

Early America and Visual Culture

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Web Site
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This course will be divided into four parts: (1) The Colonial Era
(2) The Revolution
(3) Biography
(4) The Pre-Industrial Era

Weekly readings will provide a basis for class discussions and writing assignments. Emphasis will be placed on visual culture and the stories of ethnic minorities and women in the evolution of early America. The goal of this course is to consider critical thinking, discussion and writing related to the development of American cultural history.

Participants are required to write two essays of approximately ten pages in length. The first essay will be due at mid semester and the second near the end of the term. Essay topics will be chosen from course readings and themes.

All writing assignments must be typed. Please double-space the lines and use one-inch margins on all sides of the page.

Final grades will depend 60% on submitted written work and 40% on class participation.

Please inform me of any medical issues that may influence your attendance and performance in class.

More than four class absences result in automatic failure of the course. Recurring tardiness will be reflected in the final grade.

Plagiarism occurs when one writer copies the words of another writer without attributing the words to the source. Unattributed copying will result in course failure.

Course calendar (subject to change)

Week

One

Introduction

Part One — The Colonial Era

Two

Native America

Three

The Chesapeake and New France

Four

The Black Majority

Five

Everyday Life in New England

Part Two — The Revolution

Six

Religion in the Colonies

Seven

The Literature of Dissent

Essay Due

Eight

“Popular” Uprisings

Nine

Individual In-Class Conferences

Ten

Artisans of the New Republic

Part Three — Biography

Eleven

Tecumseh and the Open Door

Twelve

Harriet Jacobs — Slave Girl

Part Four — the Pre-Industrial Era

Thirteen

Birth of the Middle Class

Fourteen

The Myth of the American West

Essay Due

Fifteen

Human Freight — New York’s Immigrants

Class Schedule (subject to change)

Introduction

Searching for Social History

Reading excerpt from —

1. Drums Rising: the Drum as Myth and Symbol in African American Culture. Chris Johnson. Manuscript.
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Part One — The Colonial Era

Native America

Reading excerpt from —

2. The Columbian Exchange. Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492. Alfred Crosby. 1972.
3. The Founders of America: From the Earliest Migrations to the Present. Francis Jennings. 1987.

Supplemental Reading

Before Columbus: Exploration and Colonization from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1229-1492. Felipe Fernandez-Armesto. 1987.

The Chesapeake, New France and Interrelationships

Reading excerpt from —

4. The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century. Essays on Anglo-American Society. Thad Tate, et al. 1979.
5. Chain Her by One Foot: The Subjugation of Native Women in Seventeenth-Century New France. Karen Anderson. 1991.

Supplemental Reading

Profits in the Wilderness: Entrepreneurship and the Founding of New England Towns in the 17th Century. John Martin. 1991.

The Black Majority

Reading excerpt from —

6. Black Majority. Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion. Peter Wood. 1974.
7. Before the Melting Pot: Society and Culture in Colonial New York City, 1664-1730. Joyce Goodfriend. 1992.

Supplemental Reading

Race and Class in Colonial Virginia: Indians, Englishmen, and Africans on the Eastern Shore During the Seventeenth Century. Douglas Deal. 1993.

Everyday Life in New England

Reading excerpt from —

8. The Reshaping of Everyday Life 1790-1840. Jack Larkin. 1988.
9. In Public Houses: Drink and the Revolution of Authority in Colonial Massachusetts. David Conroy. 1995.

Supplemental Reading

Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race and Power in Colonial Virginia. Kathleen Brown. 1996.

Part Two — The Revolution

Religion in the Colonies

Reading excerpt from —

10. Under the Cope of Heaven. Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America. Patricia Bonomi. 1986.
11. Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England. David Hall. 1989.
Supplemental Reading
Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought. Ruth Bloch. 1985.
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The Literature of Dissent

Reading excerpt from —

12. The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution. Bernard Bailyn. 1967, 1992.
13. Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America. Cathy Davidson. 1987.
Supplemental Reading
Original Meanings: Politics and Ideas in the Making of the Constitution. Jack Rakove. 1996.
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“Popular” Uprisings

Reading excerpt from —

14. From Resistance to Revolution. Colonial Radicals and the Development of American Opposition to Britain, 1765-1776. Pauline Maier. 1972, 1991.
15. The Road to Mobocracy: Popular Disorder in New York City, 1763-1834. Paul Gilje. 1987.
Supplemental Reading
A Planters' Republic: The Search for Economic Independence in Revolutionary Virginia. Bruce Ragsdale. 1996.
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Artisans of the New Republic

Reading excerpt from —

16. Artisans of the New Republic. The Tradesmen of New York City in the Age of Jefferson. Howard Rock. 1984.
17. The Washington Community, 1800-1828. James Sterling Young. 1966.
Supplemental Reading
Toward a New Society: American Thought and Culture, 1800-1830. Jean Matthews. 1991.
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Part Three — Biography

Tecumseh and the Open Door

Reading excerpt from —

18. Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership. R. David Edmunds. 1984.
19. Black Elk Speaks: Being the Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux. Black Elk. 1979.
Supplemental Reading
The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815. Richard White. 1991.
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Harriet Jacobs — Slave Girl

Reading excerpt from —

20. Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Written by Herself. Linda Brent. [Harriet Jacobs] 1861, 1987.
21. Within the Plantation Household. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese. 1988.
Supplemental Reading
Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation in 1838-1839. Frances Anne Kemble. 1863, 1984.
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Part Four — The Pre-Industrial Era

Birth of the Middle Class

Reading excerpt from —

22. Cradle of the Middle Class. The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865. Mary Ryan. 1981.
23. Good Wives: Image and Reality . . . in Northern New England, 1650-1750. Laurel Thatcher Ulrich. 1982.
Supplemental Reading
Workers in the Metropolis: Class, Ethnicity, and Youth in Antebellum New York City. Richard Stott. 1990.
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The Myth of the American West

Reading excerpt from —

24. Virgin Land. The American West as Symbol and Myth. Henry Nash Smith. 1950, 1982.
25. “It’s Your Misfortune and None of My Own”: A New History of the American West. Richard White. 1991.
Supplemental Reading
The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West. Patricia Limerick. 1987.
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Human Freight — New York’s Immigrants

Reading excerpt from —

26. The Rise of New York Port 1815-1860. Robert Albion. 1939, 1984.
27. News from the Land of Freedom: German Immigrants Write Home. Walter Kamphoefner, et al. 1991.
Supplemental Reading
Erin’s Daughters in America: Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century. Hasia Diner. 1983.

Illustrations

“Prices Current”

“Commercial Advertisement”
