

HIST 4317.W01: The American Revolution

PROFESSOR: DR. WILLIAMSON

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OFFICE HOURS:

<i>DAY</i>	<i>TIME</i>	<i>LOCATION</i>
Mondays	9am-12pm	UC 212
Tuesdays	12:30-2pm	LH 211
Wednesdays	9am-12pm	UC 212
Thursdays	12:30-2pm	LH 211
Fridays	9am-12pm	UC 212

Course Objectives:

This course examines what historians have called America's dual revolution. The first of these is what typically comes to mind when people think about the American Revolution: the independence movement against Great Britain to establish "home rule." The second revolution developed in tandem with the first: an internal contest between different groups of Americans to decide "who shall rule at home." Although this course covers the independence movement in depth, the primary focus is on the internal revolution. In particular, it explores the different ways people defined words like "freedom" and "independence" and the various hopes they brought to the cause. The goal is to understand what the Revolution meant to prominent "founding fathers" such as Thomas Jefferson and John Adams as well as the aspirations of ordinary people: farmers, artisans, women, slaves, and Indians. At issue is how these different visions of the revolution interacted: how they meshed peacefully or collided violently. When collisions happened, the question becomes whose visions "won" and "lost" and why things ended as they did and all of the resulting fallout in the form of changes, compromises, and layers of irony. This course traces all of this over the Revolution's expansive terrain: from the initial conflicts with Great Britain; to the wrenching experiences of the War for Independence; to the post-war tensions over the direction of the Revolution, the extension of democracy, rights, and liberties, and the creation of new governments. By the end of the course, students will have a better understanding of the Revolution's causes, its major events, its accomplishments, and its shortcomings.

Each week, you will be expected to participate in discussion in detail the assigned readings for the week. Through this analysis, we will examine the content presented by the authors as well as the evidence upon which they base their arguments. We will also discuss how each work fits within ongoing historical debates about the topic and/or theme of the readings. You must contribute to each week's discussion by voicing your ideas and opinions, supporting them with evidence, and responding constructively to the ideas of your peers.

Student Learning Outcomes

The graduating student in history will be able to:

1. The student will be able to develop an informed, critical, and articulate approach to the study of history.
2. The student will be able to demonstrate knowledge of historical events, movements, major turning points and personalities of the past.
3. The student will be able to demonstrate an ability to identify and relate the role that historical interpretation plays in assessments of the past.

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4. The student will be able to write effectively, logically, and persuasively about topics in history.
5. The student will be able to communicate information, arguments, ideas effectively.

Course Content Note

At times this semester we will be discussing historical events that may be disturbing, even traumatizing, to some students. If you suspect that specific material is likely to be emotionally challenging for you, I'd be happy to discuss any concerns you may have before the subject comes up in class. Likewise, if you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to course material with the class or with me individually afterwards, I welcome such discussions as an appropriate part of our classwork.

If you ever feel the need to step outside during a class discussion you may always do so without academic penalty. You will, however, be responsible for any material you miss. If you do leave the room for a significant time, please plan to get notes from another student or see me individually to discuss the situation.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- This is an online course, which means that you **must** have regular, reliable access to a working computer with internet. Students are responsible for checking email and the Blackboard site on a regular basis to access course materials and information.
- Though this class will not meet face-to-face, we will still be covering an entire semester's worth of material. You must be both able and willing to put in the necessary time and effort to do well in the course.
- Think of this course like joining a gym—you get out what you put in. As your professor, it is my responsibility to make sure you know how to use the equipment and to assist you when you need a spotter. Meanwhile, it is your responsibility to engage with the course materials, put in the work, and complete the assignments by the designated due dates. The grade you earn is determined by the quality of your effort, not necessarily the time you spend.
- **This is a Writing-Intensive Course** intended to introduce you to the practice of history. History is an analytical discipline. While facts and dates are indeed important, alone they do not allow us to understand the past in a meaningful fashion. Among other things, history is the art of mustering evidence to make an argument or arguments about the past in as compelling a manner as possible. If you engage the course material in a meaningful way, this class will help you to read more carefully, think more critically, and write more eloquently.

Required Texts

- Carol Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers: Women in the Struggle for America's Independence* (New York: Vintage, 2006).
- Woody Holton, *Black Americans in the Revolutionary Era: A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009).

GRADES

A 90-100% **B** 80-89% **C** 70-79% **D** 60-69% **F** 59% or lower

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- **Discussion & Participation (30%)**—Students are expected to post at least one original comment on the weekly discussion boards AND post a minimum one comment in response to another student in the course, for each discussion board. Students who do not participate in the discussion boards will not receive credit for that week's assignments.
- **Scholarly Book Reviews (20%)**—Students will write and submit précis, or scholarly book reviews, over each of the assigned texts AND one scholarly texts of their choosing (must be relevant to the course themes/topics), for a total of 3 précis submissions. Each review will be 2-3 pages in length, double-spaced, with 12-point font and 1" margins on all sides.
 - A précis should summarize a given book or article's argument, scope, and methodology as clearly and concisely as possible. Some reviews may require students to write a comparative analysis of multiple readings at the discretion of the professor. These reviews should evaluate the effectiveness of the monograph or article(s) as well as its limitations. Précis should be 2-3 full, double-spaced page, in 12-point Times New Roman font, with one-inch margins all around. For examples of a scholarly review (otherwise known as a précis), see: www.h-net.org/reviews/home/php
 - The purpose of a review is to both summarize the book's or article's contents and, more importantly, to critically evaluate its contribution to knowledge, both factual and historiographical. The reviewer's first priority is to critically appraise each book; to analyze it on its own terms, to discuss what it did and did not do, what sort of evidence the author used and how well, what its strengths and weaknesses were. *Be sure to point out the thesis of each book and whether or not the author presented a supported a persuasive argument.* Also ascertain what kind of historiographical context (if any) the author provided—in other words, how did the author's work fit into a broader body of historical literature? If the author did not do this, hold them to task. For examples of scholarly book reviews, see: www.h-net.org/reviews
Late submissions will not be accepted without documentation.
- **Historiography Paper (30%)**—You will complete a 10-12-page historiographical research paper on the topic of your choice.
 - You will consult with the professor about possible paper topics prior to making your final decision. You may choose any subject relevant to the theme and chronology of this course.
 - This essay must have a strong, coherent thesis statement, which will be supported by a minimum 10 scholarly sources, such as peer-reviewed, scholarly books or journal articles. These may include works from the required, supplemental, and/or recommended reading lists.
 - Papers must be typed or word-processed in 12-point fonts (Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri), double-spaced, with one-inch margins all around. Not included in the page count are a cover/title page before the essay and a works cited/bibliography page that follows.
 - All papers will be evaluated on style and content and therefore should be well-written and free of grammatical errors. Papers that are not formatted according to guidelines and requirements will be dropped one letter grade.
 - It is expected that each of you will consult with the professor via email and/or scheduled appointments to discuss possible paper topics prior to making your final decisions. You may choose any subject relative to the theme of this seminar, and your papers must be based on both primary and secondary sources. You will be required to include at least ten scholarly sources in your final paper.

Papers will be evaluated on the following points:

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- strength of your historical arguments and content
- how well you have used historical evidence to support your arguments?
- composition (i.e., spelling, grammar, sentence structure)
- form (i.e., correct citation)

THE 5 C'S OF HISTORICAL REASONING

1. **Change and Continuity:** Historians debate what has changed over time and what has remained the same. Change can be a dramatic pivot or a slow shift.
2. **Causation:** Historians debate the causes of historical events. Actually, it would be more accurate to say that we often discuss about causality, sometimes passionately. Few events have only one cause (monocausal), so we debate with one another about which cause should be considered the most important.
3. **Context:** Historians insist that the past must be understood on its own terms. Any historical event, person, idea must be placed in the context of its historical era to be interpreted. The historian's goal is to discover how people in the past understood their own lives, which is often quite different from how we may react to their situation.
4. **Contingency and Connections:** Historians are aware that events happen for a variety of reasons, which are often interconnected. Change one factor, and the event might not have happened at all. This idea helps us to remember that historical events are not inevitable.
5. **Complexity:** Historical reasoning is not about memorizing dates and names. It is about making sense of the messiness of the past, in all its complexity. That often means recognizing that different historical groups experienced events in different ways.

****ALL FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE BY ****

Academic Honesty

The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of their classroom. The University may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. "Cheating" includes:

1. Copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files, data listings, and/or programs, or allowing another student to copy from same.
2. Using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test.
3. Collaborating, without authorization, with another person during an examination or in preparing academic work.
4. Knowingly, and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying, or possessing, in whole or in part, the contents of a non-administered test.
5. Substituting for another student; permitting any other person, or otherwise assisting any other person to substitute for oneself or for another student in the taking of an examination or test or the preparation of academic work to be submitted for academic credit.
6. Bribing another person to obtain a non-administered test or information about a non-administered test.

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7. Purchasing, or otherwise acquiring and submitting as one's own work any research paper or other writing assignment prepared by an individual or firm. This section does not apply to the typing of a rough and/or final version of an assignment by a professional typist.
8. "Plagiarism" means the appropriation and the unacknowledged incorporation of another's work or idea in one's own written work offered for credit.
9. "Collusion" means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit.
10. "Abuse of resource materials" means the mutilation, destruction, concealment, theft or alteration of materials provided to assist students in the mastery of course materials.
11. "Academic work" means the preparation of an essay, dissertation, thesis, report, problem, assignment, or other project that the student submits as a course requirement or for a grade.
12. "Falsification of Data" means the representation, claim, or use of research, data, statistics, records, files, results, or information that is falsified, fabricated, fraudulently altered, or otherwise misappropriated or misrepresented.



All academic dishonesty cases may be first considered and reviewed by the faculty member. If the faculty member believes that an academic penalty is necessary, he/she may assign a penalty but must notify the student of his/her right to appeal to the department chair, the dean and eventually, to the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs before imposition of the penalty. At each step in the process, the student shall be entitled to written notice of the offense and/or of the administrative decision, an opportunity to respond, and an impartial disposition as to the merits of his/her case. The decision of the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs shall be final.

Please read the complete policy at

http://www.sulross.edu/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/users/docs/stulife/student_conduct_discipline.pdf

Student Resources

ADA

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request.

Students seeking accessibility services must contact:

Location: Ferguson Hall 112

Telephone: 432-837-8691

E-mail: counseling@sulross.edu

Mailing Address: P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832

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Students should then contact the instructor as soon as possible to initiate the recommended accommodations.

Counseling and Psychological Services.

Provides counseling services and offers other services to students in need.

Location: Ferguson Hall 112. Hours: M-F 8am-12pm and 1pm-5pm. Phone: (432) 837-8203.

Email: counseling@sulross.edu

Web: <http://www.sulross.edu/section/2408/counseling-accessibility-services>

Please contact Counseling & Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall (Suite 112) at 432.837.8203; mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832.

Commitment to Classroom Environment

I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives, and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.). I also understand that the recent crises of COVID, economic disparity, and health concerns could impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create an inclusive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

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Tentative Course Schedule

PART I: Making the Revolution

Week 1 (Monday, Aug. 28-Sunday, Sept. 03): Introductions & What IS a revolution?

Course Introductions

What IS a revolution?

Reading:

What *is* a revolution? & Historiography of the American Revolution (in Blackboard)

Week 2 (September 04-10): Power in Colonial America—Class & Gender

Consider: How did the thirteen colonies fit into the British empire on the eve of revolution? Who held power in America before 1776? How democratic was life under British rule? How did ordinary people express their grievances?

What social roles were men and women expected to play during the colonial period? How much power and influence did women have?

Reading:

Documents on Power in Colonial America (in Blackboard)

Reflections: What do these documents reveal about power relations underlying class and gender relations in colonial America?

Week 3 (September 11-17): Race in Colonial America

Consider: What were the lives of Native Americans and African Americans like in British North America? How were race relations governed?

Week 4 (September 18-24): Great Awakening and the French and Indian War

Consider: How did religious revival help to spark the American Revolution? How did the French and Indian War (aka The Seven Years' War) serve as a catalyst for the American Revolution? How did British policies after the French and Indian War affect the economy and convince colonists that they were oppressed?

Reading:

Discussion of Berkin, *Revolutionary Mothers*. **Paper due by 11:59pm Sunday, September 24th.**

Week 5 (September 25-October 01): Economic Origins of the American Revolution

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Consider: How did the crisis with Britain trigger conflict between Americans along class lines? How did Native Americans and enslaved African Americans pushing for their own notions of freedom deepen the conflict between Britain and the colonies?

Week 6: (October 02-08): Topic Presentations and Discussions

Students must be prepared to present their paper topics, tentative scope, and reading lists to the class for open discussion and constructive feedback.

Tentative Proposal of Historiography Paper due in Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, October 8th.

Your statement should be typed, in complete sentences, and should briefly explain your 1) topic, 2) your methods (approach, what types of sources will you use), 3) a tentative argument, 4) what you think you will find, and 5) a tentative works cited of both primary and secondary sources, cited in Chicago Manual of Style format.

Week 7 (October 09-15): Empire & Rebels

Consider: What crises led the colonies to war with Great Britain? How was the Revolution organized? What was the relationship between the founding elite and “the people”? How was resistance mobilized at the local, colony, and continental levels and coordinated between those levels? When war broke out, who chose which side and why?

Week 8 (October 16-22): MIDTERM EXAM due to Bb by 11:59pm Sunday, Oct. 22nd

PART II: Tying Up the Revolution

Week 9 (October 23-29): Ideologies of Independence

Consider: What were the keywords of the Revolution? How did different Americans define terms like “liberty,” “equality,” and “independence”? How were those ideals reflected in the Revolutionary governments in 1776? How “revolutionary” were the changes many people were calling for by 1776?

Week 10 (October 30-November 05): Turning Points and Tough Times

Consider: Why did the colonies do so poorly at the beginning of the war? How, when, and why did the tide of war shift in the colonies’ favor? Despite the shift, what problems continued to make it difficult to wage war? How and why did the colonies ultimately defeat the British?

Assignment: Revolutionary War Pension Applications
<http://www.usgarchives.net/pensions/revwar/index.htm>

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Question: This link takes you to a website filled with transcribed pension applications from Revolutionary War veterans and their widows. Most of the applications were filed under 1818 and 1832 pension laws that sought to address the issue of poverty among veterans of the War for Independence. The applications also serve as a window into the postwar lives of the soldiers and their families. Use a minimum of FIVE pension files to draw some conclusions about the wartime and postwar experiences of the men who fought the Revolutionary War and their families. Bear in mind that not every file is a good one to use: many are incomplete and provide little detail about wartime or postwar service. Choose carefully!

Week 11 (November 06-12): Counter-Revolution & The Federalist Era

Consider: How did Americans differ on their understandings of “rights”? How did popular political reforms and mass resistance threaten the founding elite and lead to calls for a stronger and less-democratic national government as a “stronger barrier against democracy”? How did the Federalists try to reshape the social, political, and economic landscape of the new republic, and how successful were their efforts?

Week 12 (November 13-19): The Election of 1800 & Black Americans in the Revolutionary Era

Consider: Who were the Jeffersonians and how revolutionary was their “Revolution of 1800”? In what ways did African Americans participate in the events of the 1760s-1780s and the war for independence? How did the revolution challenge the institution of slavery and what was the legacy of that challenge in the decades that followed? What did the Revolution mean for slaves North and South?

Reading:

Woody Holton, *Black Americans in the Revolutionary Era: A Brief History with Documents*. **Paper due by 11:59pm Sunday, November 19th.**

Week 13 (November 20-26): Gender & Race in the New Republic

Consider: Was there a revolution for women? In what ways was life the same for white women before and after the Revolution, and what changes did the Revolution bring for women? How and why did the Seneca accommodate the new order that the United States was trying to impose on them and what were the results? How did other Native American peoples resist and what were the results?

Week 14 (November 27-December 03): The Battle Over History of the Revolution

Consider: How has historical and popular understanding of the American Revolution changed over time? Why is the American Revolution you learn about in college so different from the one you learned about in grade school?

Supplemental Book Review due by 11:59pm Sunday, December 3rd.

Week 15 (December 04-10): Semester Wrap Up

FINAL PAPERS DUE to BLACKBOARD by 11:59pm Sunday, December 10th