

The Era of the American Revolution

HISTORY 337-01

Instructor: Mandy L. Cooper

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Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. from 1:30-2:30 in Carr 122 and by appointment

Course Description:

The Broadway musical “Hamilton” has popularized study of Alexander Hamilton and the rapidly changing world in which he lived. Yet, it has also raised questions regarding the central ideas, acts, and figures of the founding of the United States. This class will examine key moments in making the United States from the late colonial period through the early American Republic—the Era of the American Revolution. The concepts of liberty and freedom, concepts which have become central to the way Americans define themselves yet are surrounded by contradictions, will act as unifying themes in this course.

While delving deeper into these key moments and events, students will also become acquainted with the “ordinary” men and women of diverse backgrounds who helped form the nation. This course will both tell history from the vantage point of recognizable figures and move beyond the “great man/woman” perspective into persons and groups such as women, Native Americans, African Americans, immigrants, and loyalists. In this course, students will explore the origins of the American Revolution and the Revolution itself before turning to examine its ideological, social, and cultural implications within the broader age of revolutions, including gender relations and ideas in the new republic, slavery, nation-building, the development of a US economy, and the development of the two party system.

This course will be roughly divided into three sections. The first section focuses on the Revolution itself. We will examine the origins of the Revolution, battles, alliances, politics, and the end of the war. These weeks will offer a more traditional view of the Revolution, focusing on armies, political and military leaders, politics, and diplomacy. The second section of the class will focus on a central question in the history of the American Revolution: “a revolution for whom?” In this part of the class, we will examine divided loyalties and the Revolution’s impact on people other than the elite white men—in other words, we’ll move beyond the Founders to examine the Revolution from the perspective of women, Native Americans, African Americans, and loyalists. Finally, the last section of the course will examine the broader implications and effects of the Revolution, both within the United States and globally.

The readings, lectures, and assignments have been structured to help students think critically about history and not simply memorize facts, dates, places, and names. Students should leave this class with a better and deeper understanding of American history and why the past remains relevant today. While this course is geared toward history majors, students of all fields should find this class helpful in learning how to participate in scholarly discussion and analyze historical arguments.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, students should:

- Acquire a general knowledge of the history of the era of the American Revolution
- Analyze the origins and implications of the Revolution, particularly the intersections of empire, ideology, race, class, and gender
- Gain a better understanding of the development of the United States' political, legal, economic, and social agenda
- Develop skills in analyzing primary sources and historical topics and apply those skills to develop strong analytical arguments
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate analytical ideas effectively, both in discussion and in writing
- Construct a historical argument
- Critique scholars' interpretations of history

Course Text:

Alan Taylor, *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016.

Kathleen Duval, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution*. New York: Random House, 2015.

Class Structure: Each class will begin with a lecture that draws from your textbook and other readings. At certain points during class, I will stop and ask you to discuss specific points from the readings and lecture. Your response and discussion should reveal your knowledge of the assigned reading. A portion of each class will be devoted to discussing the primary source reading for that day, generally one or two short items; this discussion will usually fall at the end of class. Diverse and strong opinions are welcome; however, I expect students to conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner at all times.

Reading Assignments: Students should complete the assigned readings for a particular lecture before class. You will need to thoroughly read the book chapters and/or articles (posted on Sakai) and come to class prepared to discuss what you have read. We will discuss strategies for reading analytically (and quickly!) in class. If you miss a lecture, the textbook will serve you well, but you should also ask a classmate if he/she would be willing to share a copy of their notes for that day. The primary sources are brief (generally only one to two pages each), and we will go over them in class together. Students are expected to come to class having done the required reading and prepared to thoughtfully engage in the lecture, discussion, and primary source exercise. There will be some readings during the course that are listed as "Suggested Readings." You will not be expected to read the suggested readings, but they may be helpful in class discussions, in your primary source analysis, or in developing answers for your midterm and final exam questions.

Assignments: Students will complete three written assignments. The first assignment will be an analysis of a podcast episode on the American Revolution. Students will be provided with several different podcast episodes on new and exciting historical scholarship to choose from for this assignment. The second assignment will be a book review (750 words) of a book that

students will choose from a provided list. The final assignment will be a primary source analysis of 8-10 pages.

Exams: There will be two take-home exams, a midterm and a final. Students will be provided with essay topics in advance and asked to write on two out of the three provided topics.

Grading Scheme:

Participation: 10%

Podcast Analysis: 15%

Book Review: 15%

Primary Source Analysis: 20%

Midterm Exam: 20%

Final Exam: 20%

Attendance Policy: The university does not have a specific attendance policy. Please be aware, however, that it will be very difficult for you to succeed in this course if you do not attend class. Consequently, three or more absences will result in a penalty on your participation grade. If you encounter extenuating circumstances that result in three or more absences, you should speak to me personally.

Late Work: All papers and assignments are due at the start of class on the date listed on the syllabus. Late work will not be accepted without a documented excuse (i.e. doctor's note). If you cannot come to class the day your paper is due, you have until the start of class that day to email it to me.

Honor Code: Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. I expect students to uphold the Duke Community Standard. Ignorance is never an excuse. Please see the university's website for what constitutes plagiarism and violations of the Community Standard. Students suspected of academic dishonesty will be reported with the Dean of the Office of Student Conduct. <https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/conduct/about-us/duke-community-standard>

Services for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Student Disability Access Office at (919) 668-1267 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion.

Writing Studio: The Writing Studio offers free, collaborative, non-evaluative writing consultations to all Duke students and all visiting college students at any stage of a writing process—from brainstorming to drafting to revising. Students may schedule appointments—including same day appointments – by using the online appointment calendar at <http://twp.duke.edu/writing-studio>. Appointments are held in Perkins 112, Monday through Thursday. Both face-to-face appointments and real-time online appointments are available.

Duke Digital Initiative: Students can borrow equipment to use in course projects (such as the podcast analysis)—including iPads, video recording devices, and Go Pro cameras—by visiting the Link desk in Perkins Library (for more information, see <http://link.duke.edu/equipment-link-desk>).

Office Hours: I am always happy to discuss any questions or concerns you have regarding this course. I am always available during office hours, and you are welcome to schedule an appointment outside of those times by emailing me.

Syllabus Updates: Please note that readings and due dates are subject to change. I will notify you of any changes to the course schedule in class.

Course Schedule

Tuesday, August 28	Introduction to the Era of the American Revolution Major Themes, Questions, Problems, Concerns
Thursday, August 30	Setting the Stage: Colonial America Readings: Taylor, <i>American Revolutions</i> , Ch. 1
Tuesday, Sept. 4	Setting the Stage: Imperial Conflicts in North America Readings: Mapp, <i>The Elusive West</i> , Intro
Thursday, Sept. 6	Emotion, Culture, Politics, and the Coming of the Revolution Readings: Eustace, <i>Passion is the Gale</i> , p. 385-407
**Friday, Sept. 7	**Last Day to Drop/Add a Course
Tuesday, Sept. 11	Parliamentary Acts and Early Colonial Responses Readings: Taylor, <i>American Revolutions</i> , Ch. 3 Primary Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Virginia Resolutions on the Stamp Act (1765)-Stamp Act Congress, Declaration of Rights and Grievances (1765)-Governor Francis Bernard Describes the Boston Riot, 1765-Phillis Wheatley, “An Address to George III” (1768)
Thursday, Sept. 13	Discontent and Disillusionment Readings: Taylor, <i>American Revolutions</i> , p. 131-162 Primary Sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none">-Thomas Paine, <i>Common Sense</i> (1776)-Jonathan Boucher’s Argument against Independence (1775)

-The Declaration of Independence (1776)

Tuesday, Sept. 18	Outbreak of War Readings: Taylor, <i>American Revolutions</i> , 162-173 Primary Sources: -King George Proclaims America in Rebellion (1775)
Thursday, Sept. 20	NO CLASS – COMPLETE PODCAST ASSIGNMENT
Tuesday, Sept. 25	The First Years of the Revolution Reading: Taylor, <i>American Revolutions</i> , Ch. 5 Primary Sources: -General George Washington Asks Congress for an Effective Army (1776)
Thursday, Sept. 27	The Home Front Readings: Hartigan-O'Connor, <i>The Ties that Buy</i> , Ch. 6 Primary Sources: -Jefferson's Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom (1779) -The Right of 'Free Suffrage' (1776) -Noah Webster on Equality (1787) ** Exam Essay Topics Handed Out In Class
Tuesday, Oct. 2	The Role of the Frontier Readings: Taylor, <i>American Revolutions</i> , Ch. 7
Thursday, Oct. 4	Problems for the Patriots, Problems for the British Readings: Taylor, <i>American Revolutions</i> , p. 313-320 Primary Sources: -General George Washington Explains Army Problems and Calls for Help (1780)
Tuesday, Oct. 9	NO CLASS – FALL BREAK
Thursday, Oct. 11	"The World Turned Upside Down" Readings: Taylor, <i>American Revolutions</i> , Ch. 8 Primary Sources: -Two Views of the Battle of Yorktown (1781)
Sunday, Oct. 14	Take home exam due by 5PM

- Tuesday, Oct. 16 **Rubenstein Library Session**
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- Thursday, Oct. 18 Loyalists
 Readings: Taylor, *American Revolutions*, Ch. 6
 Primary Sources:
 -Patriots Intimidate a New Jersey Loyalist (1775)
 -A Patriot Urges Congress to Execute Loyalists (1776)
 -A Newspaper Attack on Loyalists (1779)
 -Thomas Hutchinson Criticizes the Declaration of Independence (1776)
 -Grace Galloway, “A Loyalist Wife” (1778-1779)
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- Tuesday, Oct. 23 African Americans and the Revolution
 Readings: Nash, *Unknown American Revolution*, p. 223-232, 320-339
 Primary Sources:
 -Petition of Slaves to the Massachusetts Legislature (1777)
 -Thomas Jefferson on Race and Slavery (1781)
 -Petition to the Assembly of Pennsylvania against the Slave Trade (1780)
 -Lord Dunmore Promises Freedom to Slaves Who Fight for Britain (1775)
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- Thursday, Oct. 25 Native Americans and the Revolution
 Readings: Nash, *Unknown*, p. 247-263, 345-357, 376-387
 Primary Sources:
 -Oneida Indians Declare Neutrality (1775)
 -John Adams Reports on Congress’s Strategy Toward the Native Americans (1775)
 -Chickasaw Indians Seek Help (1783)
 ****Book Review Due**
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- Tuesday, Oct. 30 A Revolution for Women
 Readings: Zagarri, “The Rights of Man and Woman in Post-Revolutionary America”
 Primary Sources:
 -Benjamin Rush, Thoughts Upon Female Education (1787)
 -Judith Sargent Murray, “On the Equality of the Sexes” (1790)
 -Abigail and John Adams, Family Letters on Revolutionary Matters (1776-1783)
 -Eliza Wilkinson’s Thoughts on Women and War, 1779

Thursday, Nov. 1	The Culture of Revolution No Class Readings – Read Ahead for Tuesday
Tuesday, Nov. 6	Winners and Losers, Part 1 Readings: Duval, <i>Independence Lost</i> , Introduction & Parts 1 & 2
Thursday, Nov. 8	NO CLASS – Independent Research in the Rubenstein
**Friday, Nov. 9	**Last Day to Withdraw from Course with a W
Tuesday, Nov. 13	Winners and Losers, Part 2 Readings: Duval, <i>Independence Lost</i> , Parts 3 & 4 & Conclusion Primary Sources: -Loyalists Plead Their Cause to King, Parliament, and the British People (1782)
Thursday, Nov. 15	From the Articles of Confederation to the Constitution Readings: Taylor, <i>American Revolutions</i> , 337-351, 353-379 Primary Sources: -The Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union (1781) -The Constitution of the United States of America (1787) **Primary Source Analysis Rough Draft Due
Tuesday, Nov. 20	The Question of Slavery in the New Nation Readings: Taylor, <i>American Revolutions</i> , 379-393 Primary Sources: -Constitutional Convention, Debates on Slavery (1787) -Thomas Jefferson, <i>Notes on the State of Virginia</i> (1785)
Thursday, Nov. 22	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK
Tuesday, Nov. 27	Love, Sex, and Emotions in the Early Republic Readings: Good, <i>Founding Friendships</i> , Ch. 4
Thursday, Nov. 29	Gender & Politics in the Early Republic Readings: Freeman, <i>Affairs of Honor</i> , Ch. 4 Suggested Readings: Taylor, <i>American Revolutions</i> , Ch. 11
Tuesday, Dec. 4	Politics & Economics in the Early Republic Primary Sources:

- James Madison, *The Federalist*, No. 51 (1787)
- Patrick Henry's Anti-Federalist Argument (1788)
- George Washington, Farewell Address (1796)

Thursday, Dec. 6 An Age of Revolutions
Readings: Taylor, *American Revolutions*, Ch. 12
****Primary Source Analysis Final Draft Due**
****Final Exam Essay Topics Handed Out In Class**

FINAL EXAM DUE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13 BY NOON