



**HIS 262/262W**  
**BENJAMIN**  
**FRANKLIN'S**  
**AMERICA:**  
ANGLO-AMERICAN  
CULTURE IN THE  
AGE OF REVOLUTION,  
1720-1790



Professor Michael Jarvis  
Tue/Thu 12:30-1:45 pm  
Morey 501  
Michael.jarvis@rochester.edu

Office: Rush Rhees 446  
Phone: 585-485-9870  
Office Hours: Wed. 2:00-  
4:00 or by appt

This course and introductory 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 course provides a deep dive into historical research and Early American history. 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, 4, 6, 7, 10, and 11, you will write a singlespaced, 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 one reaction papers during the semester, but this does not absolve you from doing the reading and participating in discussion. The FIVE reaction papers you turn in over the course of the semester will constitute 20% of your grade.

**Short Research Paper:** Due in class on Oct. 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 (12-15 pages; 1520 pages for students taking HIS 262W) 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 Sept. 29 ~ Schedule an individual meeting with me to register your topic.

Oct. 11 ~ submit a 1-2 page proposal and annotated bibliography (see Storey, *Writing History*, 22-24, for criteria).

Nov. 1 ~ submit a detailed outline and a status report of your completed and outstanding research (see Storey, 69-73, for advice).

Nov. 17 ~ draft due

Week of Nov. 29-Dec. 1 ~ schedule an individual meeting with me to collect your evaluated draft and discuss ways to further improve your work.

Dec. 13 ~ 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* (4<sup>th</sup> 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)

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

**[UR Writing, Speaking, and Argument Center \(WSAP\)](#)**: Over the course of the semester while developing your reaction and research papers, you are allowed -- and very much encouraged -- to work with writing tutors and specialists in the College WSAP, located in Rush Rhees G-122. 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 can help you to achieve this ideal -- if you work with them. YOU MUST MAKE APPOINTMENTS IN ADVANCE to work with writing tutors, so plan ahead.

**Rush Rhees Research Librarians:** You are also encouraged to consult Rush Rhees research librarian Lara Nicosia (lnicosia@library.rochester.edu; 585275-9298) early and often while developing your research paper. Lara is a specialist in U.S., British, and European history sources and can help you at all stages of the research project, especially in finding relevant source materials.

**Rare Books and Special Collections (RBSCP):** The University of Rochester has archival materials and items in their special collections related to 18<sup>th</sup> century America. You are encouraged to explore these holdings as you think about a potential research topic using actual paper primary sources.

**Credit Hours:** The College's credit hour policy on undergraduate courses is to award four credit hours for courses that meet for the equivalent of three periods of fifty minutes each week. Students enrolled in HIS 262 are expected to devote at least one hour each week to identifying the main lines of argument in course readings, using online tutorials and software manuals to teach themselves digital techniques, conducting in depth research on their topics in local archives, and building their final projects.

**Academic honesty:** All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and will be treated as such. Anyone who engages in such activities will be turned over to the College Board on Academic Honesty for disciplinary action, as outlined at <http://www.rochester.edu/College/honesty/>. For a helpful discussion of plagiarism (including subtle instances), see the American Historical Association's "Defining Plagiarism."

**A Note on Communication:** It is your responsibility to get to class on time and to submit all your work on time or early in paper or electronic form. I check my email regularly during the work week and am usually good about responding to **correct and courteously worded** missives, but don't expect instant responses and do not assume I got your email. Informal and poorly punctuated/capitalized emails annoy me. Finally, do not simply "disappear" if you find yourself overwhelmed or struggling: I can only work with you if I know this is happening, and an early timely intervention can do far more than damage control at semester's end.

**Inclusion:** The University of Rochester is committed to inclusion and welcome students of all backgrounds and abilities. Services and reasonable accommodations are available to students with temporary and permanent disabilities, to students with DACA or undocumented status, to students facing mental health issues, other personal situations, and to students with other kinds of learning needs. Please let me know if there are circumstances affecting your ability to participate in class. Some resources that might be of use include:

- In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources. ([disability@rochester.edu](mailto:disability@rochester.edu); (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall)
- [Undocumented/DACA Student Support Contacts](#)
- [University of Rochester CARE Network](#)
- [University Health Center UCC \(University Counseling Center\)](#)
- [Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning \(CETL\)](#)

**Accommodation** If you have a disability for which you require an academic accommodation, you are encouraged to contact the Office for Disability Resources and me. We will work together to find a solution. Access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you

to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. The director of disability resources is Amy Wight ([amy.wight@rochester.edu](mailto:amy.wight@rochester.edu)). The access coordinators are Pamela Spallacci ([pamela.spallacci@rochester.edu](mailto:pamela.spallacci@rochester.edu)) and Elizabeth Carpenter ([elizabeth.carpenter@rochester.edu](mailto:elizabeth.carpenter@rochester.edu)). The access assistant is Anne Staab ([anne.staab@rochester.edu](mailto:anne.staab@rochester.edu)). The Office of Disability Resources is located in Taylor Hall, can be reached via telephone at 585-276-5075, and maintains a website at <http://www.rochester.edu/college/disability/>.

**Grading Scale** For the papers and other assignment graded out of 100 points, I use the following scale:

- |             |                            |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| * A: 93-100 | * C: 73-76                 |
| * A-: 90-92 | * C-: 70-72                |
| * B+: 87-89 | * D+: 67-69                |
| * B: 83-86  | * D: 63-66                 |
| * B-: 80-82 | * D-: 60-62                |
| * C+: 77-79 | * E: Failure (59 or below) |

For more information on the undergraduate grading scheme, please see: Grading Schemes – AS&E, Office of the University Registrar, <https://www.rochester.edu/registrar/grading/scheme.html>.

# SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Key to Assignments: (\*) = Required Reading, (R) = on Reserve/Blackboard

## Week I (Sept. 1) Course Introduction : A Fun Founding Father?

In which we cover course goals and expectations and get to know each other a bit better.



## Week II - History, Historical Research, and Early American Sources

**R**UN away from the subscriber in *Albemarle*, a Mulatto slave called *Sandy*, about 35 years of age, his stature is rather low, inclining to corpulence, and his complexion light; he is a shoemaker by trade, in which he uses his left hand principally, can do coarse carpenters work, and is something of a horse jockey; he is greatly addicted to drink, and when drunk is insolent and disorderly, in his conversation he swears much, and in his behaviour is artful and knavish. He took with him a white horse, much scarred with traces, of which it is expected he will endeavour to dispose; he also carried his shoemakers tools, and will probably endeavour to get employment that way. Whoever conveys the said slave to me, in *Albemarle*, shall have 40 s. reward, if taken up within the county, 4 l. if elsewhere within the colony, and 10 l. if in any other colony, from  
THOMAS JEFFERSON.



Sept. 6 (Tu) – What is history and why does it matter?

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

Sept. 8 (Th) – What Historians Do All Day - In which we take a gentle stroll through Rush Rhees Library to survey texts, digital resources relevant to 18th-century America, make a visit the Rare Books and Special Collections department.

### **Week III ~ Eighteenth-Century America: An Overview**

Sept. 13 (Tu) British America in 1700 (lecture)

Sept. 15 (Th) The Contours of Colonial America.  
DISCUSSION of

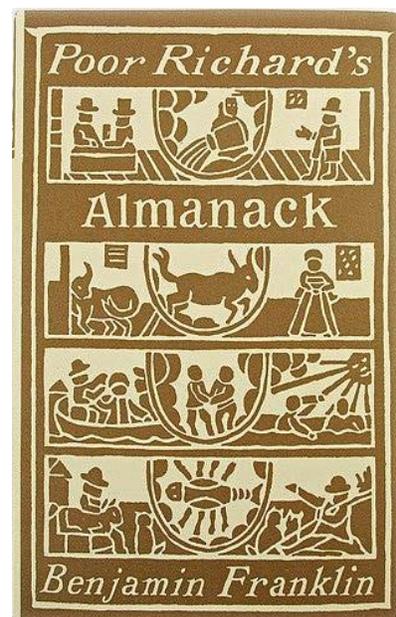
\* Jon Butler, *Becoming America: The Revolution Before 1776* (Harvard, 2001), all  
FIRST REACTION PAPER DUE.



### **Week IV ~ The “Self-Made Man”? Franklin and his Biographers**

Sept. 20 (Tu) DISCUSSION of  
\* Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, (1996)

Sept. 22 (Th) DISCUSSION of  
\* Gordon Wood, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* (2004), all  
SECOND REACTION PAPER DUE



Recommended:

H.W. Brands, *The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin* (2002)

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

Carl Japikse, ed. *Fart Proudly: Writings of Benjamin Franklin You Never Read in School* (1990)

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)



**Week V ~ Franklin's Philadelphia and the Seaports of Colonial America**  
DEADLINE FOR REGISTERING YOUR TENTATIVE RESEARCH TOPIC

Sept. 27 (Tu) The Maritime Atlantic and Urban America (lecture)

Sept. 29 (Th) Material Worlds (lecture & Discussion of Butler, *Becoming America*, ch. 4 and 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 ~ Franklin as  
Publisher:  
Newspapers, Printing, and the  
Circulation of Information**

Oct. 4 (Tu) Awakenings & Enlightenment: Religion and Reason in Early America (lecture)

Oct. 6 (Th) DISCUSSION of  
\* (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.

### THIRD REACTION PAPER DUE

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)

David Waldstreicher, *Runaway America: Benjamin Franklin, Slavery, and the*

*American Revolution* (New York, 2005)

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 ~ Franklin as Gentleman Scientist**

PAPER PROPOSAL AND  
BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

Oct. 11 (Tue): NO CLASS, FALL  
BREAK

Oct. 13 (Th) DISCUSSION of \* Joyce  
Chaplin, *The First Scientific  
American: Ben Franklin and the  
Pursuit of Genius* (2007), all

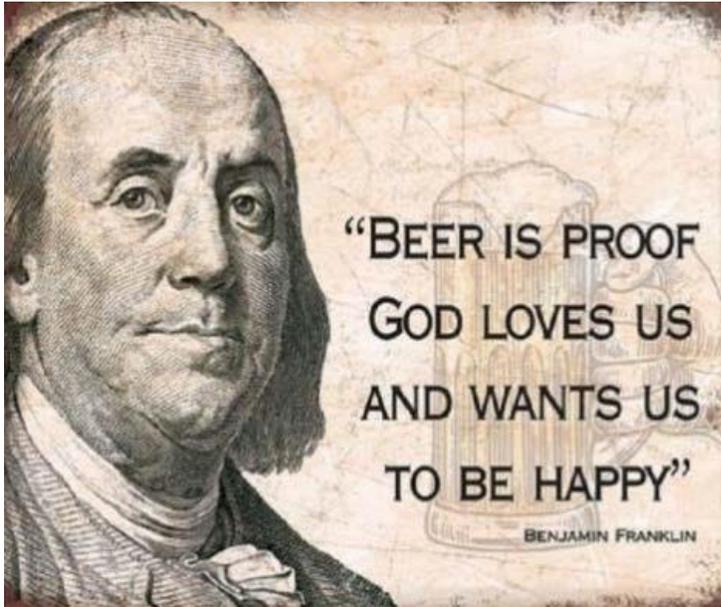
FOURTH REACTION PAPER DUE

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)

Philip Dray, *Stealing God's Thunder: Benjamin Franklin's Lightning Rod and the Invention of America* (2005)





**Week VIII ~ Partying with  
Ben Franklin:  
Leisure and Recreation in  
Colonial America  
SHORT RESEARCH  
PAPER DUE**

Oct. 18 (Tu) 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.

Oct. 20 (Th) Performances (continued) & Eating and Drinking in Colonial  
America

**Week IX ~ "The Gentle Sex"?: Women in Franklin's America  
DETAILED OUTLINE AND STATUS REPORT DUE**

Nov. 1 (Tu) - Slavery, Race, and Sex in Colonial British America (lecture)

Nov. 3 (Th) - Discussion of

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

SIXTH REACTION PAPER DUE

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)



1754



1774

### Week X ~ Franklin's Revolution: Patriots and Loyalist

Oct. 25 (Tu) The Road to Revolution and Franklin as Diplomat Rock Star (lecture)

Oct. 27 (Th) DISCUSSION of

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

FIFTH REACTION PAPER DUE

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)

Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (2011)

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)

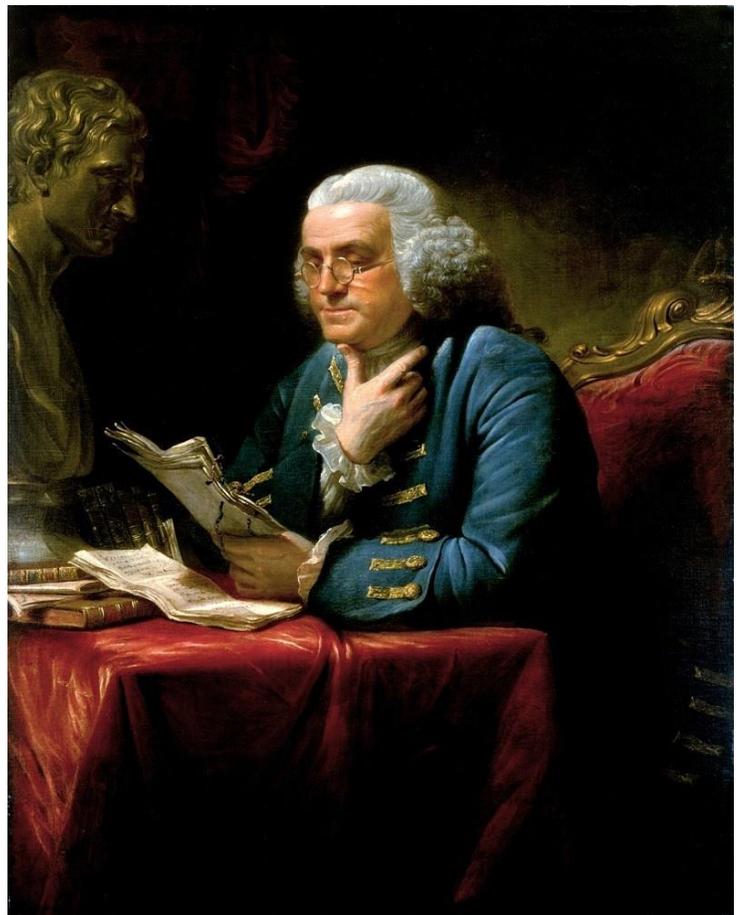
### **Week XI ~ Your Explorations of Early America**

Nov. 15 (Tu) ~ NO CLASS ~  
Work on your research  
papers!

Nov. 17 (Th) ~ PAPER  
DRAFTS DUE.  
IN CLASS presentations of  
your individual research  
topics thus far.

### **Week XII ~ Thanksgiving Break**

Nov. 22 (Tu) - NO CLASS.  
Keep revising your paper  
draft, travel safely, eat turkey (unless you are vegan/vegetarian, in which  
case avoid Tofurkey because it is gross), and meditate on the political  
nature of a holiday that pretends we did not steal a continent from the  
Native Americans who were there first.



BTW, Benjamin Franklin preferred the American turkey over the US national bird, the bald eagle:

“I wish the Bald Eagle had not been chosen as the Representative of our Country. He is a Bird of bad moral Character. He does not get his Living honestly. You may have seen him perched on some dead Tree near the River, where, too lazy to fish for himself, he watches the Labour of the Fishing Hawk; and when that diligent Bird has at length taken a Fish, and is bearing it to his Nest for the Support of his Mate and young Ones, the Bald Eagle pursues him and takes it from him. With all this injustice, he is never in good case but like those among men who live by sharpening & robbing he is generally poor and often very lousy. Besides he is a rank coward: The little King Bird not bigger than a Sparrow attacks him boldly and drives him out of the district. He is therefore by no means a proper emblem for the brave and honest Cincinnati of America who have driven all the King birds from our country... I am on this account not displeas'd that the Figure [on the US Presidential Seal] is not known as a Bald Eagle, but looks more like a Turkey. For the Truth the Turkey is in Comparison a much more respectable Bird, and withal a true original Native of America... He is besides, though a little vain & silly, a Bird of Courage, and would not hesitate to attack a Grenadier of the British Guards who should presume to invade his Farm Yard with a red Coat on.”

### **Week XIII ~ In Which We Discuss Your Progress and Make Improvements**

Nov. 29 (Tu) ~ Drafts Returned and Individual Conference Meetings Scheduled

Dec. 1 (Th) ~ Individual Meetings, continued.

**Week XIV ~ Presenting your Research  
In Which you Dazzle Us with your Erudition, Polish, and Accomplished  
Study of Franklin's World**

Dec. 6 (Tu) ~ Student Paper Presentations I

Dec. 8 (Th) ~ Student Paper Presentations II



HIS 262 students delivering their final research papers in Rush Rhees Great Hall. Prof. Jarvis gave them extra credit if they wore white wigs.

**Week XV ~ Ends and Beginnings**

Dec. 13 (Tu) ~ Reflections on History, Franklin, and You  
FINAL PAPERS DUE