HIST-300-004: World of the Founders
Fall 2018

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Robinson B343 ~ Office Hours: M 1:00-3:00, or by appt.

This course uses the broad topic of the World of the Founders (c.1765-1815) to introduce History majors to the methodology of researching, interpreting, and writing history. Although we will use many Founders-related primary sources for this course—which are readily accessible in both print and digital formats--students are encouraged to follow their interests and do their final project on any topic in American history during this chronological era.

HIST-300 is part of Mason’s Students as Scholars initiative. Students who enroll in this "Students as Scholars Inquiry" course will develop a research question, answer that question by using historical research and writing methods, and situate their findings in an appropriate historiographical context. HIST-300 also fulfills in part the Writing Intensive requirement for the History major via multiple written assignments of varying lengths. Note that students must earn a grade of C or better in HIST-300 in order to register for the second required Writing Intensive History course, HIST-499.

This course focuses primarily on developing skills, all of which have real-world applications. Students will access information, read and interpret print and visual texts, and write a grant proposal according to guidelines prescribed by the National Endowment for the Humanities. They will also learn about ways in which historians and other humanities scholars have become both producers and consumers of digital technologies.

This class will occasionally meet somewhere other than our assigned classroom, as noted in the course schedule below.

No books are required to be purchased for this course.

**Course Requirements:**

Students are expected to follow the course schedule. Attendance is essential for success in this course, which meets only once weekly. In-class work is significant and there are often assignments due in class (as noted in the course schedule). **If you miss class, it is your responsibility to keep up with the work and to submit your assignments on time. If you come to class unprepared for the day's work, you may be asked to leave.**

Written work: Students will complete several written assignments over the course of the semester, each of which must be submitted electronically (as Word files) through the course Blackboard site. For specific assignments, please see the course schedule and also
the specific directions in the Assignments section of Blackboard. Late submissions will be penalized, typically by a deduction of one letter-grade.

Oral work: Students will do one formal oral presentation, in addition to participating regularly in informal class discussions. Please come to class prepared to discuss that day’s assigned work or reading. Because discussion and in-class work are integral to this course, attendance will be taken.

Course grades will be determined as follows:

- *American Yawp* quiz (due 9/10) 10%
- Founders assignment (due 9/17) 10%
- Petitions paper (due 10/29) 10%
- Historiographical essay (due 11/5) 10%
- Draft of research proposal Narrative (due 11/15) 10%
- Oral presentation 10%
- Final research proposal (due 12/7) 20%
- Annotated bibliography (due 12/7) 10%
- Attendance/participation 10%

Course Schedule

Mon. 27 Aug.: Introductory meeting.

- *Finding Kate*: What primary sources does Ph.D. candidate Sara Collini use to reconstruct the life of an enslaved woman at George Washington’s Mount Vernon?
- Tutorial on “Top 5” research resources for early American history: [https://infoguides.gmu.edu/early-american](https://infoguides.gmu.edu/early-american) (also accessible via Blackboard as “Library Research Guide”).

Mon. 3 Sept.: Labor Day—no class

Mon. 10 Sept.: The Big Picture.

Read the following and complete the quiz in the Assignments section of Blackboard by noon today:


Read all three chapters and one primary source from the chapter you find most interesting. Be prepared to discuss the primary source you chose. The idea is to give you a grounding in the period to help you think about possible topics for your final project.
Mon. 17 Sept.: Historians Debate the “Founders.”

Read the introductions to the following books:

- Joseph Ellis, *Founding Brothers* (in eReserves on Blackboard)
- Ray Raphael, Alfred F. Young, and Gary Nash, eds., *Revolutionary Founders* (in eReserves on Blackboard)
- Andrew M. Schocket, *Fighting over the Founders: How We Remember the American Revolution* (in eReserves on Blackboard)

Pay particular attention to the authors’ arguments/theses and to how they use and format citations (endnotes or footnotes) in their work.

In-class discussion of the readings and possible project topics.

**Founders assignment due.** For specific directions, see the Assignments section of Blackboard.

Mon. 24 Sept.: Individual meetings to discuss final project. Meet me in my office, Robinson B343, at our prearranged time. Students must send me a tentative topic in the form of a research question via email before we meet and bring to our meeting a relevant book—the actual physical object—from the university library.

Mon.: 1 Oct.: Research sources and skills with Dr. George Oberle. Fenwick Library, room 1014A.

To prepare for class, please familiarize yourselves with the following (all of which will help you to complete the final assignments for this course):

- How to prepare an annotated bibliography: read [http://www.history.ucla.edu/sites/default/files/assets/annotated_bibliographies.pdf](http://www.history.ucla.edu/sites/default/files/assets/annotated_bibliographies.pdf)

The pdfs above are also included in the Course Contents section of Blackboard, where you will also find my own Annotated Bibliography Example and Rubric.

For more detailed information on both the annotated bibliography and the final research proposal (both of which are due at the end of the semester), see the appropriate documents in the Assignments section of Blackboard.

Mon. 8 Oct.: Columbus Day/Fall Break—no class—research week.

Mon. 15 Oct.: Working with Primary Sources: Newspapers.

To prepare for class, please familiarize yourself with the *Massachusetts Spy*, from 3 May 1775, which is available in the Course Content section of Blackboard. You will need to have access to this newspaper, either digitally or as a paper print-out, for our in-class work.
Also read “Evaluating Internet Resources,” at https://www.library.georgetown.edu/tutorials/research-guides/evaluating-internet-content.

Mon. 22 Oct.: Working with Primary Sources: Public documents.

During and after the Revolution, Americans increasingly pressed their government to recognize and protect what they believed to be their interests and their rights. One way they did so was by petitioning their state legislatures for assistance or redress.

Slavery and marriage were entrenched institutions that, to varying degrees, constrained individual rights. Today's classwork—and the short research paper due on Monday 29 October—draws on individual petitions for emancipation from slavery and from abusive marriages filed by Virginians between 1776 and 1800.

To prepare for class, please do the following:

- Decide which issue you prefer to read and write about: divorce or emancipation.
- Once you have made your choice, browse the appropriate documents (“divorce petitions” or “emancipation petitions”) in the Course Content section of Blackboard.

Come to class prepared to work collaboratively to transcribe some of the more difficult documents in the category you have chosen. You will be required to use a minimum of 6 documents as sources in your paper. For more detailed instructions for the paper, see the instructions in the Assignments section of Blackboard.

Mon. 29 Oct.: Fairfax County Historic Records Center Site Visit.

Class will meet at The Historic Courthouse, 4000 Chain Bridge Road, Suite 1600, Fairfax. Park in the lots behind the building on West Street and enter the building via the West Street entrance. Our contact is Ms. Heather Bollinger. There is map of the courthouse complex posted in the Course Content section of Blackboard. If you consult the map, we are going to building #2 and parking in the blue spot behind it.

Petitions paper due.

Mon. 5 Nov.: Historiography/Special Lecture on the American Revolution.

Class will meet in room 2001 in Fenwick Library. Please arrive at 4:30, as usual. Our agenda for the day will be as follows:

- Historiographical essays due. For specific directions, see the Assignments section of Blackboard.
- 4:30-5:00: class discussion of historiography-related issues
- 5:00-6:30: Lecture by Prof. Robert Parkinson, Binghamton University, author of The Common Cause: Creating Race and Nation in the American Revolution
Students who ask Prof. Parkinson a question during the Q & A will receive one extra credit point toward their final grade.

Mon. 12 Nov.: Narrative Drafts.

- In-class work: All students must bring complete drafts of the “Narrative” portion of their final projects/proposals to class for peer review.

- Revise your draft after peer review and submit to me via Blackboard by Thursday 15 November at 5:00 p.m. (10%). I will return your draft to you—with my comments and suggestions for revision—before class meets on Monday.

Mon 19 Nov.: Visit to Special Collections Research Center. Class will meet in Fenwick Library, room 2400. Please review the SCRC webpage before we meet: [https://scrc.gmu.edu/visit.php](https://scrc.gmu.edu/visit.php).

Mon 26 Nov.: Student presentations. (Use one of the poster formats from the Assignments section of Blackboard. Please submit your completed poster on Blackboard before class.)

Mon. 3 Dec.: Student presentations. (Use one of the poster formats from the Assignments section of Blackboard. Please submit your completed poster on Blackboard before class.)

Fri. 7 Dec.: Revised final projects (20%) and annotated bibliographies (10%) due via Blackboard by 5:00 p.m.