What most Americans call “the South” is a physical, cultural, economic, and political space that coalesced and solidified in the decades surrounding the Civil War. In other words, the "American South" is a cultural construction as well as a geographical unit, an imagined community as well as a political entity.

This course examines the history of territories that stretched from the Chesapeake to Spanish America from the era of European colonization, through the age of revolutions, and into the nineteenth century. This entire region shared certain environmental features and, beginning in the colonial era, also economies and societies defined by chattel slavery and plantation-based agriculture. Only in the decades following the America Revolution, did "the South" become a unique and distinctive region confined to the United States alone. Even then, the American South was never monolithic and its people remained connected--commercially, culturally, and otherwise--to larger national and global communities.

**Course Requirements:** This class meets once weekly. Students should do assigned reading before coming to class and be prepared to participate in discussions.

**Written requirements** are three short papers chosen from the weekly assignments listed below, a longer final paper, and an annotated bibliography of the roughly half of the final paper's sources (due midway through the semester). Short papers should be 4-5 pages, excluding notes. The final essay should be a minimum of 15 pages, excluding notes and bibliography.

Please note that historians use “Chicago” or “Turabian” style footnotes or endnotes, and that this form of annotation (done correctly!) is required for work submitted for this course. For proper citation formats, consult Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers* (many editions). Brief overviews and examples are also widely available online—e.g., [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html).

Due dates for all written work are noted in the course schedule below. Students must submit written work (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. (Of course, I will be there to help, if needed, but ideally leaders should be able to generate and guide the class discussion.)

All books are available at the campus bookstore, as well as at amazon.com and other online booksellers. All articles are accessible in electronic format via JSTOR or other electronic databases, with the exception of a few book chapter on eReserve from Fenwick Library, as noted below. (Library eReserves are now accessed via the course Blackboard site, which we will *not* use for any other purpose this semester.) Most journal articles that are accessible via databases are also available at the university library in their original paper form.
Course grades will be calculated as follows:

- Short papers (3 x 15%) 45%
- Annotated bibliography (due 22 October) 10%
- Final essay (due 10 December) 30%
- Participation (including leading discussion) 15%

Course Schedule


Wed. 8 Oct.: Individual meeting to discuss student topics.
**Wed. 15 Oct.: Revolution (Virginia):** Read either Rhys Isaacs, Landon Carter’s Uneasy Kingdom or James Sidbury, Ploughshares into Swords: Race, Rebellion, and Identity in Gabriel’s Virginia, 1730-1810, as well as the introduction and conclusion of the book you have chosen not to read; also read Edmund S. Morgan, "Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox," Journal of American History, 59 (1972): 5-29. (Note: both books have been placed on two-hour Reserve in Fenwick Library.) Essay question: Drawing on all of these readings, explain the vital role that slavery and enslaved people played in Virginia’s version of the American Revolution.


**Annotated bibliographies due**


**Wed. 5 Nov.: Religion, Race, Gender, and Region.** Read Christine Leigh Heyrman, Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt, and Stephanie McCurry, "The Two Faces of Republicanism: Gender and Proslavery Politics in Antebellum South Carolina," Journal of American History, 78 (1992): 1245-64. Essay question: How, according to Heyrman and McCurry, did politics and religion shape ideals about masculinity in the post-revolutionary era? To what extent were these ideals distinctively southern?


**Wed. 19 Nov.: The Big Picture, Redux.** Read David Brion Davis, The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation; Joan E. Cashin, “Southern History in Global Perspective: Vagaries of War, Region, and Memory,” Journal of The Historical Society, 11 (2011): 425-39; and Edward L. Ayers, “What We Talk About When We Talk About the South,” in Ayers, et al., All Over the Map: Rethinking American Regions, 62-82 (eReserve via Blackboard). Essay question: For what sorts of topics is a global or Atlantic perspective useful--or not useful--for studying the nineteenth-century American South? (To answer this question, draw on this week's assigned reading, along with any other pertinent reading from this course.)

**Wed. 26 Nov.: Thanksgiving Break--no class.**

**Wed. 3 Dec.: Oral presentation of student papers.**

***Final papers and annotated bibliographies due via email on Wed. 10 Dec. by 8:00 p.m.***
Instructions for the final paper (15 pages, minimum, excluding notes and bibliography)

Option 1: Historiographical essay

A historiographical essay summarizes and analyzes scholarly interpretations on 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 8 October.

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.

Your final paper must include a bibliography, though it need not be annotated.

Option 2: Research essay

For this assignment, you must use both primary and secondary sources and your essay must include a historiographical section in which you establish the significance of your research and your thesis by fitting it into the existing secondary literature. Failure to meet these two criteria--primary research and historiographical context--will result in an unsatisfactory grade for this paper.

For this option, too, finding an appealing and viable topic is arguably the hardest part. Think of your topic as a research question--and your paper as the means by which you answer that question with a thesis supported by evidence. Because fifteen pages is very short for a research paper, your topic/question should be extremely narrow so that your discussion can move beyond superficial generalities. You must have at least a general idea for a topic by the time you meet with me during the week of Wednesday 8 October.

In this case, too, your final paper must include a bibliography, though it need not be annotated.

Instructions for the annotated bibliography (minimum 5 sources)

This assignment should help you to focus on the arguments of a sampling of sources before you actually begin writing. You will be graded on the correctness of your citations, the insightfulness of your annotation, and the appropriateness of your sources. For instructions on how to prepare an annotated bibliography, see http://www.indiana.edu/~histweb/seminars/05_bibliography/annotated.htm.