

HIS 701-02 Colloquium in American History before 1865

Professor: Dr. Greg O'Brien
Office: MHRA 2110

Phone: 334-3988
email: wgobrien@uncg.edu

*The historian is perforce a critic; the historian of history is a critic of critics
History is always written because history is always made. Historiography is always revised because
history is constantly remade.*

–Bert James Loewenberg,
American History in American Thought

Interpretations of events, ideas, forces, and persons in history change all the time. Historiography is the study of those differing interpretations by professional historians and their development over time. In this class you will be exposed to various schools of thought on major themes in American history through the Civil War. You must read a large amount of material in order to begin to master the literature on our selected topics. You will read the equivalent of roughly a book and a half each week, a normal load for history graduate students. I strongly urge you to take notes on your readings and familiarize yourself with the notes. As a matter of course, you will be exposed to “facts” and “content knowledge” in this course, but we are more interested in historical interpretations and how and why historical interpretations have changed over time.

When doing history, it helps to keep in mind that there are many different ways of determining how history happens. One of the key things to remember is that historians can disagree very much over why almost any event happened. You will not agree with all interpretations that you encounter in this course. However, you must know the major differing interpretations in order to understand historians and to become one yourself.

Grading: I expect that you will attend every class meeting, complete all readings, and participate in discussions. Your grade will be reduced for non-participation or absences.

You will complete six (6) analysis papers throughout the semester. Each paper of 5 or more pages will take that week's readings and search for a crucial fact, process, question, idea, or approach to history that has caused historians to disagree about that topic. Analyze that particular item: why is it so critical to debate on this topic? Should it be the main focus of historians, or are there other facts, processes, questions, ideas, or approaches that could open up new understandings? Perhaps one of the week's readings makes such a case? In addition, you should briefly tell me and the class about the authors of the readings for each week that you write about. You choose the six topics/weeks to complete your papers – they are due the day we discuss that particular topic, though **at least two of them must be turned in by Oct. 6.**

At one meeting you will lead the discussion of that week's readings. Prepare a one-page, single-spaced outline of key ideas and questions you will use to guide the discussion to turn in at the end of that class. It is obviously helpful if you are also completing an analysis paper for the same week.

Finally, there will be a take-home exam that will require you to discuss some of the key trends we identify over the course of the semester.

Grading summary:

6 Analysis Papers	10% each or	60% of your overall grade
Final Exam		20%
Class Participation		10%
Discussion Leadership		<u>10%</u>
		100%

Required books (available in the UNCG campus bookstore):

Jon Butler, *Becoming America: The Revolution before 1776* (Harvard, 2000)

Jack P. Greene, ed., *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (2009)

Colin Calloway, *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America* (1998)

Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America* (2006)

Jon Butler, *New World Faiths: Religion in Colonial America* (Oxford, 2008)

Gwenda Morgan, *The Debate on the American Revolution* (Palgrave, 2008)

Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (1999)

Carol Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence* (2006)

Alfred F. Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution* (Beacon Press, 2000)

Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (Oxford, 2007)

Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619-1877* (Hill & Wang, 2003)

Kenneth Stampp, *Causes of the Civil War* (Simon & Schuster, 1992)

SCHEDULE:

Nearly all of the articles listed in the schedule are available on the J-STOR or Project MUSE databases through the UNCG Library webpages or via the general internet. Others will be handed out by me.

August 25: Introduction

WEEK ONE (Sept. 1)

Colonial America - generally speaking

Book: Jon Butler, *Becoming America: The Revolution before 1776* (Harvard, 2000)

Articles:

Joyce Appleby, "A Different Kind of Independence: The Postwar Restructuring of the Historical Study of Early America," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. Ser., Vol. 50, (Apr., 1993), pp. 245-267. *JSTOR*

Alfred F. Young, "An Outsider and the Progress of a Career in History," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 52, No. 3 (Jul., 1995), pp. 499-512 *JSTOR*

Gordon S. Wood, "A Century of Writing Early American History: Then and Now Compared; Or How Henry Adams Got It Wrong," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 100, No. 3 (Jun., 1995), pp. 678-696 *JSTOR*

WEEK TWO (Sept. 8)

Colonial America: an Atlantic World?

Book: Jack P. Greene, ed., *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (2009)

WEEK THREE (Sept. 15)

American Indians, Ethnohistory, and the "New Indian History"

Book: Colin Calloway, *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America* (1998)

Articles:

James Axtell, "Colonial America Without the Indians: Counterfactual Reflections," *Journal of American History* 73 (1987) 981-96 *JSTOR*

Nicolas G. Rosenthal, "Beyond the New Indian History: Recent Trends in the Historiography on the Native Peoples of North America," *History Compass* Volume 4 Issue 5, Pages 962 – 974 (2006) *Internet*

WEEK FOUR (Sept. 22)

Early American Environmental History

Book: Virginia DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America* (2006)

Articles:

Mart A. Stewart, "Environmental History: Profile of a Developing Field," *The History Teacher*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (May, 1998), pp. 351-368. *JSTOR*

Richard White, "Afterword Environmental History: Watching a Historical Field Mature," *The Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 70, No. 1 (Feb., 2001), pp. 103-111. *JSTOR*

Ted Steinberg, "Down, Down, Down, No More: Environmental History Moves beyond Declension," *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Summer, 2004), pp. 260-266. *JSTOR*

September 29: No Class: Ethnohistory Conference

WEEK FIVE (Oct. 6)**Religion in early America**

Book: Jon Butler, *New World Faiths: Religion in Colonial America* (Oxford, 2008)

Articles:

Charles L. Cohen, "The Post-Puritan Paradigm of Early American Religious History," *William and Mary Quarterly* vol. 54, no. 4 (Oct. 1997), pp. 695-722. *JSTOR*

Philip Goff and Alan Heimert, "Revivals and Revolution: Historiographic Turns since Alan Heimert's 'Religion and the American Mind,'" *Church History* vol. 67, no. 4 (Dec. 1998), pp. 695-721. *JSTOR*

October 13: Fall Break: No class per university calendar

WEEK SIX (Oct. 20)**The American Revolution: Causes & Historiography**

Books: Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (1999) &

Gwenda Morgan, *The Debate on the American Revolution* (Palgrave, 2008), pp. 1-94

Articles:

Gordon S. Wood, "Rhetoric and Reality in the American Revolution" *William and Mary Quarterly* vol. 23 (1966) 3-32. *JSTOR*

Colin Gordon, "Crafting a Usable Past: Consensus, Ideology, and Historians of the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 46, No. 4 (Oct., 1989), pp. 671-695. *JSTOR*

WEEK SEVEN (Oct. 27)**The Impact of the American Revolution**

Book: Gwenda Morgan, *The Debate on the American Revolution* (Palgrave, 2008), pp. 95-214 & 254-302

Articles:

Alfred F. Young, "Afterword: How Radical Was the American Revolution?" Young, ed., Beyond the American Revolution (1993) 317-364. *Copies provided by instructor.*

Michael Zuckerman, "Review: Rhetoric, Reality, and the Revolution: The Genteel Radicalism of Gordon Wood," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 51, No. 4 (Oct., 1994), pp. 693-702. *JSTOR*

Woody Holton, "An 'Excess of Democracy' -- Or a Shortage?: The Federalists' Earliest Adversaries," *Journal of the Early Republic* - Volume 25, Number 3, Fall 2005, pp. 339-382. *Project MUSE*

WEEK EIGHT (Nov. 3)**Women in Early America: Revolutionary Changes?**

Books: Carol Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence* (2006) & Gwenda Morgan, *The Debate on the American Revolution* (Palgrave, 2008), pp. 215-253

Articles:

Kathleen Brown, "Brave New Worlds: Women's and Gender History," *William and Mary Quarterly* vol. 50, (1993) pp. 311-328. *JSTOR*

Kathleen Brown, "Beyond the Great Debates: Gender and Race in Early America," *Reviews in American History* - Volume 26, Number 1, March 1998, pp. 96-123. *Project MUSE*

WEEK NINE (Nov. 10)**Historical Memory and Myth-Making in Early America**

Book: Alfred F. Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution* (Beacon Press, 2000)

Articles:

Robert M. S. McDonald, "Thomas Jefferson's Changing Reputation as Author of the Declaration of Independence," *Journal of the Early Republic* 19 (1999) 169-95. *JSTOR*

Carla Mulford, "Figuring Benjamin Franklin in American Cultural Memory" *New England Quarterly* 72 (1999) 415-43. *JSTOR*

Mitch Kachun, "From Forgotten Founder to Indispensable Icon: Crispus Attucks, Black Citizenship, and Collective Memory, 1770-1865," *Journal of the Early Republic* 29 (Summer 2009) 248-286. *Project Muse*

WEEK TEN (Nov. 17)**Whig America?****Andrew Jackson, the Whig Party & the Market Revolution**

Book: Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (Oxford, 2007)

Articles:

Part of a forum on another major recent book on this era, Sean Wilentz's book *The Rise of American Democracy*:

James Oakes, "The Ages of Jackson and the Rise of American Democracies," *The Journal of the Historical Society* 6 (December 2006) 491-500. *EBSCO Host*

See also the excellent review of Howe's book by Jill Lepore in *The New Yorker*, October 29, 2007:

http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2007/10/29/071029crbo_books_lepore?printable=true

WEEK ELEVEN (Nov. 24)**Antebellum Slavery: The Institution and Slave Life**

Book: Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619-1877* (Hill & Wang, 2003)

Articles:

Walter Johnson, "On Agency," *Journal of Social History* - Volume 37, Number 1, Fall 2003, pp. 113-124.
Project MUSE

Peter Kolchin, "Eugene D. Genovese: Historian of Slavery," *Radical History Review* - Issue 88, Winter 2004, pp. 52-67. *Project MUSE*

WEEK TWELVE (Dec. 1)**Causes of the Civil War**

Book: Kenneth Stampp, *Causes of the Civil War* (Simon & Schuster, 1992)

Article:

Gary J. Kornblith, "Rethinking the Coming of the Civil War: A Counterfactual Exercise," *Journal of American History*, 90 (June 2003), pp.76-105. *JSTOR*

Final Exam due in my office or office mailbox by 12:00 p.m., NOON, Tuesday, December 8.