

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

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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).

Wendy Warren, *New England Bound: Slavery and Colonization in Early America* (Liveright, 2017).

Kathleen Duval, *Native Ground: Indians and Colonists in the Heart of the Continent* (Pennsylvania, 2007).

Simon Gikandi, *Slavery and the Culture of Taste* (Princeton, 2014).

Alejandra Dubcovsky, *Informed Power: Communication in the Early American South* (Harvard, 2016).

Catherine Brekus, *Sarah Osborn’s World: The Rise of Evangelical Christianity in Early America* (Yale, 2013).

Janet Polasky, *Revolutions Without Borders: The Call to Liberty in the Atlantic World* (Yale, 2015).

Robert G. Parkinson, *The Common Cause: Creating Race and Nation in the American Revolution* (UNC, 2016).

Mark M. Smith, *Documenting and Interpreting a Southern Slave Revolt* (South Carolina 2005).

Rebecca Scott and Jean Hébrard, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation* (Harvard, 2014).

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 or 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

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, “Introduction: “*a great sea A going*,” in *A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (Random House, 1992).

http://dohistory.org/book/100_introduction_txt.html

Week 2. Aug. 31. First Contacts

Lipman, *Saltwater Frontier*

Juliana Barr, “Geographies of Power: Mapping Indian Borders in the ‘Borderlands’ of the Early Southwest,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 68 (2011), 5-46.

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*

Pekka Hämäläinen, “The Politics of Grass: European Expansion, Ecological Change, and Indigenous Power in the Southwest Borderlands,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 67 (April 2010), 173-208.

Juliana Barr, “There’s No Such Thing as ‘Prehistory’: What the Longue Durée of Caddo and Pueblo History Tells Us About Colonial America,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 74 (2017), 203-40.

Week 4. Sept. 14. Race and the Creation of New World Slave Societies

Warren, *New England Bound*

Edward Rugemer, "The Development of Mastery and Race in the Comprehensive Slave Codes of the Greater Caribbean during the Seventeenth Century," *William and Mary Quarterly* 70 (2013), 429-58.

Jennifer Morgan, "Some Could Suckle Over Their Shoulder': Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500-1770," *William and Mary Quarterly* 54 (1997), 167-92.

Week 5. Sept. 21. Cultures of Slavery

Gikandi, *Slavery and the Culture of Taste*

Vincent Brown, "Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery," *American Historical Review* 114 (2009), 1231-49.

Marjoleine Kars, "Dodging Rebellion: Politics and Gender in the Berbice Slave Uprising of 1763," *American Historical Review* 121 (2016), 39-69.

Week 6. Sept. 28. Anatomy of Slave Rebellion

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

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

Week 8. Oct. 12. Transformations in the Early American South

Dubcovsky, *Informed Power*

Joshua Piker, "Colonists and Creeks: Rethinking the Pre-Revolutionary Southern Backcountry," *Journal of Southern History* LXX (2004), 503-40.

Gregory E. O'Malley, "Slavery's Converging Ground: Charleston's Slave Trade as the Black Heart of the Lowcountry," *William and Mary Quarterly* 74 (2017), 271-302.

Week 9. Oct. 19. Spiritual Lives of Early American Women

Brekus, *Sarah Osborn's World*

Emily Clark and Virginia Meacham Gould, "The Feminine Face of Afro-Catholicism in New Orleans, 1727-1853," *William and Mary Quarterly* 59 (2002), 409-49.

Rachel Wheeler, "Women and Christian Practice in a Mahican Village," *Religion and American Culture* 13 (2003), 27-67.

Week 10. Oct. 26. No class

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