *Virginia Gazette* newspaper between, say, 1765 and 1776. You cannot write about the Revolutionary War in Virginia, or even about the Battle of Yorktown—both topics are much too big—but you could write about disease in an army encampment or the battlefield experiences of a specific commander at Yorktown, or about the experiences of a certain group of soldiers.

Mon. 26 Sept: Prof. Serena Zabin, Carleton College, "Mapping the Boston Massacre." We will also use a portion of our class time to address questions and concerns about topics and research proposals.

Mon. 3 Oct: Research proposals due in class. (Submit electronically via Blackboard, but also bring a paper copy.) Proposals should be 4-6 pages and they must include the following:

- An overview of your topic, including the historical question you seek to answer in your paper--stated explicitly as a question--and your tentative answer to it. (This answer, of course, is your paper's tentative thesis.)
- A detailed account of where you have already looked for sources (Fenwick catalog, *America: History and Life*, specific primary sources), what you have found, and what you still need. Be as specific as possible. At this point, we are one month into the semester, so you should have done some substantial preliminary research to gather your sources.
- A research plan or schedule with dates. In what order will you examine your sources? When do you plan to complete your research and begin to write? What will be your schedule for writing a complete draft of your paper?
- A preliminary bibliography of primary and secondary sources that you have already examined to ascertain their relevance for your project. This section should be presented with full and correct bibliographical citations. For examples, please refer to whatever research manual you may have used in HIST-300 or online at http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html (also accessible via Blackboard).

Mon. 10 Oct.: Columbus Day/fall break—no class

Mon. 17 Oct: Bring one of your primary sources to class and be prepared to discuss it.

Mon. 24 Oct.: Dr. Larrie Ferreiro, George Mason University, "Brothers at Arms: American Independence and the Men of France and Spain who Saved It." Students must submit Research Report #1 via Blackboard by 1:30 p.m. For directions and preferred format, consult the Course Content section of Blackboard.

Mon. 31 Oct.: Research week. Class will not meet, but you should be working on your paper and tracking your progress in your next research report.

Mon. 7 Nov.: Visit to Gunston Hall, home of George Mason. Please arrive at Gunston Hall in time for a 2:00 tour. We will meet as a class after the tour on-site. Students must submit Research Report #2 via Blackboard by 10:00 a.m. Read <https://www.bowdoin.edu/writing-guides/thesis.htm> for help thinking about how you will construct your paper's thesis.

Mon. 14 Nov: Historiographical essay due in class. (Submit electronically via Blackboard by noon, but also bring a paper copy.) Essays should be 4-5 pages, excluding notes and bibliography. Come to class prepared to discuss and share your historiography. Peer reviewers of draft of final papers (2 reviewers per paper; 2 peer reviews per student) will also be assigned at this class meeting.

Because historians write in conversation with each other, your final paper must include a section that situates your research and thesis in a larger historiographical context. For the historiographical essay, all or part of which may be incorporated into your final paper, you must draw on a minimum of 5 relevant secondary sources. For directions, see http://web.calstatela.edu/faculty/cendy/388histg_essay.pdf and consult the additional directions in the Course Content section of Blackboard.

Mon. 21 Nov.: Peer review. Complete drafts (including citations, bibliography, etc.) are due to me by Sunday 20 November at noon via Blackboard. I will forward papers to their assigned reviewers via email. I will comment extensively on your drafts and return them to you for revision on or before Thursday 24 November.

Mon. 28 Nov.: Oral presentations. (Use poster format and submit via Blackboard. For templates, go to the Course Content section of Blackboard.)

Mon. 5 Dec.: Oral presentations. (Use poster format and submit via Blackboard. For templates, go to the Course Content section of Blackboard.)

Wed. 7 Dec.: Final Papers Due by noon via Blackboard.

Note: To ensure a relatively level playing field for all students, anyone who took HIST-300 with me and intends to continue with the same topic in this course will have additional requirements as follows:

- *For the secondary source analysis, you must use one of the article pairs on the syllabus (rather than choosing your own).*
- *Historiographical essay must draw on 8 high-quality secondary sources (instead of 5).*
- *Final paper (both complete draft and final version) must be 25-30 pages.*