

Revolutionary America

History 456 – CRN 36513

Spring 2017 – M, W 4:00 – 5:20 PM, Room Lillis 175



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Office Hours – M, T 1:00-2:00 PM And By Appointment

What’s so “revolutionary” about the American Revolution? Is it dry, dusty history, dead as the dinosaurs, or does it still matter today? Indeed, is it still going on?

This class is intended to be fun, interesting and innovative, going beyond simply a rehash of what historians think about the American Revolution. This course brings you the Revolution in the way it unfolded in real life: through the words, thoughts and experiences of those people who were really there.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course is intended to provide you with an understanding of the importance, legacy and resonance of the American Revolution in both U.S. and world history. At the end of the course I hope you will be able to:

1. Assess the meaning of the “promises” of equality and opportunity made in the Declaration of Independence, the Revolutionary War and the national government that arose from the Constitution.
2. Place the American Revolution in proper historical context, both understanding where it came from and why it matters.
3. Understand the process by which Americans separated themselves—perhaps imperfectly and incompletely—from Britain, and how they attempted to forge a new national identity.
4. Reflect critically upon the meaning of the Revolution and Revolutionary ideals for African-Americans, women, Native Americans and other stakeholders who have traditionally not been placed at the center of the American founding story.

The backbone of this course—and the core of your understanding—will come from reading actual primary source documents from the American Revolutionary period and assessing their meanings and their importance using your own critical thinking skills. You will *not* be asked merely to absorb, parrot or synthesize what other historians (including me) have said and written about the American Revolution. Instead, you *will* be asked to reach your own conclusions based on the actual historical evidence of the period.

Examinations and papers (see below for the details) are aimed at developing your skills at thinking critically about history, as well as your writing skills, and evaluating this ongoing process of assessment of the primary source evidence. The first paper (“Origins and Promises of the Revolution”) will ask you to discuss analytically several major themes of the first part of our course, and illustrate these themes with evidence from the primary source texts. The second paper (“*The Coquette* and the Gendered Revolution”) will require you to read a work of contemporary fiction from the American Revolutionary period, and analyze it in light of what you learn about the Revolution from the primary source documents covered in reading assignments and in class. The final examination will require you to write analytically about a question or set of questions intended to put the Revolutionary period and its legacy in context.

Because there is no research paper in this course, grading of essays and exams will be fairly rigorous.

FORMAT

This class will meet 2 times a week, on Mondays and Wednesdays, 4:00 to 5:20 PM, in Room 175 of Lillis Hall. There is no discussion section. The class sessions will involve primarily in-depth discussion of the readings. There may also be some film presentations.

Please note this requirement: laptop computers and other electronic devices are not allowed in class. This rule, which will be strictly enforced, will require you to take notes with pen or pencil. This is not arbitrary or simply my personal preference—there is a rationale behind this rule which relates specifically to the topics and materials in our course, which I will explain on the first day of class. If you have a documented disability that requires you to use a computer in class, please see me for approval.

BOOKS

The following books are **required**:

- Course packet of primary source readings [available at Duck Store].
- Gary B. Nash, *Race and Revolution* (Madison, WI: Madison House, 1990).
- Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette* (New York: Dover Thrift Edition, 2015).

While copies of all of these books can be purchased at the Duck Store, *The Coquette*, originally published in 1797, is available in various free e-book versions on the Internet. While you will need to read *The Coquette* in some form, it does not have to be the exact edition available at the Duck Store.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

You will be graded on the basis of the following:

Course attendance and participation: 10%.

First paper (Origins and Promises of the Revolution): 30%.

Second paper (*The Coquette* and the Gendered Revolution): 30%.

Final examination, June 13: 30%.

The final exam will be an essay exam. Details about the papers will be posted on Canvas a reasonable time prior to the due date.

Papers are due in class on the date specified. Late essays will be accepted only in the most extraordinary circumstances. Papers turned in late (without prior arrangement) will incur a penalty of one full letter grade at the outset, followed by another letter grade for each additional day past the deadline that the paper remains outstanding.

Please note: the final exam, on Tuesday, June 13 at 2:45 PM, cannot be rescheduled except in extraordinary circumstances. **Please check your other final exam times now (at registration or beginning of term) to determine if they conflict.** Additionally, **vacations or undesirable but non-conflicting exam times do not count as “extraordinary circumstances” for which an accommodation can be made.** If you cannot make the final exam on the date and time scheduled, do not take this course.

Grading rubric:

This is the grading rubric for the midterm, paper and final exam.

A+: Work of unusual distinction.

A: Work that distinguishes itself by the excellence of its grasp of the material and the precision and insight of its argument, in addition to being well executed and reasonably free of errors.

B: Work that satisfies main criteria of the assignment, and demonstrates command of the material, but does not achieve the level of excellence that characterizes work of A quality.

C: Work that demonstrates a rudimentary grasp of the material and satisfies at least some of the assigned criteria.

D: Work that demonstrates a poor grasp of the material and/or is executed with little regard for college standards, but which exhibits some engagement with the material.

F: Work that is weak in every aspect, demonstrating a basic misunderstanding of the material and/or disregard for the assigned question.

This class is not graded on a curve.

Accessibility:

The University of Oregon works to create inclusive learning environment. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Conduct, Integrity, Respect etc.:

Academic integrity will be maintained at all times, and academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Students will be held to the University of Oregon Conduct Code as set forth here: <http://policies.uoregon.edu/vol-3-administration-student-affairs/ch-1-conduct/student-conduct-code>. The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at <http://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism>.

Additionally, in this class students are required to treat each other, and their instructor, with dignity and respect. While academic freedom is vital and a free exchange of ideas is part of the learning process, I will not tolerate conduct in this class that is harassing, disruptive, or violates generally accepted standards of civil decorum and reasonable academic discourse and/or proper respect for others.

ASSIGNED MATERIALS, READINGS AND WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

NOTE: Course readings are not spread “evenly” throughout the term. Some weeks and classes will involve more readings than others. Furthermore, judging workload from raw page numbers is somewhat misleading and will not give you an accurate impression of the workload for each class. Many of the primary source documents are extremely dense, especially with legal and political concepts, and nearly all are written in 18th century style that is unfamiliar to 21st

century readers. The good news, however, is that the majority of these primary source documents are quite short (especially on days for which there are a large number of readings, for example, April 12 & 17).

Each reading, with the exception of *The Coquette*, is assigned a number. Please consult the list of documents and readings (attached to this syllabus) to identify each individual reading. The readings and subjects of our course will be divided into six units. Each unit will deal with a different facet of the Revolution, its meaning and its legacy.

Attendance will be taken in class. You should have the readings for each class done **by the time that class period meets**. Please note, there *is* a reading assigned for the first day of class. **It is vital that you bring your course packets (primary documents) to every class.** Discussions will involve close reading of these materials, often down to the specific wording. Consequently, you *must* have these documents with you in each class.

Unit I: Equality and the Meaning of the American Revolution (April 3, 5, 10)

What is this course about and how does it work? What's "revolutionary" about the American Revolution? Who "owns" the American Revolution, for what purposes can it be "used," and by whom? What does the Declaration of Independence mean? How have its ideas resonated throughout history? Was America founded as a "Christian nation"? How do the Declaration and the Revolution expand (or limit) religious freedom?

Readings:

April 3 – Reading 1

April 5 – Readings 2-5

April 10 – Readings 6-10

Unit II: Origins, Political Events, The War (April 12, 17, 19)

What was America like before the Revolution? Why did the relationship between the Colonies and the British Crown change when it did? What were the reasons for the crisis? How did the crisis play out? Why did the Colonies break from Britain? How did the Revolutionary War progress? Who "won"? Who "lost"?

Readings:

April 12 – Readings 11-19

April 17 – Readings 20-29

April 19 – Readings 30-38

Unit III: African-Americans, Slavery and the Revolution (April 24, 26, May 1)

What did the promise of the Revolution mean for African-Americans, both enslaved and free? Was it realistic to expect the new United States to abolish slavery? Why didn't it? Does the failure of abolition negate the meaning of the Revolution? How did African-Americans come to terms with the Revolution's successes and failures?

Readings:

April 24 – Reading 39, Reading 40 (first part of *Race & Revolution*)

April 26 – Reading 41 (second part of *Race & Revolution*)

May 1 – Reading 42 (third part of *Race & Revolution*)

Unit IV: Native Americans, Women and Loyalists (May 3, 8, 10)

What were the stakes of the American Revolution for Native Americans? How did they experience it? Did they “win” or “lose”? How did women experience the Revolution, and what did its promises mean for gender equality? What about the Americans who didn't agree with the Revolution? What happened to them, and why?

Readings:

May 3 – Readings 43-50

May 8 – Readings 51-53

May 10 – Readings 54-55, and begin reading *The Coquette*

First Paper (on Origins and Promises) due May 10 in class.

Unit V: The Revolutionary Settlement (May 15, 17, 22)

How was the American Revolution “settled” between Britain and the United States? How was it “settled” between the states themselves? What challenges did the new republic face? Why didn't the Articles of Confederation work? How did the Constitution come into being? Was it a betrayal of the Revolution, or a validation of its promises?

Readings:

May 15 – Readings 56-59

May 17 – Readings 60-63

May 22 – Readings 64-67, and finish *The Coquette*

May 24 – No class; work on your *Coquette* paper

May 29 – No class; Memorial Day holiday

Unit VI: American Identity and the Legacy of the Revolution (May 31, June 5, 7)

How did the new Constitutional government actually come into operation and practice? What challenges did it face? What did the formation of the new republic mean for

American identity? How was the Revolution recalled and commemorated as time went on? Did the Revolution end? Is it still going on, and, if so, how is it being contested?

Readings:

May 31 – Readings 68-71

June 5 – Readings 72-74

June 7 – None

Second paper (on The Coquette) due June 7 in class.

Final Exam:

Tuesday, June 13, 2:45 PM

Though it is likely the final will stress material from the second half of the course (since the Origins & Promises paper), it will draw upon a cumulative understanding of the material, and should thus probably be considered cumulative.

READINGS KEY

<u>No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Document</u>	<u>Where it Is</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1	4/3	Declaration of Independence	Packet	1
2	4/5	Declaration of the Rights of Man (France)	Packet	4
3	4/5	Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948	Packet	7
4	4/5	Declaration of Seneca Falls Convention, 1848	Packet	12
5	4/5	Douglass: What to the Slave is the 4th of July?	Packet	14
6	4/10	Massachusetts Declaration of Rights, 1780	Packet	25
7	4/10	Boston's View of Religious Freedom, 1780	Packet	26
8	4/10	Ezra Stiles on Christianity in America, 1783	Packet	27
9	4/10	Philadelphia Jews, 1783	Packet	29
10	4/10	Virginia Statute of Religious Liberty, 1786	Packet	30
11	4/12	Navigation Act, 1696	Packet	31
12	4/12	British Treasury on Customs Service, 1763	Packet	32
13	4/12	Jonathan Mayhew on British Valor	Packet	33
14	4/12	Proclamation of 1763	Packet	34
15	4/12	George Washington on the Proclamation, 1767	Packet	37
16	4/12	Stamp Act, 1765	Packet	39
17	4/12	Patrick Henry on the Stamp Act, 1765	Packet	44
18	4/12	New York Reacts to the Stamp Act, 1765	Packet	45
19	4/12	Stamp Act Congress, 1765	Packet	47

20	4/17	Benjamin Franklin Before the House of Commons	Packet	48
21	4/17	Declaratory Act, 1766	Packet	53
22	4/17	Charleston Merchants' Resolutions, 1769	Packet	54
23	4/17	Sheffield Declaration, 1773	Packet	58
24	4/17	Parliament Debates Coercive Acts, 1774	Packet	60
25	4/17	Coercive Acts, 1774	Packet	63
26	4/17	Resolutions of Continental Congress, 1774	Packet	65
27	4/17	Accounts of Battles, Lexington & Concord	Packet	82
28	4/17	Common Sense, 1776	Packet	84
29	4/17	May 10 & 15 (1776) Declarations	Packet	100
30	4/19	King George III Speech on the Rebellion	Packet	105
31	4/19	Recommendation of Inoculation	Packet	107
32	4/19	Washington on Army Problems	Packet	113
33	4/19	Veteran Remembers Battle of Saratoga	Packet	114
34	4/19	American Diplomats Press for French Alliance	Packet	116
35	4/19	American Diplomats Report Success	Packet	117
36	4/19	Petition of Moses Hall	Packet	118
37	4/19	Benedict Arnold's Letter to America	Packet	123
38	4/19	Army Cook & Washerwoman on Yorktown	Packet	125
39	4/24	Lord Dunmore's Proclamation, 1775	Packet	126
40	4/24	<i>Race and Revolution</i> , Chapter 1 & documents	Nash book	3-23, 91-131
41	4/26	<i>Race and Revolution</i> , Chapter 2 & documents	Nash book	25-55, 133-165
42	5/1	<i>Race and Revolution</i> , Chapter 3 & documents	Nash book	57-87, 167-201
43	5/3	Logan Laments the Murder of Mingos	Packet	127
44	5/3	Oneida Indians Declare Neutrality, 1775	Packet	128
45	5/3	New York Mourns an Indian Killer, 1775	Packet	129
46	5/3	North Carolina Delegation Urges Extirpation	Packet	130
47	5/3	Washington Orders Expedition against Iroquois, 1779	Packet	132
48	5/3	American Officer Observes Destruction of Iroquois Homes	Packet	134

49	5/3	Chickasaw Indians Seek Help, 1783	Packet	137
50	5/3	Report on Indian Affairs, 1783	Packet	139
51	5/8	John & Abigail Adams Debate Women's Rights	Packet	145
52	5/8	American Woman Asserts Women's Rights	Packet	148
53	5/8	Judith Sargent Murray on Women's Equality	Packet	149
54	5/10	Loyalists Plead Their Cause	Packet	153
55	5/10	Loyalist Woman Recounts her Journey in Exile	Packet	155
56	5/15	Treaty of Paris, 1783	Packet	157
57	5/15	Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union	Packet	160
58	5/15	Land Ordinance of 1785	Packet	166
59	5/15	Northwest Ordinance, 1787	Packet	169
60	5/17	Regulation (Shays's Rebellion) in Massachusetts	Packet	172
61	5/17	Delegates Report from Demoralized Congress	Packet	176
62	5/17	James Madison on Vices of the Political System	Packet	177
63	5/17	Slave Trade Debates	Packet	180
64	5/22	Constitution of the United States	Packet	189
65	5/22	The Federalist, No. 10	Packet	196
66	5/22	Antifederalists Attack the Constitution	Packet	200
67	5/22	The Bill of Rights	Packet	204
68	5/31	Washington's First Inaugural, 1789	Packet	206
69	5/31	Notes on the State of Virginia	Packet	208
70	5/31	Morris & Findlay Debte the Bank	Packet	210
71	5/31	Alexander Hamilton Promotes Industry	Packet	215
72	6/5	Alien & Sedition Acts	Packet	219
73	6/5	Kentucky Resolutions of 1798	Packet	221
74	6/5	Washington's Farewell Address, 1796	Packet	224

Not numbered: *The Coquette*, which should be read in full beginning May 10. We will probably discuss some aspects of *The Coquette* on May 10.