History 499 (Fall 2022)
Senior Research Seminar on "The Founders: Past and Present"

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Office hours: Thursday 4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. or by appointment.
Class meets on Thursday 7:20 p.m-10:00 p.m. in Horizon Hall 1007

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:

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

4. Gather evidence appropriate to the question.
5. Analyze sources to assess the validity of key assumptions and evidence.
6. Present their findings in writing using the conventions of historical scholarship.
7. Demonstrate awareness of broader implications.
8. 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:

9. Clarity and originality of the paper's research question and thesis
10. Use of primary sources in support of thesis statement
11. The degree to which the work is situated appropriately in the existing literature of secondary sources (i.e., historiography)
12. Use of diverse sources
13. Sophistication of historical analysis
14. 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 (5-7 minutes) on their research projects, using the poster format that is sometimes featured at scholarly conferences https:// oscar.gmu.edu/students/p os ter-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:

15. Clarity and organization
16. Ability to respond to questions from the audience
17. Completion of presentation's essential elements within the allotted time
18. Ability to engage and maintain the audience's attention
19. Quality and completeness of the poster

Grading: Course grades will be determined as follows:

- Topic proposal and Bibliography 15%
- Outline 10%
- Complete draft of final paper 30%
- Oral poster presentation 10%
- Final research paper 25%

- Participation (peer-review and class discussions) 10%

Finally, please note that all students are subject to the George Mason University Honor Code (see https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/).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 Fives and Politics of the American Revolutionaries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

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

Tentative Schedule

Thursday, August 25, 2022

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

Thursday, September 1, 2022

- 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 "efficiently 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?) o What is the author's thesis (i.e., the concise answer to the research question)?
- Do this for each chapter you are reading. 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 document to class for our discussion.
- Also Read Schrag *Princeton Guide to Historical Research* Chapter 1
- In class exercise: Using your general topic find at least 3 relevant scholarly books and 3 scholarly articles.

Thursday, September 8, 2022

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
- 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 Read Schrag *Princeton Guide to Historical Research* Chapter 3,4,5. In class exercise: Develop topic proposal and bibliography.
- Sign up for an appointment with me for next week.

Thursday, September 15, 2022

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 3 articles (or some combination (e.g. 2 books 4 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 you think 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?

Thursday, September 22, 2022

Outlining a Project and engaging with historiography

- Read Schrag, *Princeton Guide to Historical Research* Chapter 11,12, Bring your bibliography of core secondary sources to class. Make sure your sources are annotated and they cover the following:

    - What is the main point, or argument, made by each of your authors? Think particularly about whether or not an author is trying to reinforce an earlier perception of history or argue in favor of a re-interpretation of it.
    - What kinds of sources does the author use as evidence in support of the argument? How does the author deal with counter-evidence, or information that seems to weaken or contradict the thesis?

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the book/article in terms of the argument, analysis, and conclusions? Do you find it persuasive?
- How does this work relate to arguments advanced by scholars who previously wrote about this topic?

Thursday, September 29, 2022

Working with sources and developing a working outline-In class assignment

Read Schrag *Princeton Guide to Historical Research* Chapter 13,6,8,9

Topic Proposal 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. Discuss what kind of primary sources will be the basis for your research.)

Thursday, October 6, 2022
Discussion of ethics and academic integrity in research

- Read Schrag, *Princeton Guide to Historical Research* Chapter 2

Read "Falsification: The Case of Michael Bellesiles." In Course Content Area.
And the 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

Read "Revisiting Mills Kelly's 'Lying About the Past' 10 years Later."
https://dancohen.org/2018/03/22/revisiting-mills-kellys-lying-about-the-past-10-years-later/

DUE: Submit Outline

Thursday, October 13, 2022

- Ways of communicating history
  - Listen to Podcast Consolation Prize: Episode 1 "Burroughing into Mexico." https://consolationprize.rrchnm.org/episode-1/
- Poster Creating a Poster Workshop Guest Speaker Hannah McLaughlin
- Read Schrag, *Princeton Guide to Historical Research* Chapter 16

Thursday, October 20, 2022

Independent Research NO CLASS

Thursday, October 27, 2022

Guest Speaker from Career Services

- Read Schrag, *Princeton Guide to Historical Research* Chapter 14, 15
- Discussion on what you do with a history major.

Thursday, November 3, 2022

Independent Research NO CLASS

Thursday, November 10, 2022

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 be have until 11/16/2021 to submit your draft so that you can take advantage of that feedback.

DUE: Complete draft of final paper 11/19/2022 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* (suggested amount 3); *Secondary Source Articles* (suggested amount four). Online resources must be listed in appropriate category listed above. Papers MUST use the *Chicago Manual of Style* citation format or points will be deducted from the grade.

Thursday, November 17, 2022

Individual Appointments to discuss drafts

Thursday, November 24, 2022

THANKSGIVING RECESS NO CLASS

Thursday, December 1, 2022

Oral Presentation and Poster Due

FINAL VERSION OF PAPER DUE Friday, December 9, 2022
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.

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 Focused

1. Mason Family and Education in late 18th-century early 19th century Virginia.
2. Mason, Marriage, and Family Life in late 18th-century early 19th century Virginia.
3. Mason's Role as a Member of the Virginia Gentry and early American democracy.
4. Comparative analysis of George Mason's attendance and actions at the Fairfax County Court.
5. Examining the wills/inventories of the Mason family to explore the legacy of enslaved people.
6. Comparative analysis of wills/inventories of members of the Virginia gentry and their family to explore patterns of gifts.
7. The Influence of Mason's Declaration of Rights on other state constitutions
8. Religion in early American life—(A Study of the religious life on a plantation would be very interesting.)
9. Mason's Reasons for Opposing the US Constitution compared with those of antifederalist Mercy Otis Warren
10. 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. o
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

11. Mason/Mason Family relationships with indigenous peoples.

12. Comparative Biography of Mason family figures with appropriate person
13. Comparative analysis of enslaved populations at Gunston Hall and Mount Vernon (Monticello)
14. Gunston Hall compared with another eighteenth-century English (and/or Virginia) mansion of the time
15. Loudoun County Masons (Thomson Mason-Brother of George Mason)
    - o Stevens Thomson Mason o Armistead Mason o Abraham Thomson Mason
16. Revolutionary War Service
17. Mexican American War
    - o George Thompson Mason
18. Mason's Views on Slavery compared with those George Washington
19. Mason's Success as a Businessman, Land Speculator, and Planter
20. Members of the Mason Family
21. Confederate Masons
    - o James Murray Mason
    - o George Mason 16 April 1830 — 3 February 1895 (son of James Murray Mason)
22. Thomson Mason Family (Loudoun County)
23. Comparative analysis between Mason family figure and comparable figure such as John Mason and Bushrod Washington.
24. Specific Explorations of Enslaved people at Mason Homes and Plantations.

Regionally Focused

25. Slave Sales in NoVA
26. Slave patrols in the region as means of social control
27. Racism and the implementation of 2nd Amendment
28. Reston Black Focus as a change agent.
29. Vietnam War protesting
30. Environmental protest and land development 20th century in region
31. Ponnet vs Southern Railroad-case about pollution and business in early 20th century
32. Comparison of ports of Colchester and Alexandria Virginia.
33. Transportation (Canals, Railroads, roads) and political arguments over internal improvements in Virginia/Maryland etc.
34. Plantation Management in late eighteenth early nineteenth century Chesapeake
35. Resistance among enslaved population
36. Food-ways/Dining on Plantations (Lots of sources at Gunston Hall and Mount Vernon)
37. Taverns and Social life in Virginia
38. Women and Reading
39. Haitian Revolution and the Impact on Virginia
40. Partisanship in early America (with an emphasis on Virginia/Maryland)
41. Political Ideas amongst Virginians
42. Comparative newspaper analysis using an event or theme, (e.g. John Brown and Harper's Ferry,
43. Study of slavery in Fairfax/Loudoun etc. Comparative analysis.
44. Owners of Gunston Hall (Colonial Dames) or similar institution: http://www.mountvernon.org/the-estate-gardens/the-mansion/owners-of-mount-vernon /
45. Heritage Tourism and/or Monuments and Memorials
46. Exploring topics of local history
    - o Grace United Methodist in Manassas (slave cabin on property)
    - o Manassas Industrial School
    - o Colchester a forgotten port town

- o Local Daughters of the Confederacy Chapter
    - ■ Children of the Confederacy in Fairfax 1950s.
- o Racial Covenants in region.

47. The Mason-McCarty duel and dueling
48. County court as community center in early America
49. Medical Knowledge in connection with Race and Gender
50. Specific programs of study-"Legacies of George Mason" program of the 1980s at George Mason University.
51. Civil Rights movement at George Mason University in the 60s and 70s.
52. Important figures at George Mason University
53. Kate Mason Rowland 1840-1916 (early George Mason collector and family member— United Daughters of the Confederacy. Granddaughter of John Thomson Mason 1787-1850)
    - o https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kate Mason Rowland
54. Robert Rutland (Editor of the Papers of George Mason—and others)
55. Comparative History of Gunston Hall and Historical sites
56. Look more deeply at education in northern Virginia and find a general topic to develop into a research proposal.
57. Black Churches and Communities (ask me)
58. Civil Rights era and the End of Jim Crow in Northern Virginia (ask me)
59. History of Gum Springs
60. Land ownership and use
61. The Gunston Hall cult
62. 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.