

## **History 780: Culture and Society in Early America**

Fall Semester 2004. Wednesdays 4:10-6:55 pm

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Office hours: by appointment

During the past four decades, the field of Early American History has been transformed as scholars have adopted new methods, asked fresh questions, and explored previously neglected themes. Early Americanists have produced some of the most influential work in the new social history. Few areas of historical study have undergone such extensive or exciting changes. This course will explore the history of colonial America by examining the most important recent historiographical debates. We will investigate the relationship among slavery, race, and class in the development of the colonial societies. We will engage with works that use social science methods of demographic reconstruction to reinterpret the colonies' social development. We will explore the dynamic interplay among religion, politics, and society. We will study the role of gender in defining people's identities and social careers. Related to gender, but distinct from it as a subject of historical inquiry, we will look at the varied experiences of women in the colonial societies. Historical geography will enable us to trace the emergence of interconnected but distinctive sociocultural regions and political communities. It will also provide the conceptual tools to analyze the problems of empire-building, imperial expansion, and the historical processes by which imperialism and colonialism may beget nationalism. The objective of this course is not only to understand the history of the colonial era, but also to reflect critically on how historians do their work.

### **Requirements:**

**Essays:** Each student will write three critical historiographical essays based on the readings. Each essay will be 8-10 typewritten pages in length. Each week individual students or pairs of students will lead the discussion.

**Grading:** Each essay will count for 25% of the course grade. Leadership in class discussions will count for the other 25% of the course grade.

### **Readings:**

Berkin, Carol. **First Generations: Women in Colonial America** (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996).

Berlin, Ira. **Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America** (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 1998).

Bonomi, Patricia U. **Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion and Politics in Colonial America** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

Brown, Kathleen M. **Good Wives, Nasty Wenches & Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia** (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1996).

Bushman, Richard L. **The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities** (New York: Random House, 1993).

Greven, Philip J., Jr. **Four Generations: Population, Land, and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts** (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970).

Hall, David, **Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgement: Popular Religion in Early New England** (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

Hoffer, Peter Charles. **Law and People in Colonial America** (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, revised edition 1998).

Lockridge, Kenneth A. **A New England Town: The First Hundred Years, Dedham, Massachusetts, 1636-1736** (New York: W.W. Norton, 1970).

Meinig, D.W. **The Shaping of America. Volume I: 1492-1800** (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

Morgan, Edmund. **American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia** (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975).

Nash, Gary B. **The Urban Crucible: The Northern Seaports and the Origins of the American Revolution** (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

Richter, Daniel K. **Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America** (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

**Essays:** (on reserve – password: pilgrim):

Galenson, David. "Settlement and Growth of the Colonies: Population, Labor, and Economic Development." In Stanley L. Engerman and Robert Gallman, eds. **The Cambridge Economic History of the United States: The Colonial Era. Volume 1** (New York: Cambridge University Press), 135-208.

Greene, Jack P. "'A Posture of Hostility': A Reconsideration of Some Aspects of the Origins of the American Revolution." **American Antiquarian Society Proceedings**, 87, Part I (1977): 27-68..

Greene, Jack P. "An Uneasy Connection, an Analysis of the Preconditions of the American Revolution." In Stephen Kurtz and James Hutson, eds. **Essays on the American Revolution** (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 32-80.

Murrin, John M. "Political Development." In Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole, eds. **Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era** (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

Nash, Gary B. "The Social Development of Colonial America." In Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole, eds. **Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era** (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

Richards, Eric. "Scotland and the Uses of the Atlantic Empire," and A. G. Roeber, "'The Origin of Whatever Is Not English among Us': The Dutch-speaking and the German-speaking Peoples of Colonial British America," both in Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan, eds, **Strangers within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire** (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1991), 67-114, 220-83.

Vaughan, Alden. "The Origins Debate: Slavery and Racism in 17th Century Virginia." **Virginia Magazine of History and Biography** 97 (July 1989): 311-354; and **Roots of American Racism: Essays on the Colonial Experience**. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

## **Schedule**

WEEK 1: August 25. **Introduction**

WEEK 2: September 1. **Building Empires: Cultural Conflict, Cultural Negotiation**

Meinig, **Shaping of America**, pp. 1-250

WEEK 3: September 8. **Slavery, Class, and Racism**

Morgan, **American Slavery, American Freedom**

Vaughan, "The Origins Debate"

WEEK 4: September 15. **Race and Gender in the 18th-Century Chesapeake**

Brown, **Good Wives, Nasty Wenches & Anxious Patriarchs**

WEEK 5: September 22. **Limitation or Liberation? Colonial Women's Experience**

Berkin, **First Generations**

WEEK 6: September 29. **Errand into the Wilderness**

Hall, **World of Wonders, Days of Judgement**

## **FIRST ESSAY DUE**

WEEK 7: October 6. **Family and Patriarchy**

Greven, **Four Generations**

WEEK 8: October 13. **Social History: New England**

Lockridge, **A New England Town**

WEEK 9: October 20. **Population, Labor, Law**

Galenson, "Settlement and Growth"

Hoffer, **Law and People in Colonial America**

Richards, "Scotland and the Uses of the Atlantic Empire"

Roeber, "'The Origin of Whatever Is Not English among Us'"

WEEK 10: October 27. **Forced Labor, Communities of Resistance: the African-American Experience**

Berlin, **Many Thousands Gone**

WEEK 11: November 3. **Frontiers of American Empire**

Richter, Daniel K. **Facing East from Indian Country**

**SECOND ESSAY DUE**

WEEK 12: November 10. **Material Life and American Identities**

Bushman, **The Refinement of America**

WEEK 13: November 17. **The Emergence of an American Religious System**

Bonomi, **Under the Cope of Heaven**

WEEK 14: November 24. **THANKSGIVING**. No Class.

WEEK 15: December 1. **The Maturation of the Colonies: Economy, Politics, and Society**

Murrin, "Political Development"

Nash, "The Social Development of Colonial America"

Nash, **The Urban Crucible**

WEEK 16: December 8. **The Art of Deconstructing an Empire**

Greene, "A Posture of Hostility"

Greene, "An Uneasy Connection"

Meinig, **Shaping of America**, pp. 251-454

December 15. **THIRD ESSAY DUE**