

Hist 442-001: American Revolutions
Spring 2014
Professor Robert St. George
MW 1:30-3:00
Office hours: W 12-2 pm
by appointment
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As a number of historians have observed, “the” American Revolution now may seem to have been the inevitable culmination of political, economic, and cultural changes underway in the eighteenth century. But for many whose lives were altered by its disruptive contours differentially by region, it likely seemed more improbable than inevitable. How, then, are we to make sense of the Revolution? What were its causes? Its various progresses? Its extended “settlements,” or period of resolutions and integrations into a new kind of democratic government?

As we address these and others questions during the course of the semester, we will need to keep our eyes open for changes afoot in many social fields: the ascendancy of democratic and egalitarian thought; the widespread development of consumerism and market capitalism; the linked forms processes of rebellion and nation-building; and the progress of the war and the strategies of its leaders. Many of the emphases within these subject areas will to some extent reflect the personal interests (and idiosyncrasies) of the instructor.

Course Requirements: The course has five component parts: assigned readings, attendance at lecture/discussions, two brief papers, and examinations. No one of these parts can, by itself, convey the full meaning of the course. You are the only person in the course who will be doing all of these things at the same time: listening to lectures and actively participating in discussions, reading books, essays, and primary documents (which will be posted soon on the course’s Blackboard site), and writing papers and examinations. Your task is to integrate the distinct segments of the course so that you can develop your own points of view about the origins, development, and lasting impact of the American Revolution and the cultures of both radical and conservative interest it both depended upon and helped to sustain..

Required Reading: It is essential that you do all of the assigned reading if you are to master the subject matter of this course. All of the books listed below are available in paperback at the House of Our Own Books, 3920 Spruce Street.

Breen, T.H. *American Insurgents, American Patriots: The Revolution of the People* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010).

Holton, Woody. *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1999.

Kars, Marjoleine. *Breaking Loose Together: The Regulator Rebellion in Pre-Revolutionary North Carolina*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2002.

Shannon, Timothy. *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire: The Albany Congress of 1754*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2000.

Ward, Matthew C. *Breaking the Backcountry: The Seven Years War in Virginia and Pennsylvania, 1754-1763*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003.

Young, Alfred. *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party*. Boston: Beacon, 2000.

In addition, I have assembled a substantial body of additional reading that you can locate on the course Canvas site under "files." Those readings are every bit as important as the books you will be purchasing. You may read them on the site or print out hard copies of them on your own printer.

Lectures: The lectures are designed to supplement the assigned readings. If I am successful in doing my job, the lectures should help you organize in your own mind some of the other materials that you confront in the course. You should remember, however, that the lectures are not intended to represent ultimate "truths" about this period of American history, but rather, represent my interpretations of the American past as well as my preferences concerning research methods and historical evidence. I also do not want this course to be anything but participatory. Come prepared to ask questions.

Papers: You will be asked to write two relatively brief papers:

The first (*due in class on Thursday, Feb. 24*) will be as follows. Choose any two websites that deal with some aspect of the American Revolution (as, for example, primary sources, maps, battlefields, museums exhibitions, historical organizations and libraries) and write a three to four page paper comparing and contrasting the themes of the sites (and, perhaps, their navigability) that you see in them. You can choose any pairing of sites that you like: they could be from two different countries (there are American Revolution –related websites in the UK, France, Germany, among others); two different research libraries, two different preservation agencies, and the like. A hint: Select ones that you think will make for an interesting (and enlightening!) comparison.

The second paper (*due in class on Thursday, April 14*) will be an exploration—through careful reading, comparison, and contrast of the secondary work/s of two or three of the historians' work you have read this semester. I will discuss these assignments as they draw closer, and stand ready to discuss with you, if need be, the work/s you choose.

One final point: I look upon late papers with extreme displeasure. You are advised to make an extra copy of your paper in order to avoid problems stemming from having lost, mislaid, or misdelivered (aka, "the dog ate my attachment") papers. It is also important that you observe scrupulously The University's Code of Academic Integrity. Each paper

counts for 15% of your final grade.

Examinations: There will be two examinations—a midterm (30%; on Thursday, March 17) and a final (40%; to be scheduled). Each of the exams will be of the essay variety and will place heavy emphasis on your ability to integrate some of the diverse themes of the course.

Websites: Here are some of the many, many web sites that either concentrate upon or include a discussion of the American Revolution. Here are three you may want to start with, before you do your own Google search on the topic:

<http://revolution.h-net.msu.edu/> (academic history site)

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/armhtml/armhome.html> (Library of Congress site, good maps)

<http://www.rihs.org/> (Rhode Island Historical Society, links to manuscript holdings)

<http://www.mdhs.org/> (Maryland Historical society, good manuscript library on line)

<http://www.masshist.org/welcome/> (Massachusetts Historical Society, on-line holdings of Adams and Jefferson family papers, and good historical maps. On-line library)

<http://www2.cr.nps.gov/abpp/index.htm> (US National Park Service Revolutionary and War of 1812 battlefield preservation site, excellent maps)

<http://www2.cr.nps.gov/abpp/revwar/advisors.htm> (a related US National Park Service site, with links to survey of 2,748 web sites of interest to students of American Revolution and War of 1812, and links to 811 preservation sites)

<http://www.mith2.umd.edu:8080/eada/index.jsp> (University of Maryland Digital Archive)

http://www.readex.com/scholarl/eai_digi.html (Early American Imprints [Evans series], pre-1800 (digital edition, 1639-1800); all published material from the American colonies and the early nation.

<http://www.americanrevolution.org/> (History Channel)

Part 1. From Albany to the Stamp Act, 1754-1764

1. (Jan. 16, 18) "Revolution"
Rec.: Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry*, pp. 1-58
2. (Jan. 21, 23) A congress and its fragments.
Rec.: Shannon, *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire*.
Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry*, pp. 59-156.
3. (Feb. 28, 30) Ordeals of empire
Req.: Ward, *Breaking the Backcountry*, pp. 157-262.
*Gordon Wood, *Radicalism of the American Revolution*, pp. 3-92.

Part 2. Toward Independence, 1765-1776

4. (Feb. 4, 6) Protesting stamps.
Req.: *St. George, "Attacking Houses," from *Conversing by Signs: Poetics of Implication in Colonial New England Culture* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1998), pp. 206-95.
*Bernard Bailyn, "Stephen Johnson," in *Faces of Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1990), pp. 137-49.
5. (Feb. 11, 13) Farmers up in arms.
Req.: Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*
6. (Feb. 18, 20) Making Virginia revolutionary.
Req.: Holton, *Forced Founders*.
Rec.: *Rhys Isaac, "Evangelical Revolt The Nature of the Baptists' Challenge to the Traditional Order in Virginia, 1765-1775," in *Colonial America: Essays in Politics and Social Development*, ed. Stanley N. Katz and John M. Murrin (New York: Knopf, 1983), pp. 518-40.
7. (Feb. 25, 27) Challenges of mixed social and political order
Req.: Breen, *American Insurgents, American Patriots* (entire).
Rec.: *Benjamin L. Carp, "Fire of Liberty: Firefighters, Urban Voluntary Culture, and the Revolutionary Movement," *WMQ* 3rd ser., 58: 4 (Oct. 2001): 781-818.
8. (March 4, 6) Review session and *midterm examination*.
9. (March 8-16). SPRING BREAK

Part 3. Faces of Revolution 1775-1783

10. (March 18, 20) John Adams
 Req.: *Bernard Bailyn, "John Adams," in *Faces of Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1990), pp. 3-21.
 Rec.: go to: <http://www.masshist.org/adams/> (click on "The Adams Family Papers: Electronic Archive")
11. (March 25, 27) Thomas Jefferson
 Req.: *Bailyn, "Thomas Jefferson," in *Faces of Revolution*, pp. 22-41.
 *Robert St. George, "Placing Race at Jefferson's Monticello," in *Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity*, ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Liliane Weissberg (Detroit: Wayne State Press, 1999), pp. 231-63.
 Rec.: Tony Bickham, "Sympathizing with Sedition? George Washington, the British Press, and British Attitudes during the American War of Independence," *WMQ* 3rd ser., 59:1 (Jan., 2002): 101-22.
12. (April 1, 3) Two Ministers: Andrew Eliot and Jonathan Mayhew
 Req.: *Bailyn, "Andrew Eliot," and "Jonathan Mayhew," in *Faces of Revolution*, pp. 106-36.
 *Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "'Daughters of Liberty': Religious Women in Revolutionary New England," in *Women in the Age of the American Revolution*, ed. Ronald Hoffman and Peter Albert (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989), pp. 211-43.

Part 4. Revolutionary Settlements, 1783-1789.

13. (April 8, 10) Popular unrest and the Constitution.
 *Gordon Wood, *Radicalism of the American Revolution*, pp. 229-369.
14. (April 15, 17) Memory and revolution.
 Req.: Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party*
 Rec.: Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard, 2000).
15. (April 22, 24) Politics in the Streets
 Req.: *Simon P. Newman, "Resistance, Revolution, and Nationhood: The Origins of a National Popular Political Culture," in Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Streets* (Philadelphia: U. of Penn Press, 1997), pp. 11-43.16.
16. (April 29): Conclusion, new directions.