

AMH 6198

Early American History

University of Florida

Fall 2022

Thursday, per. 8-10 (3 – 6 pm.), Keene-Flint 013

Prof. Jon Sensbach, office 025 Keene-Flint

Office hours: 10 am -12:30 pm Thursdays and by appointment, as needed

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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” and its relationship to global and continental approaches to early America; 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.

Required reading:

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

Vincent Brown, *Tacky’s Revolt: The Story of an Atlantic Slave War* (Harvard, 2020).

Allan Greer, *Mohawk Saint: Catherine Tekakwitha and the Jesuits* (Oxford, 2005).

Sophie White, *Voices of the Enslaved: Love, Labor and Longing in French Louisiana* (North Carolina, 2019).

Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (Penguin, 2008).

Marcus Rediker, *The Fearless Benjamin Lay: The Quaker Dwarf Who Became the First Revolutionary Abolitionist* (Beacon, 2017).

Robert Parkinson, *Thirteen Clocks: How Race United the Colonies and Made the Declaration of Independence* (North Carolina, 2021).

Julius Scott, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution* (Verso, 2018).

Holger Hoock, *Scars of Independence: America’s Violent Birth* (Broadway, 2018).

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 for conceptualizing the broad sweep of American and Atlantic history and for teaching undergraduate courses. 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 6-7 page writing assignment in Week 7 asks students to evaluate emerging digital platforms for interpreting early American history. And for the final assignment, a 17-18 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. Most students traditionally have chosen the former option, but either approach is open.

Requirements:

17-18 page final paper	50%
6-7 page review essay	25%
Class participation	25%

Schedule

Week 1. Aug. 25. Introduction: A Glimpse of Early America

Reading: Marcus Rediker, *The Fearless Benjamin Lay*

Week 2. Sept. 1. Native America and European Colonialism

Reading: Duval, *The Native Ground*

David Jones, "Virgin Soils Revisited," *William and Mary Quarterly* 60:4 (2003), 703-42.

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 3. Sept. 8. Colonial Sources, Native Lives

Reading: Greer, *Mohawk Saint*

Alejandra Dubcovsky, "Defying Indian Slavery: Apalachee Voices and Spanish Sources in the Eighteenth-Century Southeast," *WMQ* 75 (April 2018), 295-322.

Week 4. Sept. 15. Echoes from the Middle Passage

Reading: Rediker, *The Slave Ship*

Randy M. Browne, Lisa A. Lindsay and John Wood Sweet, "Rebecca's Ordeal, from Africa to the Caribbean: Sexual Exploitation, Freedom Struggles, and Black Atlantic Biography," *Slavery and Abolition* 43:1 (2022), 40-67.

Week 5. Sept. 22. Slavery, the Black Atlantic, and the Archive

Sophie White, *Voices of the Enslaved*

Stephanie Smallwood, "The Politics of the Archive and History's Accountability to the Enslaved," *History of the Present* 6:2 (Sept. 2016).

Oscar Handlin and Mary F. Handlin, "Origins of the Southern Labor System," *William and Mary Quarterly* 7 (April 1950), 199-222.

Week 6-7. Sept. 29 – Oct. 6. Two-week project: Digital Early America (no class Sept. 29, papers due Oct. 6).

Writing assignment (6-7 p.). For an overview of digital scholarship in early America, please read Sharon Block, "#DigEarlyAm: Reflections on Digital Humanities and Early American Studies," *William and Mary Quarterly* 76 (Oct. 2019), 611-48. Then read/listen/see/engage with these two recent multimedia digital projects published in the *William and Mary Quarterly*, the flagship journal of early America. Read the original articles and absorb the accompanying audio and visual material, then study the subsequent forums featuring reviews by other scholars and responses from the original authors. In your analysis, evaluate the efficacy, the opportunities, advantages and limitations of emerging digital platforms that these two projects demonstrate for bringing the world of early America to life.

1. Simon Newman, "Hidden in Plain Sight: Escaped Slaves in Late Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Jamaica," *WMQ*, Omohundro Institute (OI) Reader Digital Access App (June 2018), 1-53.

Ayres et al., "Forum" on Newman's "Hidden in Plain Sight," *WMQ* 76 (Jan. 2019), 4-40.

2. Rachel Wheeler and Sarah Eyerly, "Singing Box 331: Re-sounding Eighteenth-Century Mohican Hymns From the Moravian Archives," *WMQ* 76 (Oct. 2019), 649-96.

"Singing Box 331 Documentary" (google), OI (Omohundro Institute) Reader Digital Access

O'Brien et al., reviews of "Singing Box 331" and authors' response, *WMQ* 77 (July 2020), 366-404.

Week 8. Oct. 13. Anatomy of Slave Rebellion

Brown, *Tacky's Revolt*

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

Week 9. Oct. 20. No class – individual conferences with instructor to discuss final project

Week 10. Oct. 27. Origins of the American Revolution

Reading: Parkinson, *Thirteen Clocks*

Week 11. Nov. 3. Age of Revolution

Hoock, *Scars of Independence*

Week 12. Nov. 10. Atlantic Emancipations

Scott, *The Common Wind*

Writing historiography

Week 13. Nov. 17. No class, work, on papers.

Week. 14. Nov. 24. Thanksgiving – no class

Week 15. Dec. 1. Student oral reports

Final papers due Monday, Dec. 12

Further Reading: Selected Topics

Consumer Revolution

- Jan de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present* (Cambridge, 2008).
- Jennifer van Horn, *The Power of Objects in Eighteenth-Century British America* (North Carolina, 2017).
- Jennifer Anderson, *Mahogany: The Costs of Luxury in Early America* (Harvard, 2012).
- Woodruff Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600-1800* (Routledge, 2002).
- Kate Haulman, *The Politics of Fashion in Eighteenth-Century America* (North Carolina, 2014).
- David Jaffee, *A New Nation of Goods: The Material Culture of Early America* (Pennsylvania, 2010).
- Cary Carson, *Face Value: The Consumer Revolution and the Colonizing of America* (Virginia, 2017).
- Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Cornell, 2010).
- Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (Penguin, 1986).
- Simon Gikandi, *Slavery and the Culture of Taste* (Princeton, 2011).
- Catherine Molineux, *Faces of Perfect Ebony: Encountering Atlantic Slavery in Imperial Britain* (Harvard, 2012).

Slavery/Black Atlantic

- Kevin Dawson, *Undercurrents of Power: Aquatic Culture in the African Diaspora* (Pennsylvania, 2018).
- Pablo F. Gomez, *The Experiential Caribbean: Creating Knowledge and Healing in the Early Modern Atlantic* (North Carolina, 2017).
- James Sweet, *Domingos Alvares, African Healing and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (North Carolina, 2013).
- Randy Browne, *Surviving Slavery in the British Caribbean* (Pennsylvania, 2017).
- Rana A. Hogarth, *Medicalizing Blackness; Making Racial Difference in the Atlantic World, 1780-1840* (North Carolina, 2017).
- Rashauna Johnson, *Slavery's Metropolis: Unfree Labor in New Orleans during the Age of Revolutions* (Cambridge, 2016).
- Jessica Marie Johnson, *Wicked Flesh: Black Women, Intimacy and Freedom in the Atlantic World* (Pennsylvania, 2020).
- Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Harvard, 2008).
- Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Pennsylvania, 2016).
- Lisa A. Lindsay and John Wood Sweet, eds., *Biography and the Black Atlantic* (Pennsylvania 2014).
- Rebecca Scott and Jean Hébrard, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation* (Harvard, 2014).
- David Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean, 1570-1640* (North Carolina, 2016).
- Randy J. Sparks, *Where the Negroes Are Masters: An African Port in the Era of the Slave Trade* (Harvard, 2014).
- Alejandro de la Fuente and Ariela Gross, *Becoming Free, Becoming Black: Race, Freedom and Law in Cuba, Virginia and Louisiana* (Cambridge, 2020).
- Cécile Fromont, *The Art of Conversion: Christian Visual Culture in the Kingdom of Kongo* (UNC, 2014).
- Marjoleine Kars, *Blood on the River: A Chronicle of Mutiny and Freedom on the Wild Coast* (New Press, 2020)
- Jason Sharples, *The World That Fear Made: Slave Revolts and Conspiracy Scares in Early America* (Pennsylvania, 2020)

Environmental/Epidemiological

W. Jeffrey Bolster, *The Mortal Sea: Fishing the Atlantic in the Age of Sail* (Harvard, 2014).

J.R. McNeil, *Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1820-1914* (Cambridge, 2010).

James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Johns Hopkins, 2009).

Elizabeth Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-82* (Hill & Wang, 2002).

William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England* (Hill & Wang, 1982).

Andrew Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison: An Environmental History, 1750-1920* (Cambridge, 2nd ed. 2020).

Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, Conn., 1972).

Thomas Blake Earle and D. Andrew Johnson, eds., *Atlantic Environments and the American South* (Georgia, 2020).

Matthew Mulcahy, *Hurricanes and Society in the British Greater Caribbean, 1624-1783* (Johns Hopkins, 2005).

Judith Carney, *Black Rice: The Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Harvard, 2002).

Judith Carney and Nicholas Rosomoff, *Africa's Botanical Legacy in the Atlantic World* (California, 2011).

Londa Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Harvard, 2004).

-----, *Secret Cures of Slaves: People, Plants and Medicine in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford, 2017).

Stewart, Mart, *What Nature Suffers to Groe: Life, Labor and Landscape on the Georgia Coast, 1680-1920* (Georgia, 2002).

Native American

Emma Anderson, *The Betrayal of Faith: The Tragic Journey of a Colonial Native Convert* (Harvard, 2007).

Elizabeth Fenn, *Encounters at the Heart of the World: A History of the Mandan People* (Hill & Wang, 2015).

Christine M. DeLucia, *Memory Lands: King Philip's War and the Place of Violence in the Northeast* (Yale, 2019).

Juliana Barr and Edward Countryman, eds., *Contested Spaces of Early North America* (Pennsylvania, 2015).

Susan Sleeper-Smith et al, eds., *Why You Can't Teach U.S. History Without American Indians* (North Carolina, 2015).

Pekka Hemalainen, *The Comanche Empire* (Yale, 2008).

-----, *Lakota America: A New History of Indigenous Power* (Yale, 2019).

Joshua Piker, *The Four Deaths of Acorn Whistler: Telling Stories in Early America* (Harvard, 2013).

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

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

Colin Calloway, *The Indian World of George Washington: The First President, the First Americans and the Birth of the Nation* (Oxford, 2019).

Michael McDonnell, *Masters of Empire: Great Lakes Indians and the Making of America* (Hill & Wang, 2016).

Bret Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slavery in New France* (UNC, 2014).

Religion

Thomas Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (Yale, 2009).
Catherine Brekus, *Sarah Osborn's World: The Rise of Evangelical Christianity in Early America* (Yale, 2015).
Douglas Winiarski, *Darkness Falls on the Land of Light: Experiencing Religious Awakenings in Eighteenth-Century New England* (North Carolina, 2018).
Travis Glasson, *Mastering Christianity: Missionary Anglicanism and Slavery in the Atlantic World* (Oxford, 2012).
Rebecca Anne Goetz, *The Baptism of Early Virginia: How Christianity Created Race* (Johns Hopkins, 2012).
Katherine Gerbner, *Christian Slavery: Conversion and Race in the Protestant Atlantic World* (Pennsylvania, 2019).

Age of Revolution

Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Harvard, 1967).
Karen Cook Bell, *Running from Bondage: Enslaved Women and their Remarkable Fight for Freedom in Revolutionary America* (Cambridge, 20210).
Ada Ferrer, *Freedom's Mirror: Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge, 2014).
Robert Parkinson, *The Common Cause: Creating Race and Nation in the American Revolution* (North Carolina, 2016).
Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (Random, 2016).
Alan Taylor, *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804* (Norton, 2017).
----, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772-1832* (Norton, 2014).
Elizabeth Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-1782* (Hill & Wang, 2002).
Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Beacon, 2000).
Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (UNC, 1999).
----, *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution* (Hill & Wang, 2008).
----, *Liberty is Sweet: The Hidden History of the American Revolution* (Simon & Schuster, 2021).
Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the America Republic, 1776-1787* (North Carolina, 1968).

Empire

Paul Mapp, *The Elusive West and the Contest for Empire, 1713-1763* (UNC, 2013).
S. Max Edelson, *The New Map of Empire: How Britain Imagined America Before Independence* (Yale, 2017).
Wim Klooster, *The Dutch Moment: War, Trade and Settlement in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World* (Cornell, 2016).
Owen Stanwood, *The Empire Reformed: English America in the Age of the Glorious Revolution* (Pennsylvania, 2013).
Carla Pestana, *Protestant Empire: Religion and the Making of British America* (Pennsylvania, 2010).
----, *The English Conquest of Jamaica: Oliver Cromwell's Bid for Empire* (Harvard, 2017).
Eliga H. Gould, *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution* (UNC, 2000).
----, *Among the Powers of the Earth: The American Revolution and the Making of a New World Empire* (Harvard, 2014).
Cecile Vidal, *Caribbean New Orleans: Empire, Race, and the Making of a Slave Society* (UNC, 2019).
----, ed., *Louisiana: Crossroads of the Atlantic World* (Pennsylvania, 2014).