History 455/555: Colonial America
Fall 2015
University of Oregon
Day(s) Mondays and Wednesdays
Time: 10:00-11:20
Location: 105 PETR

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Course Description:

This course is an interpretive survey of the history of Colonial America. It focuses on several broad themes, all of them relating to the development of Britain’s North American colonial empire, including the nature of authority in Colonial America, the history of slavery, the emergence of consumer society, and global warfare.

Required texts:

The following are required reading, and are available at the UO Bookstore. Copies will also be placed on reserve at Knight Library.


Graduate Students:


**Evaluation:**
- Class Participation and Response to Readings ___________________ 20%
- Essay 1 ___________________ 20%
- Midterm Examination ___________________ 20%
- Commodities Assignment ___________________ 15%
- Essay 2 ___________________ 25%

Assignment sheets will be distributed for each paper in class. The midterm examination will be a mixture of short response and essay questions.

Graduate students will negotiate assignments in consultation with the instructor.

**Class Participation**

Regular attendance coupled with consistent and engaged participation in the course is expected.

**Grading Policies**

**Thesis, Papers, and Exams**

An A or A- thesis, paper, or exam is one that is good enough to be read aloud in a class. It is clearly written and well-organized. It demonstrates that the writer has conducted a close and critical reading of texts, grappled with the issues raised in the course, synthesized the readings, discussions, and lectures, and formulated a perceptive, compelling, independent argument. The argument shows intellectual originality and creativity, is sensitive to historical context, is supported by a well-chosen variety of specific examples, and, in the case of a research paper, is built on a critical reading of primary material.

A B+ or B thesis, paper, or exam demonstrates many aspects of A-level work but falls short of it in either the organization and clarity of its writing, the formulation and presentation of its argument, or the quality of research. Some papers or exams in this category are solid works containing flashes of insight into many of the issues raised in the course. Others give evidence of independent thought, but the argument is not presented clearly or convincingly.

A B- thesis, paper, or exam demonstrates a command of course or research material and understanding of historical context but provides a less than thorough defense of the writer's independent argument because of weaknesses in writing, argument, organization, or use of evidence.
A C+, C, or C- thesis, paper, or exam offers little more than a mere summary of ideas and information covered in the course, is insensitive to historical context, does not respond to the assignment adequately, suffers from frequent factual errors, unclear writing, poor organization, or inadequate primary research, or presents some combination of these problems.

Whereas the grading standards for written work between A and C- are concerned with the presentation of argument and evidence, a paper or exam that belongs to the D or F categories demonstrates inadequate command of course material.

A D thesis, paper, or exam demonstrates serious deficiencies or severe flaws in the student's command of course or research material.

An F thesis, paper, or exam demonstrates no competence in the course or research materials. It indicates a student's neglect or lack of effort in the course.

Participation

A student who receives an A for participation in discussion in precepts or seminars typically comes to every class with questions about the readings in mind. An 'A' discussant engages others about ideas, respects the opinions of others, and consistently elevates the level of discussion.

A student who receives a B for participation in discussion in precepts or seminars typically does not always come to class with questions about the readings in mind. A 'B' discussant waits passively for others to raise interesting issues. Some discussants in this category, while courteous and articulate, do not adequately listen to other participants or relate their comments to the direction of the conversation.

A student who receives a C for discussion in precepts or seminars attends regularly but typically is an infrequent or unwilling participant in discussion. A student who fails to attend precepts or seminars regularly and adequately prepared for discussion risks the grade of D or F.

Students must submit all assigned work in order to pass the course. Failure to submit all required work will result in a failing grade.

Academic Honesty:
All work submitted for this course must be your own. Plagiarism is a serious offense that can result in course failure, and in some cases expulsion from school. When drawing from the thought, work and research of others it is important that you use proper citations, and give credit where it is due. If you have any questions about this, ask me, or consult a writing tutor.

Students with Disabilities We will make every effort to accommodate students with disabilities. If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations
in this course, please make arrangements to meet with the instructor as soon as possible.
Please request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying
your disability.

**Course Level Outcomes:**

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- Evaluate arguments and evidence effectively.
- Make and defend intellectual hypotheses and employ historical evidence to do so.
- Write a historical essay employing primary source material to support their arguments.
- Demonstrate familiarity with historical literature regarding Colonial American History, and the ability to identify key arguments and debates within the field.
Course Outline

Week 1: Where and when was colonial America?


Week 2: European power and weakness


Taylor, American Colonies, Chapters 4 and 6

Primary Source: Excerpt from [Edward Waterhouse], *A Declaration of the State of the Colony and Affaires in Virginia, with a Relation of the Barbarous Massacre in the Time of Peace and League, Treacherously Executed by the Native Infidels upon the English, the 22 of March ...* (London, 1622), pp. 11–34

Graduate Students:


Resource: Virginia Center for Digital History, Virtual Jamestown (http://www.virtualjamestown.org). A website with detailed timelines and useful summary articles about Jamestown, seventeenth-century and modern maps and illustrations, a variety of primary sources, and three-dimensional archaeological artifacts and virtual-reality panoramas

Week 3: *Virgin Soil Epidemics*


David Jones “Virgin Soils Revisited” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 60:4.


Graduate Students: Read one of the following:

Alfred Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange*, or


Paper 1 due

Week 4: *Human and Non-human Commodities*


Taylor, American Colonies, Chapters 14 and 15.


ASSIGNMENT:
Each student is in charge of one commodity (sugar, bullion, rice, etc.) and must be able to show on a world map the movement of that commodity through global markets.

A selection of early modern maps from the following websites:

http://www.mappingboston.org/default.htm

http://www.usm.maine.edu/~maps/exhibit2/sec4.htm

Week 5 Salem: Magic and the invisible world in New England (1670–1692)


http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0014-1801%28199722%2944%3A3%3C535%3ATCTMDO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-P


**Film:** *The Crucible* (1996, 2 hours and 4 minutes), directed by Nicholas Hytner from the play and screenplay by Arthur Miller.


Midterm Examination

**Week 6 Slavery and the Evolution of Racial Difference**


Nicholas Hudson, 'From "Nation" to "Race": The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth-Century Thought,' *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 29 (1996), 247-64.

**Week 7 Liberty for All**


Paper 2 due
Week 8 Morality and Methodologies

Jill Lepore, *New York Burning* 170-273


**Week 9: Imperial reckoning: war and empire**


**Week 10: After the Settlement**


Herman Husband, excerpt from *An Impartial Relation of the First Rise and Causes of the Recent Differences in Public Affairs* (1770): [http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6233](http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6233)

**Course Conclusions**

When does colonial America end?


**Final papers due**