History 8000—Literature of American History to 1865

Professor Andrew Robertson     Fall 2012
Wednesday 4:15-6:15 p.m. Room 5212     5 credits
Office Hours Room 5212     Wed. 3:00-4:00 and by appt.
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This course is the first in a two-semester sequence meant to prepare students for the First Written Examination. By the end of the course, successful students should be able to:

- Discuss major problems in American history before 1865 and how scholarly interpretations of these problems have changed over time.
- Summarize and critically evaluate historical monographs both verbally (in a presentation) and in writing.
- Synthesize a historical argument based on the course readings.
- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of historiography by writing an essay that analyzes and synthesizes the scholarly literature on a particular topic.

Each week, students should come to class prepared to discuss the common readings below. Over the course of the semester, each student will also read two of the recommended books, write a thousand-word review of each of these two books, and make a ten-minute presentation about each to the seminar. Each student will also write a historiographical essay of five thousand words on a topic chosen in consultation with Professor Robertson. A proposed bibliography for the essay is due in class in Week Seven, and the essay will be due in Finals Week. The final grade for the course will be based on the two book reviews (15% each), midterm exam (15%), participation in discussion (30%) and the essay (25%).

The books listed below are on reserve at the Mina Rees Library. You may also purchase books using the Graduate Center’s Virtual Bookshop http://library.gc.cuny.edu/info/amazon.html

August 29     Introduction and Organizational Meeting (Week One)

September 5     Atlantic Collisions (Week Two)

Common Reading:
Recommended Reading:

September 12  The Atlantic World (Week Three)

Common Reading:
Elliott, *Empires in the Atlantic World*, Part 2


Recommended Reading:


September 19  The Chesapeake (Week Four)

Common Reading:


Recommended Reading:


September 26  No Class
October 3  New England (Week Five)

Common Reading:


Fischer, *Albion’s Seed*, pp 13-205.

Recommended Reading:


October 10  **No Class Scheduled**

October 17  Eighteenth-Century British Colonial America (Week Six)

Common Reading:


Recommended Reading:


October 24  The Coming of the American Revolution (Week Seven)

**Bibliography Proposals Due**

**Common Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**


October 31  **Midterm Exam / The Revolutionary Settlement (Week Eight)**

**Common Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**


November 7  Political Culture in the Early American Republic (Week Nine)

**Common Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**


November 14  Religion and Reform (Week Ten)

**Common Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**


November 21 Economic and Political Transformation (Week Eleven)

Common Reading:

Recommended Reading:

November 28 Coming of Civil Wars (Week Twelve)  **Note: Date Subject to Change**

Common Reading:
- Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, Chapters 12 through 20, Finale

Recommended Reading:
December 5  Slavery, Race and Abolition (Week Thirteen)

Common Reading:


Recommended Reading:


December 12  The Civil War       (Week Fourteen)

Common Reading:


Recommended Reading:


December 19  Historiographical Essays Due