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HIST BC 3483
Fall 2015
Barnard Hall 302
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:10-5:25

Revolutionary America, 1763-1815



Few moments in American history are as well-known and well-studied as the decades leading up to and following the Revolutionary War and the 1787 Constitutional Convention. Over two centuries later, historians are still actively debating the causes, motives, and meanings surrounding the founding of the United States of America. This class will cover not just the famous events and leaders of the Revolution, but also their larger social, cultural, and intellectual contexts. Through readings of primary and secondary sources, we will chart the surprising and difficult transformation of thirteen diverse colonies into a single boisterous but fragile new nation. Major themes will include the Revolution's ideological and legal debates, its geopolitical ramifications, its class schisms, and its racial and gendered dimensions.

This is also a class about building skills in close reading, clear writing, and critical thinking. The goal of writing assignments (ten short forum posts and two longer papers) is to make sure you are prepared for class discussion, and for you to get a sense of how historians make arguments about the past. The book reviews in particular are to give us all a sense of the deep body of scholarly research on the Revolution. In our class discussions, you will be asked to voice your opinions, and encouraged to enter the headspace of people long gone. While lectures are designed to help you to learn key concepts, and some secondary readings will help summarize complex events, more than anything, this class is about listening to and learning from the real people who experienced these events.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will

- Critically evaluate secondary and primary sources through close reading and analysis.
- Understand how historians use textual evidence to construct narratives about the past.
- Interpret selections of primary and secondary sources and to construct original arguments from those sources in clear academic prose.

- Evaluate different accounts of the same event and adjudicate between varying interpretations of that event.
- Articulate textually-grounded arguments in written assignments, class discussions, presentations, and structured debates.

Evaluation

Participation (includes Q&Qs, debates, presentation)	30%
Primary Source Paper	20%
Book Review	20%
Mid-Term	10%
Final Exam	20%

You must have a passing grade in each of these elements to pass the course. You also must hand in all papers and take both the mid-term and final exams to pass.

If you are worried about your grade, be sure to talk to me *before the end of the course* so that I can make sure you complete all elements. I am always glad to help a struggling student who is honest and seeks help during the semester. However, once the class is over, I will not change failing grades.

General Deadlines and Requirements

10 Q&Qs (300+ words each). A Q&Q is a “Quotation and Question” post to be submitted on the Courseworks Discussion Board over the course of the semester. Q&Qs must be submitted *before* class to count. We’ll talk about how to approach these, but they are fairly straightforward: find a quotation (or more than one) from the reading to discuss, explain in a couple paragraph why you chose this quotation and what it can tell us—what makes it interesting, confusing, relevant, challenging, or surprising. Then pose a broader open-ended question for the rest of the class. You can look at this as a simple independent response or you can present your quotation and question as a response to a classmate’s post. While Q&Qs are given full credit for content and will not be graded as papers, please regard these posts as formal academic work—ie., please use standard capitalization, punctuation, grammar, spelling, and provide parenthetical page numbers for any quotations.

You may submit no more than five (5) Q&Qs before the mid-term exam—that is to say, you are not permitted to frontload all ten of your Q&Qs and forget about them for the remainder of the course.

Two longer papers, Due Oct. 13 and Nov. 17. For these papers, you will be divided into two groups: Group A (Last Name A-M), and Group B (Last Name N-Z).

1 Book Review (1000-1500 words, 4-6 double-spaced pages) due on October 13 (Group A) or November 17 (Group B).

1 Primary Source Paper (1500-2000 words, 6-8 double-spaced pages) due on October 13 (Group B) or November 17 (Group A).

Class Policies

Classroom Policies

1. **Attendance.** Attendance in all classes is essential to pass this course. The question-centered lectures are the main thread holding everything together, and you will be tested on the lectures' content. My attendance policy is simple: it's entirely on you, the student, to be responsible for your attendance. I also want to encourage you to befriend your fellow students to share and discuss notes.
2. **Office Hours.** My main office hours are Mondays 2-4, Lehman 420, while my unofficial office hours (better for quick chats) will be Thursday immediately after class. You can also schedule an appointment if neither of these times work. If you send me an email asking for summaries of class you missed or are going to miss for a planned absence like a religious observation or an athletic event, my response will always be the same: come talk to me in person during official and unofficial office hours.
3. **Participation.** Class discussions are the single best way for all of us—students and professor alike—to bring lectures and readings together into an ongoing conversation about history. Regular participation is mandatory for all, though I understand that some students are more naturally talkative than others. The quality of your participation is more important than the quantity. I also welcome questions in lecture and will sometimes ask you to contribute ideas during lectures.
4. **Classroom Respect.** This class only really works if everyone is respectful of everyone else. Therefore I ask you kindly to show up on time, only leave the class *if you are having a genuine bathroom emergency and take care to exit and enter the room like a ninja*. Otherwise, please just hang on—it's only 75 minutes. Please also refrain from chatting with neighbors during lecture, and most importantly, when another student is speaking. For my part, I may also need a little nudge now and again from you all to make sure I'm showing you proper respect. If I ever fail to explain a concept thoroughly, say something confusing and contradictory, or in any way simply goof as a teacher, please let me know. You can do this in class or after class, in person or in email, any way you feel is best. But please, if for whatever reason big or small, you're uncomfortable or frustrated with how something went in class, please let me know. I may not always be perfect, but I promise you, I certainly want to be alerted if you have a concern.
5. **Digital Devices.** Several studies of student learning and retention have demonstrated that students take in more information and gain a better grasp of course material when they take notes by hand and when digital devices are not in the classroom. With that in mind, computers, tablets, e-readers, phones, any device with a screen, are not allowed in lecture and may only be used sparingly during discussions, debates, or review sessions. The only exception allowed is for students who have a documented Barnard/Columbia accommodation to use digital device. (It has to be cleared through the student's home institution; I will not accept notes from doctors.) Students with laptop note-taking accommodations are required to sit in the front row, so that it is clear their screen is only being used for note-taking. I also ask that all of you, as a general courtesy, please print out the coursepacks and articles for discussions as well, or at the very least bring handwritten or printed notes. Studies on digital learning also suggest that reading comprehension and retention are vastly better when students read from printed pages.
6. **Communication.** For general queries about the class or assignments, please contact me at alipman@barnard.edu. In the unlikely event that I have not responded to your email within

48 hours, please send the email again, as I may have accidentally opened without replying and your email may have slid deep into the depths of my inbox. I also welcome anyone who wants to have a quick chat after lecture to come up and say hi, but I am usually not free to talk *before* lecture starts, as I need that time to prepare the board, ready my powerpoint, deal with any technical glitches, and review my notes.

7. **Academic Integrity.** The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity. Scholarship, by its very nature, is an iterative process, with ideas and insights building one upon the other. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars' work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited. In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent. Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community. It undermines our shared intellectual culture, and it cannot be tolerated. Students failing to meet these responsibilities should anticipate being asked to leave Barnard College or Columbia University.
8. **Disability-Related Accommodations:** In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations, students must first be registered with Disability Services (DS). More information on the DS registration process is available online at <http://barnard.edu/disabilityservices> or www.health.columbia.edu/ods. Faculty must be notified of registered students' accommodations before exam or other accommodations will be provided. Students who have (or think they may have) a disability are invited to contact Barnard or Columbia Disability Services for a confidential discussion.

Readings

Books available at Book Culture, 536 W. 112th St. (between Broadway and Amsterdam).

John Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark: The Struggle to Create the American Republic* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Woody Holton, ed., *Black Americans in the Revolutionary Era: A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Bedford St. Martin's Press, 2009).

All other readings, apart from your book review books, will be uploaded or linked on Courseworks.

Course Schedule

CP: Coursepack—The numbers after are meant to denote week number and day (i.e., CP 5.2 should be read before Week 5, Thursday class). Two Coursepacks, one for Part 1 and one for Part 2, will be posted on Courseworks as PDFs for you to download and print.

WMQ: The William and Mary Quarterly, the leading journal of early American history. PDFs of all articles will also be posted on Courseworks.

Part 1: The Path(s) To Independence

Week 1: In Fair America, Where We Lay Our Scene. Sept. 8, 10.

T: Why Study The American Revolution?

Th: What Was British America Like Before the Revolution? (1700-1750)

Reading: Excerpts from Alexander Hamilton, "The Itinerarium of Dr. Alexander Hamilton," CP 1.2.

Week 2: The Players and the Game. Sept. 15, 17.

T: How Did Politics Work in British America? (1700-1750)

Reading: Excerpts from the Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, the Diary of John Adams, the Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson, CP 2.1 A, B, C.

Th: What Was "The First British Empire"?

Reading: Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark*, preface, 1-22.

Washington, Advertisement for a Runaway Slave, CP 2.2.

Discussion of Book Review/Primary Source Paper Assignments and Expectations.

Week 3: The Ideas and Issues. Sept. 22, 24.

T: What Was The Enlightenment, and Why Does It Matter?

Reading: John Fea, "The Way of Improvement Leads Home: Philip Vickers Fithian's Rural Enlightenment," *Journal of American History* (Sept. 2003): 462-490.

Nicole Eustace, "The Sentimental Paradox: Humanity and Violence on the Pennsylvania Frontier," *WMQ*, 65.1 (Jan. 2008): 29-64.

Th: How Did the Imperial Crisis Begin? (1754-1765)

Reading: Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark*, 23-52.

The Stamp Act Documents, CP 3.2.

Week 4: Bostonians are Revolting. Sept. 29, Oct. 1.

T: In-Class Debate: The Stamp Act.

Th: Why Boston? (1770-1775).

Reading: Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark*, 53-122.

Week 5: The Civil War. Oct. 6, 8.

Th: Why Virginia? (1770-1775)

Reading: Patrick Henry, Speech to the Virginia House of Burgesses, March 23, 1775, Letter Regarding Dunmore's Proclamation, *Virginia Gazette*, Nov. 25, 1775, Excerpts from The Diary of Colonel Landon Carter, 1775-1777, CP1 5.1, A, B, C.

T: Why Independence? (1775-1776)
Reading: Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark*, 123-166.
Arguments for and against Independence, CP1 5.2.

Week 6: It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia. Oct. 13, 15.

T: How Did Independence Become Popular? (1776-1777)
Reading: Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark*, 167-207.
Group A Book Reviews and Group B Primary Source Papers are due at the start of class today. Book Reviews should also be posted to the Book Review Forum.

Th: Group A Book Review Presentations.
Reading: The Group A Book Reviews (see Forum).
Please come to class ready to ask your fellow students questions about their books.

Week 7: The Crucible of War. Oct. 20, 22.

T: Did the Declaration Create One Nation or Thirteen? (1775-1783)
Reading: Holton, *Black Americans in the Revolutionary Era*, 1-19, 25-70.

Th: Was the Revolutionary War an Insurgency? (1775-1783)
Reading: Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark*, 209-246.

Week 8: The Smoke Clears. Oct. 27, 29.

T: How Did The Americans Win the War? (1781-1783)
Reading: Please review all your lecture notes and all the assigned chapters in Ferling. We will be having a review session as part of class.

Th: In-Class Mid-Term Exam.

Part 2: The Continuing Revolution(s)

Week 9: The View From Outside. Nov. 3, 5.

T: What Happened To Loyalists? (1783-1800)
Reading: Maya Jasanoff, "The Other Side of Revolution: Loyalists in the British Empire," *WMQ* (Apr., 2008): 205-232.

Th: Was Revolution Internationally Contagious? (1789-1805)
Readings: Revolutionary Documents from France, Poland, and Haiti, CP 9.2.

Week 10: The Union Forever? Nov. 10, 12.

T: What's So Critical About the Critical Period?
Reading: Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark*, 247-280.

Crèvecoeur, Letter III: What Is An American?" CP 10.1.

Th: How Did The Constitution Get Written and Ratified? (1787-1788).

Reading: Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark*, 281-313.

Excerpts from the Constitution; James Madison, Federalist No. 10. CP 10.2 A, B.

Week 11: The In-Fighting Begins. Nov. 17, 19

T: How Did Political Parties Begin? (1792-1800)

Group B Book Reviews and Group A Primary Source Papers are due at the start of class today. Book Reviews should also be posted to the Book Review Discussion Forum.

Reading: Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark*, 314-404.

Th: Group B Book Review Presentations

Reading: Group B Book Reviews (see Discussion Forum on Courseworks).

Week 12: Created Equal? Nov. 23.

T: Did The Revolution Change Gender Relations? (1789-1815)

Reading: Excerpts from Letters of Abigail Adams, 1775-1800; Mary Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Women, 1792., CP 12.1 A, B.

Jan Lewis, "The Republican Wife: Virtue and Seduction in the Early Republic," *WMQ* (Oct. 1987): 689-721.

T: Thanksgiving Break. Pursue Happiness.

Week 13: The Changing Continent. Dec. 1, 3.

T: Why Did Slavery End in the North and Expand in the South? (1789-1815)

Reading: Holton, ed. *Black Americans in the Age of the American Revolution*, 71-140.

Th: What Did the Revolution Mean to Native Americans?

Reading: Ferling, *A Leap in the Dark*, 405-488.

Sources on Native Conversion and Battle of Fallen Timbers. CP 13.2

Week 14: One Revolution or Many? Dec. 8, 10.

T: Who Shall Write the History of the Revolution? (July 4, 1826)

Reading: Alfred F. Young, "George Robert Twelves Hewes (1742-1840): A Boston Shoemaker and the Memory of the American Revolution," *WMQ* (Oct., 1981): 561-623.

Th: Final Review.

Final Exam.