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 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 examinati. 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)

John K. Thornton, *A Cultural History of the Atlantic World* (2012), Intro, ch. 1, 2, & 3 (pp. 1-99)
9/20 How Historians Revise and Compare: New England Exceptionalism or Typicality?
Read two of the following five books:

9/27 Comparisons, Possessions, Dispossessions, Environments, and Clashes of ... What?
+Daniel K. Richter, *Before the Revolution*, ch. 5-8, pp. 121-211.

10/4 Imperial Approaches, Places, or Times?

10/11 Atlantic Approaches, Places, or Times?
+Richter, *Before the Revolution*, ch. 13-16 & Epilogue, pp. 327-421
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
Barbara Clark Smith, *The Freedoms We Lost: Consent and Resistance in Revolutionary America* (2009)

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

11/8 Slavery Revisited, Capitalism Revisited, Embodied

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]
Read also either:
Rachel Hope Clevens, *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
Yael A. Sternhell, “Revisionism Reinvented? The Antiwar Turn in Civil War Scholarship,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 3 (June 2013), 239-256

12/6 Conflict and Consensus, Synthesis and Memory Revisited

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

TUESDAY 12/18 FIRST WRITTEN EXAMINATION