

History 499 (Spring 2021)
Senior Research Seminar on "The Founders: Past and Present"

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Office hours: Monday 4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. or by appointment.

Class meets on Monday 7:20 p.m-10:00 p.m. via zoom. (see link in Blackboard)

This course is the capstone of the History major. Students are required to produce a substantial research paper based on their reading of primary and secondary sources focused on the ongoing legacy of our University's namesake, George Mason, to the region and our nation. As such, the course is broadly defined to allow students to select topics from the colonial era through the modern era. Students may focus on local history, political or military topics of their choice or on subjects relating to women, slavery, education, religion, or culture more generally. After completing some readings about George Mason and the generation of the "Founders," students, with the assistance of the instructor, will focus their attention on the various stages of researching and writing the research paper.

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.

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.

*****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.

I love to see your work develop and to read/discuss your work as it develops. Please do not hesitate to contact me to make an appointment. By the end of the course students will demonstrate their competence in the following skills:

- Plan and execute a major project.
- Articulate and refine a research question.
- Justify that their project intends to be engaging and novel to a particular audience.

- Gather evidence appropriate to the question.
- Analyze sources to assess the validity of key assumptions and evidence.
- Present their findings in writing using the conventions of historical scholarship.
- Demonstrate awareness of broader implications.
- Follow ethical principles.

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.

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

IT IS EXPECTED THAT STUDENTS WILL SPEND A MINIMUM OF 10 HOURS/WEEK DOING RESEARCH FOR THIS COURSE.

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 class meeting, students will do oral presentations (5 minutes) on their research projects, using the poster format that is sometimes featured at scholarly conferences

<https://oscar.gmu.edu/students/poster-info/>

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:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| • Topic proposal and Bibliography | 10% |
| • Historiography | 10% |

- Using Primary Sources Assignment 10%
- Participation (peer-review and class discussions) 10%
- Oral poster presentation 10%
- Complete draft of final paper 25%
- Final research paper 25%

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.

Late Work: Late submissions will be penalized, typically by a deduction of one letter-grade per week.

Required Books:

Readings are generally available in the library catalog or databases but I have also made them available in the BlackBoard course under the course readings section.

Lori Glover, *Founders as Fathers: the Private Lives and Politics of the American Revolutionaries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

Brundage, Anthony. *Going to the Sources: a Guide to Historical Research and Writing*.

Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2017. —This book is available electronically from the library.

Chicago Manual of Style <http://mutex.gmu.edu/login?URL=http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org>

Tentative Schedule

1. Monday, January 25, 2021

- Syllabus and discussion of the course.
- Research and Methods
- Discussion of course and grading
- Designing a research project

2. Monday, February 1, 2021

- Using secondary sources
 - Understanding their research questions.
 - Identifying and analyzing their sources
 - Reading scholarly sources
- Finding secondary sources
 - Library Catalogs
 - America: History and Life
 - JSTOR
 - Project Muse
 - Etc.
- Read Karen Wulf, “Efficient Reading” <https://karinwulf.com/efficient-reading/> and using the strategies suggested “read” Introduction, Epilogue, and your assigned chapter in *Founders as Fathers*.

- What historical question is the author posing (and attempting to answer)? What types of primary sources does she use to find evidence to answer this question? (Letters? Diaries? Court records? Legal codes? Newspapers? Maps?)
- What is the author's thesis (i.e., the concise answer to the research question)?
- Do this for each chapter you are reading. In the Introduction answers to these questions will be for the book. The chapters will have a similar structure but be focused on the content in the chapter.
- Which arguments of other scholars does the author address, and why? (Be sure to read the footnotes, as well as the text, to complete this part of the assignment.)
- How does the author answer the "So what" question? What big issue(s) does she address? How does she make the case for the importance of her book?
- Email a word document with your answers to me by 5:00 p.m.
- Bring this to class for our discussion.
- Also Read Brundage Chp. 4 pg. 65-77
- In class exercise: Using your general topic find at least 3 relevant scholarly books and 3 scholarly articles.

3. Monday, February 8, 2021

- Identifying questions and set of primary sources which you can use to help answer those questions.
- What is your tentative research question?
 - Good questions? Bad questions for this type of project?
 - What do you need to know to answer that question effectively?
 - Developing a research outline based on questions.
 - Finding primary sources
- Read:
 - George Mason University Writing Center, "How to Write a Research Question" <https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/guides/how-to-write-a-research-question>
 - Thomas Andrews and Flannery Burke, "What Does It Means to Think Historically?" (Blackboard) <https://www.historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/january-2007/what-does-it-mean-to-think-historically>
 - Brundage Chp. 3 pg 44-64
 - Katherine Pickering Antonova, *The Essential Guide to Writing History Essays*. New York: Oxford University Press, Chapter 2 pp 17-29
- In class exercise: Develop topic proposal and bibliography.
- Sign up for an appointment with me for next week.

4. Monday, February 15, 2021

- Instead of class we will have **Individual Meetings**
 - Bring in an idea for topic(s) and list of preliminary sources. You should have at least 3 books and 6 articles (or some combination (e.g. 5 books 2 articles) for your secondary sources. Also, identify potential primary sources which will be

useful for your project. I am interested in sets of records and why they will be useful. If you have already identified your topic, and I have approved the topic, do not bring two topics in.

- Your written draft statement should be one paragraph and include the following
 - A title.
 - A specific question you will address in your research phrased in the form of a question.
 - Why you are interested in this question and what have other scholars already addressed? (Secondary Sources)
 - Why does this topic matter?
 - What primary sources will you use to answer your research question and how will you use those primary sources?
 - What primary sources will you use to answer your research question and how will you use those primary sources?

5. Monday, February 22, 2021

- Read
 - Brundage Chapter 7 103-123
 - Reading the same author and his correction.
 - Freehling, William. "The Founding Fathers and Slavery." *The American Historical Review* 77, no. 1 (February 1, 1972): 81–93. [Find in America: History and Life]
 - William W. Freehling, "The Founding Fathers, Conditional Antislavery, and the Nonradicalism of the American Revolution," in *The Reintegration of American History: Slavery and the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). 12-33, 276-278. [See Blackboard Course Content area]

Topic Proposal, Research Outline, and Bibliography Due

Turn in a short description (a single paragraph of your proposed paper topic. Discuss what you hope to discover in the course of your research. State your research question in the form of a question. Discuss what kind of primary sources will be the basis for your research.) This is a refined version of what we started the week before.

6. Monday, March 1, 2021

- Discussion on how to effectively select and utilize a set of primary sources.
 - Read Brundage Chapter 8 pg. 124-143
 - Read Brundage Appendix C, D, E. pg. 150-159
- Make sure that you come to class ready to talk about the key sources you are using to explore your topic.
- Using Primary sources
- Citing Sources

Historiography Due

7. Monday, March 8, 2021

- Read Brundage Chapter 8 p. 124-143

Using Primary Sources Assignment —In no more than two pages, do a *close reading* of a short primary source related to your research. Explain WHO wrote the document, discussing what you have found out about that author, or if you can't find out anything specific, what you can infer from the text about the author. Explain WHY the document was written; that is, what is the GENRE of the source (newspaper account, law/legal document, government/legislative proceedings, private letter, official correspondence, pamphlet, essay in a periodical, etc.) and who the intended AUDIENCE was, either stated or implicit (i.e., was it a particular named individual? Women? Was it the reading public? Was it for the political or intellectual elite?) Also, make sure to discuss the historical background/CONTEXT for the text (i.e., what was happening at that time that may have influenced what was written). Then briefly summarize the contents of the document, paying attention to the precise meaning of words and how they were used at the time. Be sure to look up any unfamiliar words in the online OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY.

8. Monday, March 15, 2021

- Discussion of ethics and academic integrity in research
- Read “Falsification: The Case of Michael Bellesiles.” In Course Content Area.
- AHA Standards of Professional Conduct. <https://www.historians.org/jobs-and-professional-development/statements-standards-and-guidelines-of-the-discipline/statement-on-standards-of-professional-conduct>

9. Monday, March 22, 2021

- **Independent Research-No Class-Make appointment if you need help**

10. Monday, March 29, 2021

- Creating a Poster Workshop Guest Speaker Hannah McLaughlin

11. Monday, April 5, 2021

- **No Class: Independent Research Time**

12. Monday, April 12, 2021

- Peer Review Workshop
 - Make sure you have a complete draft of your paper. You will be put into review groups and conduct a peer review of the work of your colleagues. You will have until 4//2021 to submit your draft so that you can take advantage of that feedback.

DUE: Complete draft of final paper 4/16/2021

- Papers should be 20-25 pages in length, plus Bibliography and footnotes, typed, double-spaced. In the Bibliography sources need to be divided in the following three headings: *Primary Sources*; *Secondary Source Books* (at least six); *Secondary Source Articles* (at least four). Online resources must be listed in appropriate category listed above. Papers MUST use Chicago Manual of Style citation format or points will be deducted from the grade.

13. Monday, April 19, 2021

- Individual Meetings to discuss draft instead of meeting in class.
- Sign up for times to deliver oral presentation.

14. Monday, April 26, 2021

Oral Presentation and Poster Due

FINAL VERSION OF PAPER DUE Tuesday, May 11, 2021

Papers should be 20-25 pages in length, plus Bibliography and footnotes, typed, double-spaced. In the Bibliography sources need to be divided in the following three headings: *Primary Sources*; *Secondary Source Books* (seven to ten); *Secondary Source Articles* (at least four). Online resources must be listed in appropriate category listed above. Papers MUST use Chicago Manual of Style citation format or points will be deducted from the grade.

If you would like the title of your Undergraduate Senior Essay to appear on your transcript, go to the link at masonimpact.gmu.edu and follow the prompts to submit your paper.

Drop Deadlines

The last day to drop a class without a tuition penalty is Feb 12. If you drop by Feb 16, there is a 50% tuition penalty. THE FINAL DROP DATE is 4/1, when there is no tuition refund.

Statement on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

All GMU students are bound to abide by the Honor Code (<http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>). Plagiarism is a broadly defined term that includes a wide spectrum of violation that involves 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 whether something constitutes plagiarism, ask the instructor. Students suspected of Honor Code violations will be turned over to the GMU Honor Board for disciplinary action.

Academic Accommodations: If you are a student who needs academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office

Suggested Topics-Please talk to me early.

- Mason Family and Education in late 18th-century early 19th century Virginia.
- Mason, Marriage, and Family Life in late 18th-century early 19th century Virginia.
- Mason's Role as a Member of the Virginia Gentry and early American democracy.
- Comparative analysis of George Mason's attendance and actions at the Fairfax County Court.
- Examining the wills/inventories of the Mason family to explore the legacy of enslaved people.

- Comparative analysis of wills/inventories of members of the Virginia gentry and their family to explore patterns of gifts.
- The Influence of Mason's Declaration of Rights on other state constitutions
- Religion in early American life—(A Study of the religious life on a plantation would be very interesting.)
- Mason's Reasons for Opposing the US Constitution compared with those of antifederalist Mercy Otis Warren
- Specific examination of objections which Mason had to the Constitution (sixteen in his original batch. Below are quotes--
 - 1-There is no Declaration of Rights, and the laws of the general government being paramount to the laws and constitution of the several States, the Declarations of Rights in the separate States are no security. Nor are the people secured even in the enjoyment of the benefit of the common law.
 - 2- In the House of Representatives there is not the substance but the shadow only of representation; which can never produce proper information in the legislature, or inspire confidence in the people; the laws will therefore be generally made by men little concerned in, and unacquainted with their effects and consequences.
 - 3. The Senate have the power of altering all money bills, and of originating appropriations of money, and the salaries of the officers of their own appointment, in conjunction with the president of the United States, although they are not the representatives of the people or amenable to them.
 - 4. These with their other great powers, viz.: their power in the appointment of ambassadors and all public officers, in making treaties, and in trying all impeachments, their influence upon and connection with the supreme Executive from these causes, their duration of office and their being a constantly existing body, almost continually sitting, joined with their being one complete branch of the legislature, will destroy any balance in the government, and enable them to accomplish what usurpations they please upon the rights and liberties of the people.
 - 5. The Judiciary of the United States is so constructed and extended, as to absorb and destroy the judiciaries of the several States; thereby rendering law as tedious, intricate and expensive, and justice as unattainable, by a great part of the community, as in England, and enabling the rich to oppress and ruin the poor.
 - 6. The President of the United States has no Constitutional Council, a thing unknown in any safe and regular government. He will therefore be unsupported by proper information and advice, and will generally be directed by minions and favorites; or he will become a tool to the Senate--or a Council of State will grow out of the principal officers of the great departments; the worst and most dangerous of all ingredients for such a Council in a free country; From this fatal defect has arisen the improper power of the Senate in the appointment of public officers, and the alarming dependence and connection between that branch of the legislature and the supreme Executive.
 - 7. Hence also spurring that unnecessary officer the Vice- President, who for want of other employment is made president of the Senate, thereby dangerously blending the executive and legislative powers, besides always giving to some one of the States an unnecessary and unjust pre-eminence over the others.
 - 8. The President of the United States has the unrestrained power of granting pardons for treason, which may be sometimes exercised to screen from punishment those

whom he had secretly instigated to commit the crime, and thereby prevent a discovery of his own guilt.

- 9. By declaring all treaties supreme laws of the land, the Executive and the Senate have, in many cases, an exclusive power of legislation; which might have been avoided by proper distinctions with respect to treaties, and requiring the assent of the House of Representatives, where it could be done with safety.
- 10. By requiring only a majority to make all commercial and navigation laws, the five Southern States, whose produce and circumstances are totally different from that of the eight Northern and Eastern States, may be ruined, for such rigid and premature regulations may be made as will enable the merchants of the Northern and Eastern States not only to demand an exorbitant freight, but to monopolize the purchase of the commodities at their own price, for many years, to the great injury of the landed interest, and impoverishment of the people; and the danger is the greater as the gain on one side will be in proportion to the loss on the other. Whereas requiring two-thirds of the members present in both Houses would have produced mutual moderation, promoted the general interest, and removed an insuperable objection to the adoption of this government.
- 11. Under their own construction of the general clause, at the end of the enumerated powers, the Congress may grant monopolies in trade and commerce, constitute new crimes, inflict unusual and severe punishments, and extend their powers as far as they shall think proper; so that the State legislatures have no security for the powers now presumed to remain to them, or the people for their rights.
- 12. There is no declaration of any kind, for preserving the liberty of the press, or the trial by jury in civil causes; nor against the danger of standing armies in time of peace.
- 13. The State legislatures are restrained from laying export duties on their own produce.
- 14. Both the general legislature and the State legislature are expressly prohibited making ex post facto laws; though there never was nor can be a legislature but must and will make such laws, when necessity and the public safety require them; which will hereafter be a breach of all the constitutions in the Union, and afford precedents for other innovations.
- 15. This government will set out a moderate aristocracy: it is at present impossible to foresee whether it will, in its operation, produce a monarchy, or a corrupt, tyrannical aristocracy; it will most probably vibrate some years between the two, and then terminate in the one or the other.
- 16. The general legislature is restrained from prohibiting the further importation of slaves for twenty odd years; though such importations render the United States weaker, more vulnerable, and less capable of defence
- Mason/Mason Family relationships with indigenous peoples.
- Comparative Biography of Mason family figures with appropriate person
- Comparative analysis of enslaved populations at Gunston Hall and Mount Vernon (Monticello)
- Gunston Hall compared with another eighteenth-century English (and/or Virginia) mansion of the time
- Comparison of ports of Colchester and Alexandria Virginia.
- Transportation (Canals, Railroads, roads) and political arguments over internal improvements in Virginia/Maryland etc.

- Mason family and the War of 1812 Service
- Loudoun County Masons (Thomson Mason-Brother of George Mason)
 - Stevens Thomson Mason
 - Armistead Mason
 - Abraham Thomson Mason
- Revolutionary War Service
- Mexican American War
 - George Thompson Mason
- Mason's Views on Slavery compared with those George Washington
- Mason's Success as a Businessman, Land Speculator, and Planter
- Plantation Management in late eighteenth early nineteenth century Chesapeake
- Resistance among enslaved population
- Food-ways/Dining on Plantations (Lots of sources at Gunston Hall and Mount Vernon)
- Taverns and Social life
- Women and Reading
- Haitian Revolution
- Partisanship in early America
- Political Ideas amongst Virginians
- Comparative newspaper analysis using an event or theme. (e.g. John Brown and Harper's Ferry,
- Members of the Mason Family
- Confederate Masons
 - James Murray Mason
 - George Mason 16 April 1830 – 3 February 1895 (son of James Murray Mason)
- Thomson Mason Family (Loudoun County)
- Comparative analysis between Mason family figure and comparable figure such as John Mason and Bushrod Washington.
- Specific Explorations of Enslaved people at Mason Homes and Plantations.
- Study of slavery in Fairfax/Loudoun etc. Comparative analysis.
- Owners of Gunston Hall (Colonial Dames) or similar institution: <http://www.mountvernon.org/the-estate-gardens/the-mansion/owners-of-mount-vernon/>
- Heritage Tourism and/or Monuments and Memorials
- Exploring topics of local history
 - Grace United Methodist in Manassas (slave cabin on property)
 - Manassas Industrial School
 - Colchester a forgotten port town
 - Local Daughters of the Confederacy Chapter
 - Children of the Confederacy in Fairfax 1950s.
 - Racial Covenants in region.
- The Mason-McCarty duel and dueling
- County court as community center in early America
- Medical Knowledge

- Specific programs of study—"Legacies of George Mason" program of the 1980s at George Mason University.
- Civil Rights movement at George Mason University in the 60s and 70s.
- Important figures at George Mason University
- Kate Mason Rowland 1840-1916 (early George Mason collector and family member—United Daughters of the Confederacy. Granddaughter of John Thomson Mason 1787-1850)
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kate_Mason_Rowland
- Robert Rutland (Editor of the Papers of George Mason—and others)
- Comparative History of Gunston Hall and Historical sites
- The Gunston Hall cult
- Other ideas...Please ask. There are many comparative biographical projects as well as projects on slavery, enslaved people, women, military, education, economics/trade in region.

A Note on Research during the Pandemic

Your project must include primary and scholarly secondary sources—and, for the latter, both books and articles. Fortunately, for research in early American history, many credible and useful sources are available digitally, including the following:

- Open-source collections of primary sources, the most important of which is Founders Online.
- Databases to which the Mason library subscribes, which are available via the library catalog/website, the most important of which include America's Historical Imprints, Early American Newspapers, and American Periodicals. For more information, go to <https://infoguides.gmu.edu/early-american>
- Also see guides for other time periods if your research is focused in a later period.
 - <https://infoguides.gmu.edu/sources-US-1820s-1880s>
 - <https://infoguides.gmu.edu/US-History-1880-1930>
 - <https://infoguides.gmu.edu/modern-US-history>
- Digital editions of scholarly journals are also available from Fenwick Library. The best way to search for journal articles is by using the database America: History and Life. That being said, you will also need to read or consult books to complete your final project. Fenwick Library has some (mostly recent) scholarly monographs available as ebooks; many other books are available electronically during the pandemic via Hathi Trust. For more information on Hathi Trust Emergency Access, see <https://timesync.gmu.edu/libnews/?p=10303>. In addition, you will have access to actual books from most of the stacks via preorder and contactless pick-up. Inter-Library Loan is also available, albeit not as extensively as usual. For more information on library services during the fall semester, go to <https://library.gmu.edu/faq-page#t127n34362>. In the unlikely event that you cannot otherwise obtain access to a book that is absolutely essential for your topic, you can obviously buy the item.