This course introduces Ph.D. students to the historiography of the U.S. through the Civil War and is intended to prepare students for the First Written Examination.

One of our primary concerns will be periodization. To what extent should the colonial period be considered a prologue to U.S. history? And on the other side of the nationhood divide, are there analyses that suggest a coherence or continuity to U.S. history beyond the particularities of the early republic or Civil War periods? What is the status of the Revolution and the Civil War, and the political history that drives or used to drive the narrative of U.S. history, amid transformations otherwise seen as social, cultural, economic? Are there explanations that that cut across centuries, or stories that hold up in our time? What are the most important achievements of recent US historians, and what are the trends in the field now?

Another important theme of the course is space, within and beyond the places that became the United States during this period and afterwards. Is U.S. history the story of provinces or regions becoming a nation-state? What weight should be given to the local in a moment when historians are reassessing the international or even global nature of early modern as well as modern history? Should “Atlantic” and “Continental” approaches change the narrative? Can empire or empires provide a more compelling and honest as well as capacious history while allowing for the different experiences of different groups in different communities?

The books and articles we shall discuss include prizewinning narratives, classics that are still in print after decades, recent monographs born as dissertations, syntheses, and historiographical essays. An important part of what we will be doing is attempting to read these in light of each other. Be forewarned: the reading is extensive, in recognition of the five credits this course carries and its status as required preparation for a qualifying examination. Our goal is to prepare for the exam, of course, but also to prepare to teach this period at the college level and to lay a substantial foundation for future research and teaching in any period of U.S. history.

Instead of a seminar paper or historiographical essay, your written work for the course will consist of weekly (2-3 page) responses to the readings. I will provide prompting questions that will help us work toward the kinds of writing and analysis the faculty will expect for the examination. These informal short essays will be due Thursday by 10am via email and may serve as jumping off points for our Thursday seminar discussions.

Schedule of readings/discussions
Books with a + are available electronically via the GC library; articles will be posted on Blackboard


9/8 How Historians Revise: Slavery, Race, and Origins in Virginia

3) *FRIDAY 9/16* Beginnings and Comparisons; or, Empires, Environments, and Peoples in New Worlds
Cayton and Anderson, “Champlain’s Dream,” *The Dominion of War*, 1-53
John L. Brooke, *Climate Change and the Course of Global History* (2014), pages TBA

4) 9/22 How Early Americans Revised: New England and the Notion of Region (and Freedom)
5) 9/29  Zooming In on Colonial Development: Imperial and Atlantic NY and PA
Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, ch. 1-12 (3-190)
Cayton and Anderson, “Penn’s Bargain,” *Dominion of War*, 54-103

10/6 no class – GC on Monday schedule

10/13 Whose American Revolution?
Barbara Clark Smith, *The Freedoms we Lost: Consent and Resistance in Revolutionary America* (2009)
Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, ch. 13-19 (pp. 191-298)

6) *FRIDAY 10/21*

7) 10/27 The Early Republic at Home and Abroad, I
Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, ch 20-26, pp. 299-408
Cayton and Anderson, “Jackson’s Vision,” *Dominion of War*, ch. 5

8) 11/3 The Early Republic at Home & Abroad, II: Women’s Lives, other Revolutions, American Myths

9) 11/10 Slavery Revisited, Capitalism Revisited
11) 1/17 Class, Culture, & Progress, East and West

11/24 no class – Thanksgiving

12) 12/1 “Antebellum”: Political History and the Problem of Causation
David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861* (1976), chapters TBA
Gary Kornblith, “Rethinking the Coming of the Civil War A Counterfactual Exercise,” *Journal of American History* 90 (June 2003), 76-105
Scott Hancock, “Crossing Freedom’s Fault Line: The Underground Railroad and Recentering African Americans in Civil War Causality,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 2 (June 2013), 159-92

13) 12/8 Where in the World was the Civil War?
Burrows and Wallace, *Gotham*, ch. 49-50 (pp. 864-905)
Yael A. Sternhell “Revisionism Reinvented?: The Antiwar Turn in Civil War Scholarship,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 3 (June 2013), 239-256.

[12/15: makeup class if needed, or review meeting]

12/21 FIRST WRITTEN EXAMINATION