AMH 6198
Graduate Readings in Early American History

Fall 2017
Thursday, per. 8-10 (3 – 6 pm.), 13 Keene-Flint
Prof. Jon Sensbach, office 233 Keene-Flint
Office hours: 9:00 – 11:30 a.m. Tuesday and by appointment
Tel. 273-3396, email jsensbach@ufl.edu

This course will explore political, social and cultural developments in early America from the period of colonial contact through the American Revolution. We will examine the complex cultural interchange and contest for power among European, African and Indian peoples while paying close attention to historiographic developments in the field over the last twenty years. Among the topics the course will explore are the impact of European colonization on indigenous people; the creation of an “Atlantic world;” the rise of free and slave labor systems and the evolution of both racial ideology and African-American cultures; the role of religion in colonial life; gender and women’s history; the imperial struggle among competing European nations; and contested meanings of freedom during the era of Revolution.

The following books are required:
Andrew Lipman, *The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast* (Yale, 2015).
Mark M. Smith, *Documenting and Interpreting a Southern Slave Revolt* (South Carolina 2005).

Course Outline

As one of the history department’s three foundation courses for Americanist graduate students, this course is designed to provide a broad working knowledge of historiographic developments in early American history as well as exposure to important recent writings that are helping to reshape the field. Students who complete the course may not be experts in early American history, but they should have a reasonably competent grasp of the field and a sound basis upon which to prepare for an early America segment of an MA exam of for the Ph.D. qualifying exams. The reading and writing load is consequently
fairly heavy. Weekly assignments average a book and several extra articles (all articles available on JSTOR or other online venues through the UF library catalogue). Students are expected to contribute to weekly discussions. On selected weeks we will hear a report from one student on an additional related reading which will help provide historiographic context to promote lively discussion.

The course will also focus on techniques of writing history. We will examine how authors present issues and link evidence to theory. We will try to identify what makes effective historical writing and compare approaches to scholarship and writing that will help us clarify what kinds of history we aspire to write. A 7-page writing exercise in Week 6 will introduce students to the analysis of primary and secondary documents from early America. And for the final assignment, an 18-20 page paper, students will have a choice of writing either a historiographic essay on a selected subfield of early American history or a research paper based on a creative synthesis of original investigation in published or unpublished primary documents, along with critical secondary sources, on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor.

The course requirements are as follows:

- 18-20 page final paper: 60%
- 6-7 page paper: 20%
- Class participation: 20%

**Schedule**

**Week 1. Aug. 24. Introduction to Early America**


**Week 2. Aug. 31. First Contacts**

Lipman, *Saltwater Frontier*


Brett Rushforth, “‘A Little Flesh We Offer You’: The Origins of Indian Slavery in New France,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 60 (2003), 777-808.

**Week 3. Sept. 7. Natives and Newcomers**

Duval, *Native Ground*


Warren, *New England Bound*


Week 5. Sept. 21. Cultures of Slavery

Gikandi, *Slavery and the Culture of Taste*


Smith, *Stono*; 6-7 page paper due

Week 7. Oct. 5. No class – preliminary work on projects, meet with instructor


Dubcovsky, *Informed Power*


Brekus, *Sarah Osborn’s World*


Week 11. Nov. 2. Age of Revolutions, part 1

Parkinson, *Common Cause*

Week 12. Nov. 9. Age of Revolutions, part 2

Polasky, *Revolutions without Borders*

Week 13. Nov. 16. Atlantic Emancipations

Scott and Hébrard, *Freedom Papers*

Week 14. Nov. 23 Thanksgiving (no class)

Week 15. Nov. 30. Student presentations

Week 16. Nov. 7. Student presentations (if necessary)

**Final papers due Monday, Dec. 11**