

History 335-01

Colonial American History

William R. Ryan

wrryan@uncg.edu

919-672-7705

Wednesday 6:00-8:50 PM, MHRA 2211

Spring Semester 2008

Office hours: Monday 10AM-12PM, MHRA 2145

Course overview:

This course of study focuses on the portions of North American that ultimately became the United States. On a comparative basis we will look at other Spanish, French, and British North American and Caribbean colonial projects. Course readings and class time will give special attention to the genre of cultural history, and to the topics of family and gender, slavery, and revolution. Three themes will be especially important to our study:

(1) *Cultural encounters* are, in many ways, what the story of North America during this time is all about. We will look at contact between Native Americans and Europeans, between Europeans and Africans, between different European colonial projects and ideals, and finally between Anglo-American colonists and Britain. All of these encounters involved significant and sometimes sharp cultural conflict.

(2) *Colonialism and empire* are a second and related theme. Colonialism begs the cultural question: How is culture transported, transmitted, and transformed across time and space. With special attention to the English colonies, we will examine how different and similar they were from the 'mother country,' and the degree to which they replaced, replicated, and reformulated their 'Old World' traditions.

(3) Finally, we will examine *nationalism and national identity* as we look at the American Revolution and its aftermath. Rejecting conventional European understandings of nationalism and discarding the one thing they had in common (British rule), the thirteen 'American colonies' needed to construct a new understanding of what nationhood meant. The results set the stage for the promises and perennial problems of subsequent United States history.

Course goals:

- (1) To gain knowledge of the events, people and issues of this period, especially related to the three themes, above.
- (2) To identify various perspectives on a given event or topic and consider what historical sources tell us about the past and how we can interpret them in context.
- (3) To think historically, evaluate sources, consider contexts, construct arguments, and raise and answer counter-arguments.
- (4) To improve written and oral communication skills.

Policies:

- **Attendance** at all class meetings is expected. Because class participation is based on your responses to the readings, it will be difficult to do well in this course if you miss class. An attendance sheet will be circulated at the start of each class. Please do not come late. If you do arrive after the start of the lecture, enter the room quietly.
- Your questions about readings and other course-related issues are always welcome and usually prove helpful to us all. Your engagement and enthusiasm make a difference in what you can get out of the course and do not go unnoticed.
- Out of courtesy to others, plan on staying for the entire class period and **please do not talk in class, “text” your friends, or use electronic devices such as cell-phones or I-pods.**
- **Athletes and others** who must miss class meetings for travel on official university business are expected to provide me with a full schedule at the beginning of term *and* to remind me *before* each absence. Otherwise the absence will be considered unexcused. You are responsible for all the material covered in the classes you missed.
- **Cheating of any kind (including plagiarism) is not tolerated.** All students should review the UNC-G Community Standard and will be expected to abide by it in this class. If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism or cheating, please ask the professor. There is no penalty for asking.
- **Please do not eat food** during lectures unless you bring enough for everyone. Drinks are okay—just open them before we start.
- In order to receive **accommodation in support of a disability**, a student must contact the Office of Disability Services. Course requirements cannot be changed without documentation from ODS.

Quizzes (Best 10 of 14) 25%

Each quiz will cover all reading assignments since the previous quiz. Your reading quiz grade for the semester will be based upon your 10 best quiz scores. There are no make-ups for missed quizzes. We will generally (but not necessarily always) take quizzes during the first half of class and then have discussions on the readings. The quizzes will not resemble a trivia contest. I will ask a handful of questions that speak to the main points in the readings.

Class Participation 25%

This course revolves around discussions of the readings. I want each of you every week to think about what you read and come prepared to talk about the material. In a class this size, it will be obvious who is doing the readings and who is faking it...so please READ! Class discussions will be largely self-generated. Attendance is, therefore, mandatory. Missing more than 2 classes will have drastic consequences on participation grade.

Grading for all work will be out of 100. The undergraduate grading scale cut-offs are:

A+ 97 C 73
A 93 C- 70
A- 90 D+ 67
B+ 87 D 63
B 83 D- 60
B- 80 F 59
C+ 77

The final paper will analyze Mel Gibson's *The Patriot* in light of an academic article that I will post on Blackboard. The essay will be 4-5 pages in length.

The "breakdown" for grades is quite simple: 50% based on the quality of your quizzes and class participation/50% based on the quality of your final essay.

Schedule of readings:

- 1) **January 16:** Introduction
- 2) **January 23:** Read Richter 1-188
- 3) **January 30:** Read Richter 189-254
- 4) **February 6:** Read Fischer vii-xi, 3-11, 13-62, 68-93, 97-111, 117-30, 158-66, 174-205
- 5) **February 13:** Read Fischer 207-64, 274-306, 311-26, 368-73, 382-418
- 6) **February 20:** Read Fischer 419-75
- 7) **February 27:** Read Fischer 481-502, 507-17, 522-30, 560-66, 573-603
- 8) **March 5:** Read Fischer 605-55
- 9) **March 12: Spring Break—NO CLASS**
- 10) **March 19:** Read Fischer 662-83, 687-96, 703-15, 743-47, 754-82
- 11) **March 26:** Begin Reading Equiano and Countryman
- 12) **April 2:** Finish Equiano and Countryman
- 13) **April 9:** Read Wood 3-189
- 14) **April 16:** Read Wood 189-225
- 15) **April 23:** Read Fischer 828-34; Wood 229-70
- 16) **April 30:** Read Wood 279-369; Fischer 897-898

May 7: Final Paper Due