

## **The American Revolutions**

Prof. Jacqueline Beatty

### **Course Description:**

This course will explore the social, cultural, and political changes and continuities in the American Revolutionary era between 1763 and 1815. Recently, historians have asked the question “Whose Revolution was it?” In studying this period, we must also ask ourselves “Which Revolution was it?” Instead of evaluating one, monolithic “American Revolution,” we will instead focus on investigating the various American *Revolutions* of the era. The Revolutionary era saw a number of social, cultural, and political upheavals in which many Americans—regardless of age, class, gender, race, or political persuasion—participated. Together, we will examine traditional narratives of the period which acknowledge the important role of the “Founders” along with the voices of free and enslaved African-Americans, women, Loyalists, impoverished Americans, middle-class consumers, and Native Americans. We will follow the lives and lived experiences of these early Americans from the British North American colonies to a transatlantic war to the precarious and unstable founding of a new nation. In this course, you will also develop the tools to analyze both primary and secondary sources in written and oral communication.

### **Course Organization:**

This class will use both the lecture and discussion format. Readings should be completed prior to our class meetings. On discussion days, students should come to class with the day’s readings and their notes on the readings. They should also be prepared to participate in an active exchange of ideas about these readings with their classmates. Brief primary source readings will be assigned on lecture days; students should come prepared to participate in a lecture-discussion hybrid course on those days as well.

### **Required Books:**

Cynthia Kierner, *Revolutionary America 1750-1815: Sources and Interpretation* (New York: Pearson, 2003).

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*. (any edition)

Barbara Clark Smith, *The Freedoms We Lost: Consent and Resistance in Revolutionary America* (New York: The New Press, 2010).

Young, Nash, and Raphael, eds., *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation* (New York: Knopf, 2011).

Alfred Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999).

\*Assigned articles can be found via JSTOR

### **Grading, Course Policies, and Assignments:**

*Classroom Etiquette:* You may not use any electronic devices during class time (including cell phones, laptops, and tablets) unless the instructor indicates otherwise, or unless you have an accommodation for classroom learning. Use of these devices during class will adversely affect your participation grade.

*Communications:* Students are responsible for checking their university email accounts and Blackboard regularly. The instructor will communicate with students via email and announcements on the course's Blackboard site. Please be sure to use your university email account when corresponding with the instructor.

*Participation and Attendance:* Students must earn their participation grade through regular attendance and active engagement in class. A significant amount of class time will be spent in discussion, so participation is required for students to demonstrate engagement with the material. Your participation grade will include regular involvement in class discussion and group work along with attendance. If you must miss class, you are responsible for material covered during that session. The instructor will not re-teach a missed class session via email or office hours.

*Short Papers:* Over the course of the semester, you will write five short (2-3 page) papers in response to the assigned readings. Papers should use Times New Roman, 12-point font, one-inch margins. They should have a title that is reflective of your thesis statement, and utilize the Chicago Manual of Style for footnote citations (For format, see <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/>).

1. After reading Barbara Clark Smith's *The Freedoms We Lost*, answer the following question: What freedoms did British Americans lose as a result of the Revolution, and why?
2. After reading Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, answer the following question: How does Paine convince his readers that American independence is necessary? You may use primary sources from Kierner's *Revolutionary America* to support your argument.
3. After reading Edmund Morgan's "Slavery and Freedom," explain what the author means by "The American Paradox."
4. After reading the introduction to *Revolutionary Founders* and your assigned chapter, write an analysis of this chapter. Summarize the content, the main argument(s), and analyze the validity of this/these argument(s).
5. After reading Young's *Shoemaker*, analyze how one man's memory (Hewes') and the collective American memory shaped these two versions of the Revolution into one, unifying American "tradition."

*"The Other Founders" Final Project Presentation:* Each student will be assigned one chapter from the essay collection *Revolutionary Founders* and present on their findings during our last class meeting. Using the written component from the fourth short paper assignment (see above), students will find one other scholarly article and one primary source covering the same topic. In 5-7 minute presentations, students will articulate the argument of the author in their assigned chapter along with their additional findings, and analyze the significance of this arguments in the context of the American Revolution. A rubric will be provided later in the semester.

*Midterm and Final Exams:* Exams will test students' knowledge of both lecture and discussion. Students should be prepared to be tested on lecture materials, readings, and ideas discussed in class with your peers. Both exams will include identification, a primary source analysis essay, and 1-2 essays covering broader topics.

## Grade Distribution:

Attendance & Participation: 25%

Short Papers (5): 25% (5% each)

“The Other Founders” Final Project Presentation: 15%

Midterm Exam: 15%

Final Exam: 20%

## Course Schedule:

### Week 1a Course Introduction

- Syllabus Overview
- Final Project: Chapter Assignments

### Week 1b Discussion: The Revolution in the Popular Imagination

- Reading: Lyra Montiero, “Race-Conscious Casting and the Erasure of the Black Past in Lin-Manuel Miranda’s *Hamilton*,” *The Public Historian* vol. 38, no. 1 (Feb. 2016), 89-98.
- In-Class viewing: clips from *The Patriot* (2000), *John Adams* (HBO miniseries), *Liberty’s Kids* (PBS children’s show), *Hamilton* (Broadway Musical)

### Week 2a Lecture: British America

- Reading: Kierner, Chapter 1 “The Bonds of Empire,” 10-28.

### Week 2b Discussion: Royalist America

- Reading: Brendan McConville, “Pope’s Day Revisited, ‘Popular’ Culture Reconsidered,” *Explorations in Early American Culture* vol. 4 (2000), 258-280.

### Week 3a Lecture: The Emerging Language of Liberty

- Reading: Kierner, Chapter 2 “Languages of Liberty,” 37-53.

### Week 3b Discussion: British Freedom, American Freedom

- Reading: Smith, *Freedoms We Lost*.
- **Short Paper #1 Due**

### Week 4a Lecture: The Grassroots Revolution

- Reading: Kierner, Chapter 3 “Reform and Resistance,” 64-84.

### Week 4b Lecture: The Road to Rebellion

- Reading: Kierner, Chapter 4 “The Road to Rebellion,” 94-113.

### Week 5a Discussion: Lighting the Spark

- Reading: Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*.
- **Short Paper #2 Due**

### Week 5b Lecture: The World Turned Upside Down

- Reading: Kierner Chapter 7, “A World Turned Upside Down,” 178-196.

Week 6a Lecture: Declaring Independence

- Reading: Kierner, Chapter 5 “Asserting Independence,” 122-140.

Week 6b Discussion: American Scripture?

- Reading: “The *Other* Declarations of Independence,” in Pauline Maier, *American Scripture* (New York: Knopf, 1997), 47-97. Available on Blackboard.

Week 7a In-Class Film: *Mary Silliman’s War*

Week 7b **Midterm Exam**

Week 8a Lecture: The Loyalist Experience

- Reading: Kierner, Chapter 4 “A Virginia County Committee Punishes an ‘Enemy to America’,” and “Janet Schaw on the Mistreatment of North Carolina Loyalists,” 106-109 and 110-113; Chapter 7 “Partisan War in the Carolina Backcountry,” 183-196.

Week 8b Discussion: The Shared Experience of Consumerism

- Reading: T.H. Breen, “‘Baubles of Britain’: The American and Consumer Revolutions of the Eighteenth Century” *Past & Present* no. 119 (May 1988), 73-104.

Week 9a Lecture: The Black Revolution

- Reading: Kierner, Chapter 5 “Lord Dunmore’s Appeal” and “A White Virginian’s Response,” 126-128; Chapter 8 “Massachusetts Antislavery Petition,” and “Virginia Proslavery Petition” 221-225.

Week 9b Discussion: The American Paradox

- Reading: Edmund S. Morgan, “Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox,” *The Journal of American History* vol. 59, no. 1 (1972), 5-29.
- **Short Paper #3 Due**

Week 10a Lecture: The Woman’s War

- Reading: Kierner, Chapter 6 “Anne Terrel Addresses the Wives of Continental Soldiers,” and “The Sentiments of an American Woman,” 152-154 and 166-168; Chapter 7 “Petition of the Whig Women of Wilmington, North Carolina,” 191-193; Chapter 8 “Remember the Ladies,” and “On the Equality of the Sexes,” 218-221; Chapter 12 “Thoughts upon Female Education,” 326-329.

Week 10b Discussion: Republican Motherhood

- Reading: Linda K. Kerber, “The Republican Mother: Women and the Enlightenment—An American Perspective,” *American Quarterly* vol. 28, no. 2 (1976), 187-205.

Week 11a Lecture: Political Developments in the States

- Reading: Kierner, Chapter 8 “Who Should Rule at Home,” 205-218.
- **Short Paper #4 Due**

Week 11b Discussion: The People's Protests and the Politics Out of Doors

- Reading: Benjamin Irvin, "The Streets of Philadelphia: Crowds, Congress, and the Political Culture of Revolution, 1774-1783," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* vol. 129, no 1 (Jan. 2005), 7-44.

Week 12a Lecture: From Confederation to Constitution

- Reading: Kierner, Chapter 9 "Confederation and Constitution," 235-254.

Week 12b Discussion: Debating the Constitution

- Reading: Kierner, Chapter 10 "Federalists and Antifederalists," 264-285.

Week 13a Lecture: Creating an American National Identity

- Reading: Kierner, Chapter 12 "Forging a National Culture," 321-344.

Week 13b Discussion: Unbecoming British? America's Global Connections

- Reading: Kariann Akemi Yokota, "Transatlantic and Transpacific Connections in Early American History," *Pacific Historical Review* vol. 83, no. 2 (2014), 204-219.

Week 14a Lecture: The Early American Republic

- Reading: Kierner, Chapter 13 "Securing the Revolution," 355-375.

Week 14b Discussion: The American Revolution and Historical Memory

- Reading: Young, *Shoemaker*
- **Short Paper #5 Due**

Week 15a Discussion: "What comes next?": Whose Revolution is it now?

- Reading: Jill Lepore, "Tea and Sympathy: Who owns the American Revolution?" *The New Yorker* 3 May 2010 (<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/05/03/tea-and-sympathy-2>)

Week 15b **Final Project Presentations**

**Final Exam:** Date TBD