

**HIST-613-001: Early America to ca. 1763**  
**(a.k.a. The Colonial Origins of American Society)**  
**Fall 2016**

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Robinson B343 ~~ Office Hours: M 11:00-1:00, or by appointment

This course is designed to introduce students to both the history and historiography of early America from before the first arrival of Europeans to roughly the end of the Seven Years' (French and Indian) War. On completing this course, students should have broad knowledge of historical events and issues to inform their subsequent research or teaching, and help them to prepare for comprehensive M.A. or Ph.D. exams.

**Course Requirements:** This class meets once weekly, unless otherwise noted. Students should do assigned reading beforehand and come to class prepared to participate in seminar-style discussions.

***Written requirements*** are three short papers chosen from the assignments listed below, and one longer historiographical essay. Short papers should be 3 to 5 pages, double-spaced. For the final essay, students should choose a topic or issue pertinent to the course material and draw on both the assigned reading (where applicable) and other relevant secondary literature to write a historiographical essay (15 pages minimum, excluding notes and bibliography). Detailed instructions and advice about how to write a historiographical essay appear on the last page of this syllabus. Please note also that many of the articles included in the assigned course reading are examples of (very high quality) historiographical essays.

Due dates for all written work are noted in the course schedule below. Students must submit written work (preferably as Word files, via email) on or before scheduled due dates. For all assignments, late papers will be penalized a minimum of one letter-grade.

***Oral requirements*** consist of attendance and participation in weekly discussions, an informal presentation of the final paper, and leadership (or co-leadership) of class discussion for one predetermined week during the semester. Each week, class leaders should be prepared to raise questions about the assigned reading to spur debate and discussion. (I will be there to help, but ideally leaders should be able to generate and guide the class discussion.)

All course books should be available at the university bookstore, as well as at amazon.com and other online booksellers. All journal articles are available at Fenwick Library in electronic format via JSTOR or other databases.

***Course grades*** will be calculated as follows:

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| • Short papers (3 x 15%)                       | 45% |
| • Final essay                                  | 40% |
| • Participation (including leading discussion) | 15% |

## **Course Schedule:**

**Wed. 31 Aug.: Introductory Session.** Read Alan Taylor, *American Colonies*, Introduction (pre-circulated pdf)

**Wed. 7 Sept.: Going Global in Early Modern Europe.** Read Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660*; Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "Before 1607," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., 72 (2015): 3-24.

Paper: Empires are generally understood to be political and administrative entities. Why, then, is Alison Games's book primarily about neither politics nor administration?

**Wed. 14 Sept.:** Read Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America*; Daniel K. Richter, "Whose Indian History?," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., 50 (1993): 379-92.

Paper: Insofar as her book is about Native American peoples, to what extent does Virginia DeJohn Anderson's approach implement Daniel Richter's agenda for re-envisioning that field and situating it in the larger field of early American history?

**Wed. 21 Sept.: Making Race, Making Slavery.** Read Susan Dwyer Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640-1700*; Edmund S. Morgan, "Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox," *Journal of American History*, 59 (1972): 5-29.

Paper: What did Edmund Morgan mean when he called the coexistence of slavery and freedom the "American paradox"? To what extent, in your opinion, was this situation, in fact, paradoxical? Draw on assigned course readings to address this question, as well as the question of whether this juxtaposition of slavery and liberty was unique to "America" (i.e., Virginia and the other British North American mainland colonies).

**Wed. 28 Sept.: Individual meetings to discuss paper topics.**

**Wed. 5 Oct.: Faith, Mystery, and Community.** Read David D. Hall, *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England*; Patricia U. Bonomi, "'Swarms of Negroes Comeing about My Door': Black Christianity in Early Dutch and English North America," *Journal of American History*, 103 (2016): 34-58; Susan O'Brien, "The Transatlantic Community of Saints: The Great Awakening and the First Evangelical Network, 1735-1755," *American Historical Review*, 91 (1986): 811-32.

Paper: Drawing on each of the assigned readings, writing an essay assessing the relative value of studying early American religion at both the macro and micro levels.

**Wed. 12 Oct.: Gender in Public.** Read Mary Beth Norton, *Separated by Their Sex: Women in Public and Private in the Colonial Atlantic World*; Cornelia Hughes Dayton, "Taking the Trade: Abortion and Gender Relations in an Eighteenth-Century New England Village," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., 48 (1991): 19-49.

Paper: Drawing on both of the assigned readings--and accounting for both class differences and change over time--assess women's public influence and visibility in England and English America.

**Wed. 19 Oct.: Imperial Disorder (argh):** Read Marcus Rediker, *Villains of all Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age*; Robert C. Ritchie, "Living with Pirates," *Rethinking History*, 13 (2009): 411-18.

Paper: In what sense did pirates and piracy, as Marcus Rediker argues, concern "the fundamental issues of the age"? How might we explain the often dramatic differences between historical pirates and their modern cultural representations?

**Wed. 26 Oct.: Riot and Rebellion.** Read Jill Lepore, *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan*; Benjamin L. Carp, "Fire of Liberty: Firefighters, Urban Voluntary Culture, and the Revolutionary Movement," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., 58 (2001): 781-818.

Paper: Was urban residence an advantage or a disadvantage for non-elites (white and black) in eighteenth-century America?

**Wed. 2 Nov.: Royal America.** Read Brendan McConville, *The King's Three Faces: The Rise and Fall of Royal America, 1688-1776*; T. H. Breen, "An Empire of Goods: The Anglicization of Colonial America, 1690-1776," *Journal of British Studies*, 25 (1986): 467-99.

Paper: Define "anglicization," and explain its apparent rise and fall in eighteenth-century America.

**Wed. 9 Nov.: Microhistory and Narrative.** Read Joshua Piker, *The Four Deaths of Acorn Whistler: Telling Stories in Colonial America*; Jill Lepore, "Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography," *Journal of American History*, 88 (2001): 129-44.

Paper: Jill Lepore argues that the attempt to answer "important historical--and historiographical--questions" and the use of an individual person or episode "as an allegory for broader issues affecting the culture as a whole" distinguishes microhistory from biography. What are some of the questions and issues that Joshua Piker engages in *The Four Deaths of Acorn Whistler*?

**Wed. 16 Nov.:** Read Michael McDonnell, *Masters of Empire: Great Lakes Indians and the Making of America*; Elizabeth A. Fenn, "Whither the Rest of the Continent?," *Journal of the Early Republic*, 24 (2004): 167-75.

Paper: What does Michael McDonnell mean when he says that "the Anishinaabeg of the Great Lakes . . . shaped early America?"

~~~*Thanksgiving Break*~~~

**Wed. 30 Nov.: Community, Hierarchy, and Revolution.** Read Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1750-1790*.

Paper: Read the footnote on page 81. Using examples from his book, explain what Rhys Isaac means by looking beyond the literal interpretation of documents to discern "action in a social context."

**Wed. 7 Dec.: Presentation of Student Papers.**

Instructions for the final paper (15 pages, minimum, excluding notes and bibliography)

A **historiographical essay** summarizes and analyzes scholarly interpretations of a specific historical issue or topic. For this assignment, students should choose a topic relevant to the course, and analyze a minimum of *ten* high-quality secondary sources on that topic, in addition to pertinent readings from the course syllabus.

Arguably the hardest part of this assignment is finding an appealing and viable topic. One way to do so would be to browse the assigned course reading to find questions and issues in the existing literature. An ideal topic should be fairly specific--at least initially--to allow you to compare the authors' approaches and to assess the persuasiveness of their arguments. You must have at least a general idea for a topic by the time you meet with me during the week of Wednesday 28 September.

As you read your sources, your note-taking for this assignment should focus on the authors' arguments, evidence, and methodologies. You should read your sources critically and assess the validity of the authors' interpretations and approaches. Your paper should show the evolution of the best scholarly thinking on your topic/issue, as well as the current state of the field. You should also note gaps in the existing literature and suggest opportunities for further study.

Please note that many of the assigned articles for this class are historiographical essays, and most of the books contain a significant (and sometimes explicit) historiographical component.

Your final paper must include notes formatted correctly according to the Chicago (Turabian) style. It must also include a properly formatted bibliography. For examples of the Chicago (Turabian) citations that historians use, go to [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html) . You can find many more examples of properly formatted notes in the required course readings.