

Hist. 80010 The Literature of American History I Fall 2018 Thurs. 630-830pm
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Office hours (Rm. 5111.09): Thurs 3:00 to 4:30pm, and by appointment.

This course introduces Ph.D. students to the historiography of the U.S. through the Civil War and prepares students for the First Written Examination or an outside field in US history.

One of our primary concerns will be periodization. To what extent should the colonial period be considered a prologue to U.S. history? What's more important, the origins of distinctly modern or American developments – the making of the United States -- or the distinctly early dimensions of seventeenth and eighteenth century North America? 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 between these events, amid transformations otherwise seen as social, cultural, economic? Is there a coherence or continuity to U.S. history beyond the particularities of the early republic or Civil War periods? Are there explanations, or themes, that cut across centuries and thus can organize the larger story? 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, or of sections of regions converging or diverging? 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 places?

The books and articles we shall discuss include prizewinning narratives, classics that are still in print after decades, recent monographs born as dissertations, leading and lauded (and this year, a brand-new) syntheses, and historiographical essays. An important part of what we will be doing is attempting to read these in light of each other. The reading is extensive, in recognition of the five credits this course carries and its status as a prerequisite for the first 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 specialty and 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 **Thursdays by 1:00pm 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 and book chapters will be posted on Blackboard.

8/30 Introduction

9/6 Consensus and Conflict, Truth and Myth, Capitalism and Freedom in U.S. Historiography: Or, Was/Is there a New York School?

Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition and the Men who Made It* (1948), intro & ch. 1-6 (pp. v-163)
R. Hofstadter, “Consensus and Conflict in American History” in Hofstadter, *The Progressive Historians* (1968), 437-66.
Hofstadter, “Reflections on Violence in the United States” in Hofstadter and Michael Wallace eds., *American Violence: A Documentary History* (1970), 3-43.
Hofstadter, Contents, Preface and Introduction to Hofstadter, *America at 1750: A Social Portrait* (1971), vii-xvi
Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (1998), Introduction and chapters 1-5 (pp. xiii-113).
Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, Introduction, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (1999), xi-xxiv.

9/13 How Historians Revise: American Origins, and Slavery, Reconsidered

Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (1975)
Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race and Power in Colonial Virginia* (1996), pp. 1-7, 107-36 (Introduction and Chapter 4)
John K. Thornton, *A Cultural History of the Atlantic World* (2012), Intro, ch. 1, 2, & 3 (pp. 1-99)
+Daniel K. Richter, *Before the Revolution: America's Ancient Pasts* (2009), ch. 1-4 pp. 3-117.

9/20 How Historians Revise and Compare: New England Exceptionalism or Typicality?

→Read two of the following five books:

- Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth* (2002)
- Jorge Canizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550-1700* (2006)
- +Barry Levy, *Town Born: The Political Economy of New England from its Founding to the Revolution* (2009)
- David D. Hall, *A Reformed People: Puritanism and the Transformation of Public Life in New England* (2009)
- +Margaret Newell, *Brethren by Nature: New England Indians, Colonists, and the Origins of American Slavery* (2014)

9/27 Comparisons, Possessions, Disposessions, Environments, and Clashes of ... What?

- +Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America* (2004)
- +Daniel K. Richter, *Before the Revolution*, ch. 5-8, pp. 121-211.
- Allan Greer, "Commons and Enclosure in the Colonization of North America," *American Historical Review* 112 (Apr. 2012), 365-86.
- Pekka Hamalainen, "The Politics of Grass: European Expansion, Ecological Change, and Indigenous Power in the Southwest Borderlands," *William and Mary Quarterly* 67:2 (2010), 173-208.
- Pekka Hamalainen, "The Shapes of Power: Indians, Europeans, and North American Worlds from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century" in Julianna Barr and Edward Countryman eds., *Contested Spaces of Early America* (2014), 31-68.

10/4 Imperial Approaches, Places, or Times?

- +Daniel K. Richter, *Before the Revolution*, ch. 9-12, pp. 212-323.
- +Owen Stanwood, *The Empire Reformed: English America in the Age of the Glorious Revolution* (2011)
- Craig Yirush, *Settlers, Liberty, and Empire: The Roots of Early American Political Theory* (2010), Parts I and II, pp. 1-181.
- Trevor Burnard, "Empire Matters? The Historiography of Imperialism in Early America, 1492-1830," *History of European Ideas* 33 (2007) 87-107.

10/11 Atlantic Approaches, Places, or Times?

- +Richter, *Before the Revolution*, ch. 13-16 & Epilogue, pp. 327-421
- Jill Lepore, *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan* (2005)
- Wayne Bodle, "The Fabricated Region: On the Insufficiency of 'Colonies' for Understanding American Colonial History," *Early American Studies* 1 (Spring 2003), 1-27.
- Wayne Bodle, "Atlantic History is the New 'New Social History,'" *William and Mary Quarterly* 64 (Jan. 2007), 203-20.

10/18 Understandings, and Misunderstandings in and about a Long Revolutionary Era

- John M. Murrin, "The Great Inversion, or Court versus Country: A Comparison of the Revolution Settlements in England (1688-1721) and America (1776-1816)" [1980] in Murrin, *Rethinking America: from Empire to Republic* (2018), 31-98.
- Barbara Clark Smith, *The Freedoms We Lost: Consent and Resistance in Revolutionary America* (2009)
- Craig Yirush, *Settlers, Liberty, and Empire*, Part III, pp. 183-270.
- Susan E. Klepp, "Revolutionary Bodies: Women and the Fertility Transition in the Mid-Atlantic Region, 1760-4 1820," *Journal of American History* 85 (Dec. 1998), 910-45.
- William W. Freehling, "The Founding Fathers, Conditional Antislavery, and the Nonradicalism of the American Revolution," *The Reintegration of American History* (1994), 12-33.
- Michael A. McDonnell and David Waldstreicher, "Revolution in the Quarterly? A Historiographical Analysis, 1944-2016," *William and Mary Quarterly* 74 (Oct. 2017), 633-66.

10/25 "Early Republic" Democracy, Nationalism, Political Culture and Periods

- 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.
- Jeffrey L. Pasley, *The First Presidential Contest: 1796 and the Rise of American Democracy* (2014)
- John L. Brooke, "Cultures of Nationalism, Movements of Reform, and the Composite-Federal Polity: From Revolution Settlement to Antebellum Crisis," *Journal of the Early Republic* 29 (Spring 2009), 1-33.
- Reeve Huston, "Rethinking the Origins of Partisan Democracy in the United States, 1795-1840" in Daniel Peart and Adam I.P. Smith eds., *Practicing Democracy* (2015), 46-71.

11/1 Wars of the First Republic: A Postcolonial or Still Imperial America?

+Nicole Eustace, *1812: War and the Passions of Patriotism* (2009)

Amy S. Greenberg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1848 Invasion of Mexico* (2012)

Van Gosse, "As a Nation, the English are Our Friends': The Emergence of African American Politics in the British Atlantic World," *American Historical Review* 113 (Oct. 2008), 1003-28.

11/8 Slavery Revisited, Capitalism Revisited, Embodied

Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (2014)

Deirdre Cooper Owens, *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology* (2017)

Amy Dru Stanley, "Slave Breeding and Free Love: An Antebellum Argument over Slavery, Capitalism, and Personhood" in Michael Zakim and Gary Kornblith eds., *Capitalism Takes Command* (2012), 119-44.

Seth Rockman, "Negro Cloth: Mastering the Market for Slave Clothing in Antebellum America" in Sven Beckert and Christine Desan eds., *American Capitalism: New Histories* (2018), 170-94.

James Oakes, "Capitalism and Slavery and the Civil War," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 89 (2016), 195-220.

11/15 Women and Men at Home, in Public, and on the Move

"Politics In and Of Women's History in the Early Republic" *Journal of the Early Republic* (Summer 2016), pp. 313-57 [intro by Carole Lasser and short pieces by Lori Ginzberg, Patricia Cline Cohen, Ellen Hartigan-O'Connor, Amy Dru Stanley, Jennifer Morgan]

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A House Full of Females: Plural Marriage and Women's Rights in Early Mormonism, 1835-1870* (2017)

→Read also either:

April Haynes, *Riotous Flesh: Women, Physiology, and the Solitary Vice in Nineteenth-Century America* (2015)

Rachel Hope Cleves, *Charity and Sylvia: A Same Sex Marriage in Early America* (2014)

11/22 No class – Thanksgiving recess

11/29 The Causes and Nature of the Civil War - and Emancipation

William W. Freehling, *The Reintegration of American History: Slavery and the Civil War* (1994), pp. vii-x, 105-273

James Oakes, *The Scorpion's Sting: Antislavery and the Coming of the Civil War* (2014)

Frank Towers, "Partisans, New Histories, and Modernization: A Historiography of the Civil War's Causes," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 1 (2011), 237-64.

Michael E. Woods, "What Twenty-First-Century Historians Have Said about the Causes of Disunion: A Civil War Sesquicentennial Review of the Recent Literature," *Journal of American History* (Sept. 2012), 415-39.

Scott Hancock, "Crossing Freedom's Fault Line: The Underground Railroad and Recentring African Americans in Civil War Causality," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 2 (June 2013), 159-92.

Yael A. Sternhell, "Revisionism Reinvented? The Antiwar Turn in Civil War Scholarship," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 3 (June 2013), 239-256

Ted Widmer et al eds., *The New York Times Disunion: A History of the Civil War* (2016), selections

12/6 Conflict and Consensus, Synthesis and Memory Revisited

Jill Lepore, "Introduction," *The Story of America: Essays on Origins* (2016), 1-16.

James Oakes, "The New Cult of Consensus" (2016), <http://nonsite.org/feature/the-new-cult-of-consensus>

Jill Lepore, *These Truths: A History of the United States* (2018) [forthcoming in September 2018; read sections to 1865]

12/13: Makeup class if needed, and/or a meeting to review for exam.

TUESDAY 12/18 FIRST WRITTEN EXAMINATION