



Professor Michael Jarvis
Tuesdays 2:00-4:40 pm
Rush Rhees 456
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HIS 375W
BENJAMIN
FRANKLIN'S
AMERICA:
ANGLO-AMERICAN
CULTURE IN THE
AGE OF REVOLUTION,
1720-1790



Office: Rush Rhees 455
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Office Hours: Wed. 2:00-
4:00 or by appt

This research seminar explores life in colonial America and the sweeping political, cultural, social changes that occurred during lifetime of Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790). An internationally famous publisher, author, inventor, scientist, revolutionary, diplomat, statesman, and quintessential “self-made man,” Franklin is at once the most distinguished and yet the most accessible of the Founding Fathers. His life provides a vista into a wide range of topics that we will explore through readings and discussions. Within this broad and international world of Franklin’s America, students will research a specific chosen topic of interest and develop this into an original paper or project.

This is an intensive research history seminar. It carries a heavy reading load and will demand much from you in class discussions. It assumes a basic knowledge of colonial American history. If you feel you need a primer or refresher on early American history I would recommend Alan Taylor’s *American Colonies* (New York, 2001). In addition to learning about eighteenth-century America within a larger Atlantic World context, this course will introduce you to the research methods historians use to identify subjects and areas worthy of study, gather evidence to answer research questions, wrestle with biases and interpretations of primary sources, and compose an engaging and relevant narrative about the past. You will also improve your writing and critical thinking skills by composing reaction papers to the books we read. The course will culminate in your producing a significant primary source-based research paper, which you will formally present to your peers at the end of the semester.

Class Participation: You are expected to attend every class, read the assigned material, and come prepared to talk about what you have read. Since seminars are by nature

designed to be question-driven, you will be expected to think on your feet and frame historical questions of your material as we seek to understand Franklin's world. In contributing to discussion, quality is more appreciated than quantity: as Poor Richard says, "Silence is not always a Sign of Wisdom, but Babbling is ever a Mark of Folly." Your class participation is worth twenty percent (20%) of your grade. Unexcused absences will cause this grade to suffer.

Writing Assignments: The rest of your grade is based on reaction papers (20%), a short research paper (10%) and work leading to your final research paper (50%).

Reaction Papers: On weeks 3-11, you will write a single-spaced, single-page critical reaction paper addressing the assigned reading, due at the beginning of the class in which the readings are discussed. These papers should succinctly summarize the issues that each author addresses and evaluate the persuasiveness of arguments and evidence. Reaction essays turned in late on the day of class will be marked down half a grade, and for each day late thereafter another half-grade will be deducted, so have your papers ready on time! Given the intensity of this course, I will allow you to skip turning in two reaction papers during the semester, but this does not absolve you from doing the reading and participating in discussion. The SIX reaction papers you turn in over the course of the semester will constitute 20% of your grade.

Short Research Paper: Due in class on March 18, you will research and write a 4-6 page essay on some aspect of "Leisure and Fun in Franklin's America." This theme encompasses a broad range of possible topics: drinking (as well as types of drinks [tea, coffee, beer, wines, cider, rum punch, etc.], brewing, distilling, tavern culture); dating, sex, and courtship; plays, novels, poetry, and reading; dancing (types of dance and venues for dancing), sports, games, and gambling (horse racing, hunting, boxing, cricket, fencing, cards, cock-fights, crambo, etc.); songs and music (types of songs, popular ballads and broadsides, sea shanties, musical performances), foods (typical fare and formal dinners) and entertaining jokes, stories, and satires in almanacs and newspapers. In writing this paper, your purpose is mainly to inform and amuse, rather than to argue a particular thesis. Extra class participation credit will be given to those who perform or introduce the class to some aspect of their topic. This short paper is worth 10% of your grade.

Final Research Paper: You will also write one long paper (15-20 pages) that explores a specific subject or relevant theme relating to mid- to late-eighteenth-century America using mainly primary sources or a substantial collection of documents and contextual secondary material. THIS PAPER DOES NOT HAVE TO BE ABOUT BENJAMIN FRANKLIN. Your success will largely depend upon your ability to conduct research

independently, analyze documents, and creatively write up your findings.

Heeding Poor Richard's advice that "Little strokes fell great Oaks," we will follow the **schedule** below to incrementally develop your research topic:

By Feb. 18 ~ Schedule an individual meeting with me to register your topic.

March 4 ~ submit a 1-2 page proposal and annotated bibliography (see Storey, *Writing History*, 22-24, for criteria).

March 28 ~ submit a detailed outline and a status report of your completed and outstanding research (see Storey, 69-73, for advice).

April 8 ~ draft due

Week of April 15 ~ schedule an individual meeting with me to collect your evaluated draft and discuss ways to further improve your work.

April 29 ~ final revised paper due, with no exceptions.

Collectively, your research paper is worth fifty percent (50%) of your grade but the steps in the developmental process will be weighted as follows: proposal/bibliography (5%), outline/status report (5%), first draft (10%), final paper (30%). Late submissions will be penalized a grade per day. It is therefore imperative that you work steadily throughout the semester and submit complete and polished assignments on schedule.

Research Presentations: During our last two class meetings, we will hold a mini-conference in which you will each make a ten-minute formal presentation of your research to your peers and field questions about your work. Your presentation and your performance during Q&A will form part of your class participation grade.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

William Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students* (4th ed., Oxford, 2012)

Jon Butler, *Becoming America: The Revolution Before 1776* (Harvard, 2001)

Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. P. Smith (Dover, 1996)

Gordon Wood, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* (Penguin, 2004)

Joyce Chaplin, *The First Scientific American* (New York, 2007)

Jill Lepore, *Book of Ages: The Life and Opinions of Jane Franklin* (New York, 2013)

Gary Nash, *The Urban Crucible* (Harvard, 1986)

Peter Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution* (Penn, 1998)

Judith Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies* (Penn, 2002)

U. of R. Writing Center: Over the course of the semester while developing your reaction and research papers, you are certainly allowed and very much encouraged to work with

writing tutors and specialists in the College Writing Center (<http://writing.rochester.edu/center.html>, Rush Rhees G-121). They will help you to improve your prose and organization and can serve as ideal readers/sounding boards as you develop your research projects. As a fortune cookie I once opened stated, "Good writing is clear thinking made visible." The writing center staff will help you to achieve this - if you work with them.

Rush Rhees Research Librarians: You are also encouraged to consult Alan Unsworth early and often while developing your research paper. Alan is a specialist in U.S. and British primary and secondary sources. They can help you at all stages of the research project, especially in finding relevant primary source materials. You can contact him via the Reference Desk or by email/phone: aunsworth@library.rochester.edu/ x59298.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Key to Reading Assignments:

(*) = Required Reading, (R) = on Reserve/Blackboard

Week I (Jan. 21) Course Introduction A Fun Founding Father?

Week II (Jan. 28) History, Historical Research, and Early American Sources

* William Storey, *Writing History: A Guide for Students* (4th ed., Oxford, 2012)

The second half of this class will be spent touring Rush Rhees Library to survey texts and digital resources particularly relevant to 18th-century America and visit the Rare Books and Special Collections department.

Recommended:

David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge, 1985)

Week III (Feb. 4) ~ Eighteenth-Century America: An Overview

* Jon Butler, *Becoming America: The Revolution Before 1776* (Harvard, 2001), all

Week IV (Feb 11) The “Self-Made Man”? Franklin and his Biographers

* Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, (1996)

* Gordon Wood, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* (2004), all

Recommended:

H.W. Brands, *The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin*

Walter Isaacson, *Benjamin Franklin, An American Life* (2003)

J.A. Leo Lemay, *The Life of Benjamin Franklin* (2006) 2 vols.

J.A. Leo Lemay and P. M. Zall, eds., *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin: A Genetic Text* (1981).

Edmund Morgan, *Benjamin Franklin* (2002).

Stacy Schiff, *A Great Improvisation: Franklin, France, and the Birth of America* (2006)

Carl Van Doren, *Benjamin Franklin* (1938)

David Waldstreicher, *Runaway America: Benjamin Franklin, Slavery, and the American Revolution* (New York, 2005)

Week V (Feb. 18) Franklin’s Philadelphia and the Seaports of Colonial America DEADLINE FOR REGISTERING YOUR TENTATIVE RESEARCH TOPIC

* Gary Nash, *The Urban Crucible* (1986), 1-183.

* (R) T.H. Breen, “An Empire of Goods: The Anglicization of Colonial America, 1690-1776,” *Journal of British Studies* XXV (1986), 467-499, available via JSTOR.

Recommended:

Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness* (1938) and *Cities in Revolt* (New York, 1955).

Richard Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York, 1992), 1-203.

Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter Albert, eds., *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville, 1994)

Erin Mackie, ed., *The Commerce of Everyday Life: Selections from The Tatler and The Spectator* (Boston, 1998)

David Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America* (Chapel Hill, 1996)

Week VI (Feb. 25) Franklin as Publisher: Newspapers, Printing, and the Circulation of Information

* IN CLASS EXERCISE: working with Colonial American newspapers.

* (R) Ian Steele, "The Papers," in *The English Atlantic: An Exploration of Communication and Community, 1675-1740* (Oxford, 1986), 132-167.

* (R) Charles Clark, "The Newspapers of Provincial America," in John Hench, ed., *Three Hundred Years of the American Newspaper* (Worcester, 1991), 367-389.

* (R) chs. 6-7 of William Sloan and Julie Williams, *The Early American Press* (Westport, 1994)

* (R) Jurgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964)," *New German Critique* III (1974), 49-55.

Recommended:

America's Historical Newspapers: 1690-1922 Rush Rhees Library Database

Hugh Amory & David D. Hall, eds., *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, 2000)

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (1991)

Bernard Bailyn and John Hench, eds., *The Press and the American Revolution* (Worcester, 1980)

Richard Brown, *Knowledge is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700-1865* (Oxford, 1989)

Charles Clark, *The Public Prints: The Newspaper in Anglo-American Culture, 1665-1740* (Oxford, 1994).

David Copeland, *Colonial American Newspapers: Character and Content* (Newark, DE, 1997).

David Hall, *Cultures of Print: Essays in the History of the Book* (Amherst, 1996).

Roberto Franzosi, "The Press as a Source of Socio-Historical Data: Issues in the Methodology of Data Collection from Newspapers," *Historical Methods* 20:5-16 (1987).

Edward Lathem, comp., *Chronological Tables of American Newspapers, 1690-1820* (Barre, 1972).

Stephen Mrozowski, "For Gentlemen of Capacity and Leisure: The Archaeology of Colonial Newspapers," in Mary Beaudry, ed., *Documentary Archaeology in the New World* (Cambridge, 1988), 184-91.

Rosalind Remer, *Printers and Men of Capital: Philadelphia Book Publishers in the New Republic* (Philadelphia, 2000).

William Sloan and Julie Williams, *The Early American Press, 1690-1783* (Westport, CN, 1994).

Billy Smith, comp., *Blacks who Stole Themselves: Advertisements for Runaways in the Pennsylvania Gazette, 1728-1790* (1989)

Michael Warner, *Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (1990).

Lathan Windley, comp., *Runaway Slave Advertisements: a Documentary History from the*

1730s to 1790. 4 vols. (Greenwood, Conn., 1983).

Week VII (March 4) Franklin as Gentleman Scientist

PAPER PROPOSAL AND
BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

* Joyce Chaplin, *The First Scientific American: Ben Franklin and the Pursuit of Genius* (2007), all



Recommended:

I. Bernard Cohen, *Benjamin Franklin's Science* (1990) and *Science and the Founding Fathers: Science in the Political Thought of Jefferson, Franklin, Adams, and Madison* (1995)

Week VIII (March 11) SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS

**Week IX (March 18) Partying with Ben Franklin:
Leisure and Recreation in Colonial America
SHORT RESEARCH PAPER DUE**

* IN-CLASS PERFORMANCE ~ come to class prepared to talk about your paper topic and perform something entertaining (a song, story, dance, etc.) dating to Franklin's era.

* Peter Thompson, *Rum Punch and Revolution* (1998).

Week X (March 25) Franklin's Revolution: Patriots and Loyalist

* Gary Nash, *Urban Crucible, 184-247*.

* Judith Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies* (2003)

Recommended:

H.T. Dickinson, ed., *Britain and the American Revolution* (1998)

Gregory Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance* (1992)

Christopher Hibbert, *Rebels and Redcoats: The American Revolution Through British Eyes* (1990)

Piers Mackesy, *The War for America, 1775-1783* (1964)
William Nelson, *The American Tory* (1992)
Andrew O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided* (2000)
Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War* (1980)
Sheila Skemp, *Benjamin and William Franklin: Father and Son, Patriot and Loyalist* (1994);
William Franklin: *Son of a Patriot, Servant of a King* (1990); *The Making of a Patriot: Benjamin Franklin at the Cockpit* (2013)
Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground* (2006)
Barbara Tuchman, *The First Salute* (1988)

Week XI (April 1) – “The Gentle Sex”?: Women in Franklin’s America
DETAILED OUTLINE AND STATUS REPORT DUE

* Jill Lepore, *Book of Ages: The Life and Opinions of Jane Franklin* (2013)

Recommended:

Linda De Pauw, *Founding Mothers: Women of America in the Revolutionary Era* (Boston, 1975)

Joan Gundersen, *To Be Useful to the World: Women in Revolutionary America, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill, 2006)

Clare Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender and Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730-1830* (Chapel Hill, 2005)

Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty’s Daughters* (1980).

Larry Tise, ed., *Benjamin Franklin and Women* (Penn State, 2000)

Karin Wulf, *Not All Wives: Women in Colonial Philadelphia* (2005)

April 8 NO CLASS ~ First Drafts DUE

April 15 NO CLASS ~ Drafts
Returned/Individual Conference Meetings

April 22 Student Paper Presentations I

April 29 Student Paper Presentations II ~
FINAL PAPERS DUE

