

George Mason University
Department of History and Art History

Spring 2023
Meeting Time: TR 12:00-1:15 PM
Classroom: Music/Theatre 1006
Office Hours: M 10:15-12:00, T 2-3, and by appt.

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HISTORY 391: HISTORY OF VIRGINIA TO 1800

Virginia was England's first permanent settlement in the New World, and by the eighteenth century it was the largest, wealthiest, and most powerful British mainland colony. After the American Revolution, it remained the most populous and influential state in the new United States well into the nineteenth century. Virginia's history is thus central to the history of British America and the United States, and it embodies many of the contradictions, tensions, and ironies of that history. It produced a powerful, educated elite who helped lead the nation towards independence and liberty, but it also encompassed the conquest and dispossession of native peoples, the exploitation of poor men and women who sought freedom in the new world, and the development of a brutal system of chattel slavery that denied human independence and liberty at their most fundamental levels. This class will trace that complex and often contradictory history from the first contact between Europeans and native peoples, through the American Revolution, and into the early decades of the nineteenth century.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Class Participation and Preparation: This course is heavily based on reading and discussion—your attendance and active participation are crucial to its success. Evidence of preparation (i.e., having done and thought about the reading and any discussion questions), quality of discussion, engagement with other students' ideas, and appropriate behavior all factor into the class participation grade.

Preparation includes bringing a copy of the reading, something to write with, and paper to write on in order to be ready for any in-class writing or exercises we may do. (This is of course subject to accommodation for students with disabilities that may interfere with their ability to write using traditional media.)

Short Assignments: Many weeks there will be a brief written assignment based on the readings or other exercises used to encourage thought and discussion. Details and instructions for each specific short exercise will be discussed in class and posted on Blackboard. Often these will simply be reactions to the reading; other times they might be explorations of primary sources; sometimes they might be assignments designed to help you

prepare for the essays (see below). They don't usually require much sustained writing, but they should be the result of real consideration and effort.

Short Assignments are graded mostly on a completion and effort basis—if the assignment is completed and demonstrates serious engagement and effort, it will receive full credit. If it only demonstrates superficial engagement or token effort, they will receive some degree of partial credit.

In-Semester Reflections: **Two** times during the semester, you will be asked to complete a reflection on what you have learned during the preceding section of the class. These will have three main parts: 1) a section where you describe the most important information and ideas you've learned in that section of the class; 2) a section where you describe and assess your own understanding and engagement over that period of time; 3) a consideration of what you and the class can do to ensure your continued success and understanding of the material.

Essays: You will write two five- to six-page essays based on course materials, one in the first half of the semester and one in the second half. *Details of these assignments will be distributed in class.*

Final Reflection: There will be a final reflection due during exam period. This reflection is designed to help you think about the larger implications and significance of what we have covered this semester, what you have learned, and how it might shape your understanding of history and events going forward. This is not a major, high-stakes “final” exam or project, but rather a more open-ended, relatively low-stakes opportunity to synthesize and take stock of what you have learned.

Grading:

Participation	15%
Short Exercises	15%
In-Semester Reflections	15%
Papers (together)	45%
Final Reflection	10%

IN-CLASS BEHAVIOR

Behaviors such as frequent tardiness, leaving early, packing up to leave before class is over, sleeping, eating, talking when others are speaking, texting, checking email, using social media, and doing work for other classes have a strong negative effect on your own learning as well as on your classmates' ability to concentrate in class. Please make the effort to respect the class and your classmates—avoid or minimize disruption and distraction and help create an engaged, positive environment in class!

EXPLORING CHARGED TOPICS

Our course often covers issues of race, slavery, gender, sexuality, violence, and oppression that still have resonance today. In dealing with these issues, it is important to be both

respectful of the historical experience of the people involved and aware of the larger implications of that history in our world. This means making the effort to learn the appropriate vocabulary for discussing these issues in an analytical and scholarly way and avoiding uncritically echoing language that replicates the attitudes and assumptions of the past. This does not mean shying away from dealing with these issues if you are unsure of how to talk or write about them—we will do our best to confront them frankly and directly, and the course is designed to help you do so.

Because this is a learning process and these are complex and charged issues, we should presume good faith and give everyone the benefit of the doubt when people struggle with some of these concepts. At the same time, we should all work to *earn* that benefit of the doubt: by engaging in good faith, by learning from our mistakes, and by being open to new perspectives and ways of seeing this complex history and what it means to people today.

DUE DATES AND LATE WORK

All assignments are officially due at the time specified in the assignment. Meeting these due dates is important for the pacing of the class, for student interaction, and for the way in which assignments are designed to build upon one another.

That said, I also recognize the complexity of working and learning in busy circumstances. Work that is turned in up to a week after its due date will be accepted with no questions asked and a 5% penalty. If you need more time than that, please contact me (rscully@gmu.edu) in order to make a plan.

Extensions without penalty can be granted in appropriate circumstances if they are requested at least a day ahead of time.

My goal is to make sure that you are able to complete the required work and get as much as possible out of the class, but that requires clear communication and planning in the event of major challenges.

IMPORTANT: In order to be counted and graded, all work besides the final reflection must be turned in by the end of reading period (currently scheduled as Tuesday, May 9) unless you have contacted me and we have agreed in writing (email counts) on another specific plan.

In general, if you have any kind of problem that interferes with your work for the class, please consult with me as soon as possible.

HONOR CODE STATEMENT

All work in the course is governed by the George Mason University honor code: *To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: **Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal,***

or lie in matters related to academic work.

More information can be found at the GMU [Office of Academic Integrity](#).

OTHER POLICIES AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Administrative Dates (this is up-to-date and correct at time of completion of this syllabus; please double check the semester calendar on the Registrar's website)

Last day to add classes: Monday, January 30

Last day to drop with full tuition refund: Monday, February 6

Final drop deadline (50% tuition refund): Monday, February 13

Unrestricted withdrawal period (no refund): Tuesday, February 14 to Monday, February 27

Selective withdrawal period (no refund): Tuesday, February 28 to Monday, April 3

Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ods.gmu.edu) at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

GMU Email Accounts

Students must use their Mason email accounts to receive important University information, including messages related to this class.

Useful Resources

Writing Center (writingcenter.gmu.edu): Johnson Center, Room 227E, (703) 993-1200, wcenter@gmu.edu.

Counseling and Psychological Services (caps.gmu.edu): SUB I, Room 3129, (703) 993-2380.

University Catalog: catalog.gmu.edu.

Other university policies: universitypolicy.gmu.edu.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The books listed below are required reading for this class and have been ordered at the GMU bookstore.

Some of the books may be available in electronic form via the Mason Library. **I still recommend having a hard copy** to underline, to make notes, and to refer to in class, but I will try to provide up-to-date information on online options when available. If you do choose an electronic version of any of these texts, make sure you have a way of consulting them in class.

- Pagan, John Ruston. *Anne Orthwood's Bastard: Sex and Law in Early Virginia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Available online for partial (or time-limited full) download at <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.mutex.gmu.edu/lib/GMU/detail.action?docID=241279&pq-origsite=primo>. You may need your GMU username and password to log in for access.

- Taylor, Alan. *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772-1832*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2013.
- Townsend, Camilla. *Pocahontas and the Powhatan Dilemma*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2004.

Additional required readings are listed on the syllabus and are accessible via Blackboard.

Other late-breaking readings and handouts may be distributed electronically, and those will also be considered part of the required reading.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READING

NOTE: this schedule is subject to adjustment due to a variety of possible factors—weather, power outages, illness, class interest, things simply taking longer than expected, newly announced discoveries or interpretations, public events, etc. Any changes will be announced in class, via email, and on Blackboard. Please make sure to keep informed about such changes.

WEEK ONE: TSENACOMOCO

T, Jan. 24: Course Introduction; Virginia Before Virginia

R, Jan. 26: Native Americans and Early Contacts

Reading

- Townsend, *Pocahontas*, Preface and ch. 1.

WEEK TWO: THE BEGINNINGS OF ENGLISH COLONIZATION

T, Jan. 31: English Colonization: Expectations and Realities

R, Feb. 2: Struggle and Survival at Jamestown

Reading

- Townsend, *Pocahontas*, chs. 2-4.

WEEK THREE: HOPE AND DISAPPOINTMENT AT JAMESTOWN

T, Feb. 7: Reorganization and Uprising

R, Feb. 9: Pocahontas and the Jamestown Project

Reading

- Townsend, *Pocahontas*, chs. 5-9.

WEEK FOUR: THE MAKING OF A TOBACCO COLONY

T, Feb. 14: The Expansion of Virginia

R, Feb. 16: Servants and Masters

Reading

- Pagan, *Anne Orthwood's Bastard*, introduction and chs. 1-5.

WEEK FIVE: COMMUNITY AND CONFLICT IN EARLY VIRGINIA

T, Feb. 21: Community

Reading

- Pagan, *Anne Orthwood's Bastard*, chs. 6-10 and Conclusion.

R, Feb. 23: The Challenges of Governing in Mid Seventeenth-Century Virginia

WEEK SIX: REBELLION**T, Feb. 28:** Bacon's Rebellion**Reading**

- Brent Tarter, "Bacon's Rebellion, the Grievances of the People, and the Political Culture of Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 119:1 (2011): 2-41.
- James D. Rice, "Bacon's Rebellion in Indian Country," *Journal of American History* 101:3 (December 2014): 726-750.

R, Mar. 2: Aftermath**WEEK SEVEN: THE RISE OF SLAVERY IN VIRGINIA****T, Mar. 7:** Labor and Politics**Reading**

- John C. Coombs, "The Phases of Conversion: A New Chronology for the Rise of Slavery in Early Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68:3 (2011): 332-360.

R, Mar. 9: Making Race**Reading**

- Kathleen M. Brown, "Engendering Racial Difference, 1640-1670," chap. 4 in *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, & Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 107-136.

WEEK EIGHT: SPRING BREAK (Monday, Mar. 13 to Sunday, Mar. 19)**WEEK NINE: THE RISE OF THE VIRGINIA GENTRY****T, Mar. 21:** Mastering Space**Reading**

- Cary Carson, "Banqueting Houses and the 'Needs of Society' among Slave-Owning Planters in the Chesapeake Colonies," *William and Mary Quarterly* 70:4 (October 2013): 725-780 (note: main article ends on pg. 756; feel free to skim the appendix).

R, Mar. 23: Anxious Patriarchs**Reading**

- Paula A. Treckel, "'The Empire of My Heart': The Marriage of William Byrd II and Lucy Parke Byrd," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 105:2 (1997): 125-156.

WEEK TEN: GEORGE WASHINGTON'S VIRGINIA ON THE EVE OF THE REVOLUTION**T, Mar. 28:** Western Settlement and the Seven Years' War

Reading

- Warren R. Hofstra, “‘A Parcel of Barbarian’s and an Uncooth Set of People’: Settlers and Settlements of the Shenandoah Valley,” in *George Washington and the Virginia Backcountry*, ed. Warren R. Hofstra (Madison, WI: Madison House, 1998), pp. 87-114.

R, Mar. 30: The Tobacco Economy

Reading

- Bruce A. Ragsdale, “George Washington, the British Tobacco Trade, and Economic Opportunity in Prerevolutionary Virginia,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 97:2 (1989): 132-162.

WEEK ELEVEN: THE REVOLUTION IN VIRGINIA

T, Apr. 4: The Coming of the Revolution

R, Apr. 6: The Revolution and Slavery in Virginia

Reading

- Taylor, *Internal Enemy*, ch. 1-2.

WEEK TWELVE: RACE, SLAVERY, AND POLITICS IN EARLY NINETEENTH-CENTURY VIRGINIA

T, Apr. 11: The Hardening Racial Order

Reading

- Taylor, *Internal Enemy*, ch. 3.

R, Apr. 13: War Comes to Virginia

Reading

- Taylor, *Internal Enemy*, ch. 4-5.

WEEK THIRTEEN: SEEKING FREEDOM IN AN ERA OF WAR

T, Apr. 18: A Plantation Community in the midst of War

Reading

- Taylor, *Internal Enemy*, beginning and end of ch. 6 (pp. 175-6, 207-213) and ch. 7.

R, Apr. 20: Runaways and Soldiers

Reading

- Taylor, *Internal Enemy*, chs. 8-9.

WEEK FOURTEEN: DEFEAT AND VICTORY

T, Apr. 25: The End of the War of 1812

Reading

- Taylor, *Internal Enemy*, ch. 10.

R, Apr. 27: Forging New Lives

Reading

- Taylor, *Internal Enemy*, ch. 11.

WEEK FIFTEEN: THE MAKING OF ANTEBELLUM VIRGINIA

T, May 2: Slavery and Ideology in the New Nation

Reading

- Taylor, *Internal Enemy*, ch. 12 and Epilogue.

R, May 4: Make-up and Review Day

READING PERIOD: Monday, May 8 to Tuesday, May 9.

All remaining work from the semester (aside from the Final Reflection) must be turned in by the end of Tuesday, May 9, unless I have agreed to specific alternate plans.

FINAL REFLECTION: due by 11:59 pm, Friday, May 12.