

History 300  
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## SYLLABUS

The purpose of this course is to familiarize you with the techniques of writing and evaluating history. As an apprentice historian, you will learn something of the craft of the profession: together, we will examine how to gather, evaluate, and use historical materials and data; we will investigate several of the varieties of history and historical explanation; and you will engage in your own historical exploration.

To achieve the goals of this course, we will focus on the last quarter of eighteenth century American history, particularly the events surrounding July 4, 1776—on this day, King George III wrote in his diary, “nothing of importance happened.” But in fact a political, intellectual, and social revolution was in the making, and the world, not just North America, would never be the same again. We shall attempt to come to some understanding of types of scholarly issues in and approaches to this period, and in so doing, to come to a better understanding of both the nature of history and how to write it.

### Reading List:

Turabian, K., *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*

Stern, F., *The Varieties of History*

Rakove, Jack N., *Founding America: Documents from the Revolution to the Bill of Rights*

You will **not** be tested on any of the readings in this course. The purpose of the reading is to provide you with a background to the period and its historiographic problems. Some of the reading will aid you in areas of technique and mechanics, while other reading is designed to pose questions which you may not have thought of before. In sum, the materials are meant to arouse your intellectual interest and to provide a basis for class discussion.

### Grading Procedures:

You will be evaluated on the basis of both your oral and written work. Since the course will be conducted in the form of a seminar as much as possible, you will be expected to attend every session. All written work should be turned in on time: late work will be penalized, and work over a week late will not be accepted for a grade.

**Oral Work:** (15%) Class participation, including an oral report on a secondary source.

**Written Work:** (85%)

1. **Diagnostic Essays.** (10%) (a) Write a *very* short one to two page essay in which you explain how Herodotus (p. 10 of your “Ways of Remembering and Recording the Past” handout) differs from any ONE of the other selections in how he presents or explains the past. **Due: September 5.**

(b) Write a *short* expository essay (3-4 pages) on **one** of the following topics: Hofstadter carefully distinguishes history from the social sciences--how valid and important do you think his distinctions are for the historian? *Why?* **OR** Hofstadter assigns a critical role to the social sciences in the writing of history--*why* do you think he is (or is not) right to do this? The purpose of both of these assignments is for you begin thinking about the nature of history and of the historian's enterprise, and for me to get a sense of you as a writer of good English prose. **Due: September 17.**

2. **Secondary Source Criticism.** (15%) In class everyone will choose a secondary source from one of the varieties of history listed in Part II. You will give an oral report on and write a critical review of that particular work. You should identify the author's thesis and evaluate **both** the techniques used to demonstrate that thesis (e.g., the use of evidence, methodology or approach, diction, assumptions, and organization) **and** the possible contributions to history you think the author has made. For more details, see the hand-out on secondary source criticism. REMEMBER: THIS ESSAY IS AN ANALYSIS, **NOT** A BOOK REPORT--analyze the work, do not summarize it. The purpose of this assignment is to help you retrieve what is valuable in another work and to avoid the problems of that work in your own writing. Your essay should be approximately **five pages** in length. **Due: October 22.**

3. **Primary Source Analysis.** (15%) Using the contents of one of the two documents to be passed out later for your examples and illustrations, write an expository essay on the following topic: How useful are **either** public documents **or** private documents for the historian when writing any **two** of the following types of history--political, economic, social, or intellectual. Use as much of the contents of the document as you can in your essay. For more details see the hand-out on primary source analysis. The purpose of this assignment is to help you think creatively and imaginatively about primary sources, both as to their uses and their limitations. Your essay should be approximately **five pages** in length. **Due: November 9.**

4. **A Historical Practicum.** (45%) Your final research project consists of two parts, (1) writing a research abstract (with bibliography) [10%], and, (2) analyzing a set of documents concerning the 4th of July 1776 [35%]:

(1) **The Research Abstract.** Write a short paragraph in which you present an abstract of a research proposal for a **potential** seminar paper on any aspect of the period 1775 to 1800; include a two to three page working bibliography with your proposal.

(2) **Document Analysis.** 8-10 pages in length. In addition to Rakove, I will provide you with a set of documents on 1775-6. From these documents you will write a paper on the significance of July 4, 1776 on the course of the Revolution.

More details on both parts of this assignment will be forthcoming. The purpose of this two-part assignment is to have you use, in a concrete way, the various skills and concepts that you have learned over the course of the semester. **Please submit TWO copies of your final assignment.**

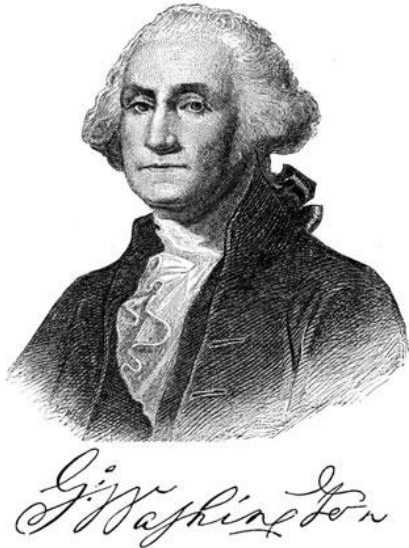
**Due Date: December 17.** Late papers will **not** be accepted. In general, an incomplete will only be given on the basis of a bona fide emergency.]

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Writing is hard work. One has to sit down on that chair and think and transform thought into readable, conservative, interesting sentences and paragraphs that both

make sense and make the reader turn the page. It is laborious, slow, often painful, sometimes agony. It means rearrangement, revision, adding, cutting, rewriting. But it brings a sense of excitement, almost of rapture—a moment on Olympus. In short, it is an act of creation.

—Barbara Tuchman



## THE COURSE

### **PART I: AN INTRODUCTION TO HISTORICAL THINKING**

1. Aug. 29- Sept. 11: **The Origins and Nature of History**

[All the readings are from Fritz Stern, *Varieties of History*]

von Ranke, pp. 54-62

Turner, pp. 198-208

Huizinga, pp. 289-303

Hofstadter, pp. 359-370

Our discussion will focus on the von Ranke, Huizinga, and Hofstadter articles; also read Rakove, *Founding America*, pp. xi-xxv, 20-35

2. Sept. 12-21: **The Logic and Science of History**

Rakove, *Founding America*, pp. 37-44, 51-59, 65-75, 77-90

An essay by Elkins and McKittrick (to be passed out later)

3. Sept. 22-31: **The Art of History**

Macauly, pp. 71-89

Trevelyan, pp. 227-245

## **PART II: THE VARIETIES OF HISTORY AND HISTORICAL EXPLANATION**

### **1. Oct. 1-7: Political and Military History—The Narrative v. The Monograph**

[Everyone: Namier, pp. 371-386]

*Narrative histories:*

David McCullough, *1776*

Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789*

Edmund S. Morgan, *The Birth of the Republic, 1763-89*

Richard B. Morris, *The Forging of the Union, 1781-1789*

Stanley Weintraub, *Iron Tears: America's Battle for Freedom, Britain's Quagmire*

*Monographs:*

Colin Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country*

F.W. Marks, *Independence on Trial: Foreign Affairs and the Making of the Constitution*

Pauline Maier, *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence*

Gary Nash, *The Forgotten Fifth: African Americans in the Age of the American Revolution*

Jack Rakove, *The Beginnings of National Politics*

### **2. Oct. 8-14: Social History, Old and "New"**

[Everyone: Braudel, pp. 403-429]

Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West*

Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs*

Robert A. Gross, *The Minutemen and their World*

James H. Merrell, *The Indians' New World: The Catawbas and their Neighbors*

Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women*

Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution*

James Sidbury, *Ploughshares into Swords: Race, Rebellion, and Identity in Gabriel's Virginia*

Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*

Laurel Ulrich, *The Mid-Wife's Tale: The Diary of Martha Ballard*

### **3. Oct. 15-21: An Interlude: Evidence--Documents and their Analysis**

Rakove, *Founding America*, 115-141, 233-240 [Discussion Focus: Declaration of Independence]

### **4. Oct. 22-28: Biography and History**

[Everyone: Carlyle, pp. 90-107]

F. Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson* (a psychohistory)

Joseph Ellis, *His Excellency: George Washington*

Joseph Ellis, *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation*

Paul Longmore, *Inventing George Washington*

David McCullough, *John Adams*

Robert Middlekauff, *Franklin and His Enemies*

Gordon S. Wood, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*

5. Oct. 29-Nov. 4: **Cultural and Intellectual History**

[Everyone: Barzun, pp. 387-402]

Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*

Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*

Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*

Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, and Cities*

C. Dallett Hemphill, *Bowing to Necessities: A History of Manners in America, 1620-1860*

Forrest McDonald, *Novus Ordo Seclorum: The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution*

William L. Miller, *The Business of May Next: James Madison and the Founding*

Mechal Sobel, *The World They Made Together: Black and White Values in Eighteenth Century Virginia*

**PART III: RESEARCH AND WRITING—THE PRACTICUM**

1. Nov. 5-9: **Stage One: Identifying the Problem--Research Topics and Research Designs**

2. Nov. 10-16: **Stage Two: The Library and the Bibliography**

Turabian

**Thanksgiving Recess: November 17-25**

3. Nov. 26-Dec. 5: **Stage Three: Writing--The Footnote, Form and Function**

Turabian

4. Dec. 6-17: **Writing, cont.: Technical Problems and Conclusions**

***FINAL PAPER DUE: December 17***



*Signing the Declaration of Independence*