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 peculiarities 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?

The books and articles we shall discuss include prizewinning narratives, monographs born as dissertations, 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 12pm via email and may serve as jumping off points for our Thursday seminar discussions.

Aug. 27 Introduction

Richard Hofstadter, The American Political Tradition and the Men who Made It (1948), introduction and ch. 1-5 (pp. v-163)
David Brion Davis, The Historical Problem: Slavery and the Meaning of America,” ch. 1 of The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture (1967), 3-28
9/10 NO CLASS – GC is on Monday schedule

9/17 How Historians Revise: Slavery, Race, and Origins in Virginia
Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia (1975)
April Lee Hatfield, “Chesapeake Slavery in Atlantic Context,” ch. 6 of Atlantic Virginia (2004), 137-68

9/24 Beginnings and Comparisons; or, Land, Water, and Animals and Peoples in New Worlds
Fred Anderson and Andrew Cayton, “Champlain’s Dream,” ch 1 of The Dominion of War, pp. 1-53
Allan Greer, “Commons and Enclosure in the Colonization of North America,” American Historical Review (Apr. 2012), 365-86.

10/1 How Early Americans Revised: New England as Reform, as Home, and in the World
Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, The Age of Homespun, ch. 1-5, pp. 42-207
Mark A. Peterson, “Life on the Margins: Boston’s Anxieties of Influence in the Atlantic World” in

D. Richter, “Planters,” Before the Revolution, 171-238

10/8 Zooming In on Colonial Development: Commerce, People, and a Dangerous, Imperial NYC

10/15 With Friends Like These? Pennsylvania as Frontier and as American Crucible
Cayton and Anderson, “Penn’s Bargain,” Dominion of War, ch. 2-3
Peter Silver, Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America (2008)
D. Richter, Before the Revolution, ch. 15-16 and epilogue, pp. 369-422.

10/22 Whose Revolution, whose Constitution?

10/29 Early Republic: Democracy, Empire, and American Political Cultures
Sean Wilentz, Rise of American Democracy, ch. 1-5, pp. 3-177.
Nicole Eustace, 1812: War and the Passions of Patriotism (2012)

11/6 The Early Republic at home: women’s lives, other revolutions, and American myths
Laurel T. Ulrich, Age of Homespun, ch. 6-14, pp. 208-418.
11/20 Slavery Revisited, Capitalism Revisited, With Bodies this Time
Jon T. Coleman, *Here Lies Hugh Glass*

11/20 Borders, Frontiers, States, Empire Again (animals too)
Coleman, *Here Lies Hugh Glass*

11/27 no class – Thanksgiving

12/3 1815-48: Jacksonian America?
Edward Pessen, “We are all Jacksonians, We are all Jeffersonians; or, a Pox on Stultifying Periodizations,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 1 (1981), 1-26.

12/10 The Coming and Fighting of the Civil War: A field taking stock
Drew Gilpin Faust, “We Should Grow too Fond of It’: Why We Love the Civil War,” *Civil War History* 50 (2004), 368-83
Yael A. Sternhell “Revisionism Reinvented?: The Antiwar Turn in Civil War Scholarship,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 3 (June 2013), 239-256

12/16 FIRST WRITTEN EXAMINATION