

History 162

Early America to 1783



MWF 11:50-12:40
Wegmans Hall 1009
Office: Rush Rhees 455 and/or 455 (lab)
Office Hours: Wed. 2:00-4:00 pm or by appt

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Course Description: This course examines European expansion into the Americas from the eve of Columbus's first voyage through the aftermath of the American Revolution. Throughout this period, we will consider the making of a multi-national and multi-ethnic Atlantic world that included Africa, Europe, and America in order to better understand the development of colonial British America and the infant United States. We will regionally survey expansion of different European nations into the Americas through the 1680s and then focus more closely on British America through 1750, emphasizing how timing, environmental factors, economic strategies, and the scale and nature of migration produced differences within colonial societies. We will also topically examine Anglo-Indian contact, slavery and the emergence of African-American culture, gender, science, religion, and the changing contours of daily life to capture the diversity of experiences of colonial Americans. We conclude by examining how and why British America fell apart, the American Revolution's impact on a diverse Atlantic and American population, and struggles the new United States faced in forging a politically and culturally cohesive republic.

While providing a broad introductory overview to our current understanding of early American history, this course also introduces students to the practices of doing history through close reading, analysis, and discussion of primary documents and scholarly debates. Through viewing films and documentaries and visiting historic sites, we will also consider how the present uses the past for various cultural purposes and conceptualize "history" as an ongoing argument between multiple contending interpretations rather than as a static script of facts and events to memorize and recite.

Evaluation: Your course grade will be based on a combination of class participation (10%), two in-class midterm exams on Oct. 10 and Oct. 26 (20% each), a take-home essay due Nov. 26 (20%) and a final exam on Dec. 17 (30%). Students who have performed well on the midterms and take-home essay (averaging B+ or better) will have the option of substituting a research paper of 12-15 pages using primary sources on an approved topic for the final exam with my advanced permission. Students interested in this option should register their topic by Monday, November 19. It is due at the start of the final exam (December 17). Any assignments submitted late will be penalized 5 points per day (or part thereof). I do not give makeup exams or assign incomplete grades unless they are sanctioned

by the dean's office.

Class Participation: Through lectures and discussions of films and monographs, we will develop a better understanding of early America's past. Your attendance is required and will be monitored through a sign-in book. It is worth 10% of your grade, the equivalent of a full letter grade. After two unexcused absences, each missed class will reduce your grade by 2%. This means that if you attend regularly, 10% of your grade will be a straight A. Alternatively, the quickest way to turn a B into a C is to blow off seven classes. Only officially sanctioned absences with advance notification or cases of sickness with independent documentation (i.e. a doctor's note) will be excused. I expect you to have done the assigned readings and come to class prepared with questions and comments for discussion. **I reserve the right to take pop quizzes if I suspect a significant portion of the class is unprepared.** Failure to demonstrate adequate preparation will result in loss of that day's attendance. In addition to lectures, three films will be screened on nights before class discussion: *Black Robe* (on Sept. 31), *A Midwife's Tale* (Nov. 11), and *Colonial House, episodes 1&2* (Nov. 18; you will need to see the other six episodes on your own). We will evaluate them in discussion sections the following day. If you cannot attend these screenings, you are responsible for seeing them on your own at the Rush Rhees [Art and Music Library](#) (G134) prior to our discussion. Even if you have already seen them, please view them again in light of the new material we are covering in this class. There will also be an optional (but highly encouraged!) field trip on Saturday, October 20 to Ganondagan State Historic Park (a 1670s Iroquois Longhouse) and the Landmark Society's Stone-Tolan house to explore Western New York from opposite sides of the same frontier: the Seneca Indians and the area's earliest Anglo-American settlers.

Course Website: The course website will let you access electronic reserve material, course syllabus and assignments, weekly terms, and other related material. Use your my.rochester.edu portal to gain access. In the past, students have had trouble viewing recently added terms. Adjusting your web browser history to refresh settings to 1 day or less should fix this problem.

Required Texts: The following books are available on reserve at Rush Rhees. They are also available (new and used) at many on-line sites.

Alan Taylor, [American Colonies: The Settling of North America](#) (AC)

Colin Calloway, [New Worlds for All](#)

Laurel Ulrich, [Good Wives](#)

Olaudah Equiano, [Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano](#), ed. Vincent Carretta (rev. ed. 2003)

Joseph Plumb Martin, [Narrative of a Revolutionary Soldier](#) (2010)

Recommended:

[Colonial House](#) (DVD, 2004)

Robert Devine et. al. *The American Story* 5th ed. (2013) – one of many US survey textbooks.

In addition to these, I have placed several articles and sections of other books on electronic

reserve, accessible through the course syllabus on the course web-page.

A Note on Communication and Academic Honesty: I assume you are all adults and that the work you do in this class is entirely your own original composition. Much of your learning will come from making connections and synthesizing information on your own. You cheat yourself as well as your peers when you steal other people's work. All assignments and activities in this course must be performed in accordance with UR's Academic Honesty Policy (www.rochester.edu/college/honesty). You are encouraged to discuss course readings and assignments with your fellow students, but all written work must be done independently. If you need guidance in writing papers (especially on proper citations to avoid plagiarism), I encourage you to consult with me and with [the College Writing, Speaking and Argument Program](#).

It is your responsibility to get to class and to submit all your work on time or early in paper form. I check my email and phone messages regularly and usually am good about responding to correct and courteously worded missives (on weekdays between 9 and 5), but don't expect instant responses and do not assume I got your email. Informal and poorly punctuated/capitalized emails annoy me. If a truly urgent or important situation arises, contact me in person, relay a message via the history department, or contact me at home (585-678-4704), rather than count on email. Also, do not simply "disappear" if you find yourself overwhelmed or struggling in this class. I can only work with you if I know this is happening, and an early timely intervention is far better than damage control at semester's end.

About Me and the UR History Department's strengths in Early Modern History

By nature, a survey course sweeps with broad brush strokes across large swaths of time and space. Should you find particular topics and periods of greater personal interest – and if you are curious about historical archaeology, digital history, historical videogames, and how the past is disseminated to a broader public, please stop by my office hours. I offer [other introductory and advanced courses](#) in Democratic America (US history 1783-1765), Maritime History, Atlantic Piracy, Comparative Colonial History, Earliest America, New York History, and Digital History, including [3D modeling of historic sites](#). I supervise research students working on my Virtual St. George's, multi-year [Smiths Island \(Bermuda\) Archaeology](#), and [Digital Elmina Projects](#), based in the Digital History lab (Rush Rhees 445 & 446) I created. I also direct the UR's Digital Media Studies program, where I encourage students to use multimedia approaches to capture, explore, analyze, and share the past.

My colleagues in the UR History Department are respected scholars who offer complementary and more advanced courses in Atlantic and Early American history, particularly [Brianna Theobald](#) (Native American history, Women's and Gender history), [Joseph Inikori](#) (West African & Atlantic economic history), [Tom Devaney](#) (Early Modern Spain, Frontiers, Microhistory, Mediterranean World), [Tom Slaughter](#) (Europe and Americas, Environmental History, Food History, Families) and [Pablo Sierra](#) (Colonial Latin America, early African Slavery in Mexico, Caribbean Piracy).

CLASS SCHEDULE

** denotes reading on E-Reserve

Aug. 29 (W) Introduction: An Atlantic Perspective on Early America

Sept. 31 (F) The Dynamics of Colonization

Part I: Settlement

Sept. 5 & 7 (WF) 1491: Europe, Africa, and America on the eve of contact AC -intro & 1-32

Sept. 10 (M) Columbus, Conquest, and Colonization, AC 33-76

Sept. 12 & 14 (WF) Spanish and Portuguese America & European Interlopers AC, 76-90

Sept. 17 (M) England's Western Turn: Ireland, Roanoke, and Jamestown ** R. Hakluyt, "Discourse on Western Planting" AC,118-125

Sept. 19 (W) The Early Chesapeake, 1607-1675 AC 125-150

Sept. 21 & 24 (F, M) New England: Puritan Exodus, 1620-1675 – AC 158-203

Sept. 26 (W) French America AC 91-113, 363-395

Sept. 28 (F) Iroquoia AC 91-113

Sept. 31 (Sunday) SCREENING of *Black Robe* (location TBD)

Oct. 1 (M) DISCUSSION of *Black Robe*

Oct. 3 (W) Dutch America AC 251-261

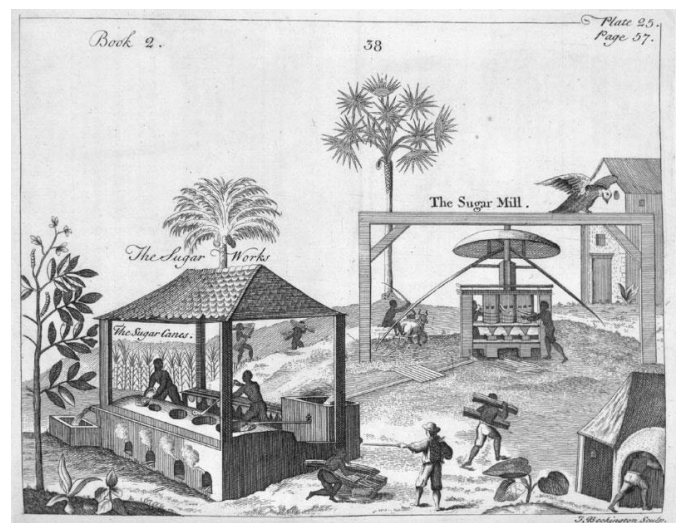
Oct. 5 (F) Bermuda and the Caribbean ** S. Jordain, "Plain Description of Bermuda" & AC 204-221

Oct. 8 (M) Cockpit of Empires: Caribbean Society

Oct. 10 (W) **FIRST MIDTERM EXAM**

Oct. 12 (F) Chesapeake Development, 1660-1760 – AC 138-157

Oct. 15 (M) FALL BREAK, NO CLASS



Oct. 17 (W) New England Declension, 1660-1760 – AC 178-186, 199-203, 275-280

Oct. 19 (F) The Lower South – AC 222-244

Oct. 20 (Sat.) FIELD TRIP to GANANDAGAN and STONE TOLAN

Oct. 22 (M) The Middle Colonies – AC 245-272

Oct. 24 (W) British America in 1750 AC 275-300

Oct. 26 (F) **SECOND MIDTERM EXAM**



Part II: New Worlds in the Making

Oct. 29 (M) Native American Response and Resistance – discussion Calloway, *New Worlds for All*, all

Oct. 31 (W) HALLOWEEN Lecture: Pirates and Witches

Nov. 2 (F) Africa, Slavery & the Slave Trade ** Berlin, “Atlantic Creoles” AC 323-337

Nov. 5 (M) Black Worlds, White Worlds: American Slavery, AC 323-337

Nov. 7 (W) Atlantic Slavery – DISCUSSION of Equiano,

Interesting Narrative, all.

Nov. 9 (F) Women’s Work, Women’s Worlds: Gender in Early America

Nov. 11 (Sunday) SCREENING of *A Midwife’s Tale*, 8:00-9:30 p.m.

Location TBA

Nov. 12 (M) DISCUSSION of *Midwife’s Tale*, **Take Home Exam Topics DISTRIBUTED**

Nov. 14 (W) Spiritual Worlds, Rational Worlds: Religion and Reason – AC 301-323, 338-362

Nov. 16 (F) Material Worlds, Creole Worlds: Daily life in Early America

Nov. 18 (Sunday) SCREENING of *Colonial House* (Episode 1&2)
Location TBA

Nov. 19 (M) DISCUSSION of *Colonial House*. **See Episodes 3-8 on your own over Thanksgiving Break.**



Nov. 21 – NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

Part III: American Revolutions

Nov. 26 (M) Imperial Rivalries: War and Empire in the 18th-century Atlantic – AC 376-395, 420-443 **Take Home Essay DUE**

Nov. 28 (W) The Seven Years War – ** American Story, 135-141, AC 428-437

Nov. 30 (F) Roots of the Revolution, 1763-1775– ** American Story, 145-165, AC 437-443

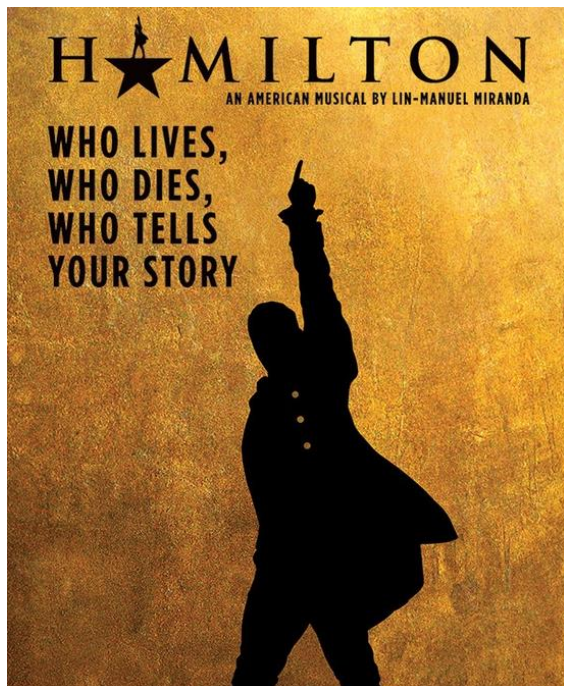
Dec. 3 (M) The American Revolution, 1775-1777 – ** American Story, 165-181

Dec. 5 (W) The American Revolution, 1778-1783

Dec. 7 (F) The Revolution from the Trenches: DISCUSSION of Joseph Plumb Martin - *Narrative of a Revolutionary Soldier*, all

Dec. 10 (M) The American Revolution as a World War

Dec. 12 (W) Revolutionary Legacies: Counting Costs, Assessing Change – ** American Story, 185-197



Dec. 17 (M) **FINAL EXAM**, 7:15-10:15 -
Research paper (option) also due