

**History 405:
The Age of the American Revolution, 1750-1789
Spring 2021
Online**

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Office Hours: Virtual

Course Description

In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson proclaimed that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights,” and if denied, the “People” had the right to create a new government. Long before Jefferson’s words inspired the colonists to rebel, imperial clashes for control of the vast North American continent planted the seed of revolution. This course will explore how what started as a demand for political representation quickly turned into a battle for emancipation. Yet solidarity among the colonists was far from assured as social, economic, and political divisions threatened to rip the young nation apart before it was even established. The colonists united long enough to drive out the British, but these fissures remained and had an indelible effect on the shape of America’s new government. In addition to examining these aspects of the revolutionary era, this course will look at how the ideals of liberty and freedom espoused by the Founders were experienced by slaves, American Indians, and women.

Course Structure & Requirements

- 1.) **Discussion Posts: 10%**
- 2.) **Primary Source Analyses: 20%**
- 3.) **Quizzes: 25%**
- 4.) **Essay Exams: Midterm Exam: 20% / Final Exam: 25%**

Grading Scale

93-100 = A 90-92 = A- 89-87 = B+ 86-83 = B 82-80 = B- 79-77 = C+

76-73 = C 72-70 = C- 69-67 = D+ 66-63 = D 63-60 = D- 60 > = F

Primary Source Analyses

You will be required to complete **FOUR** primary source analyses throughout the semester using at least four of the assigned documents from the week when the essay is due. Each analysis should be about 750 words, or 2 to 3 pages, excluding footnotes. In these analyses, you should describe the arguments of the documents. You may want to quote particular phrases in the document and then explain their significance. However, use direct quotes sparingly. The next section should contextualize the document. Explain what it tells you about the time during which it was written. What do we learn about American society, politics, and culture from the different perspectives offered in each document? What contrasting or similar goals did the writers have in mind?

You do not need to include an introductory or concluding paragraph. However, you should begin your essay with a 1-2 sentence thesis statement. Your thesis should aim to show how the documents are related to one another by highlighting the arguments presented in the collection of documents you are using in your analysis.

All work must be double-spaced in Times New Roman 12-point font; have one-inch margins on each side; and include page numbers. All sources must be cited using an abbreviated form of the Chicago Manual of Style guidelines for footnotes (Author, "Title of Work," Year (if available), Pg. #).

Discussion Post Requirements

You will be required to complete **THREE** sets of discussion posts throughout the semester. To access the discussion forums, go to the Canvas course site, and then select the "Discussions" module. The current week's discussion questions will be available under "Pinned Discussions." Before participating in the discussions, I strongly encourage you to read the "Discussion Post Grading Rubric & Guide," which you can reach by selecting "Modules" on the Canvas course site and looking under the Course Materials module.

The discussion forums are designed to prepare you for the type of thinking and analysis required on the primary source analyses and essay exams. You will be asked to respond both to specific questions about the documents and to your classmates' responses. To receive full credit, your posts must meet several requirements.

During the weeks when discussions occur, you are required to submit **TWO** posts. Each post should contain a minimum of 200 words but no more than 400 words. The first post will be an answer to one question, out of several that I post for the week. All the questions must be answered before another student can post an answer to the same question. When all the questions have been answered by at least one student, it is possible to offer another answer to the same question, though you will need to focus on an aspect not covered in the original answer. Some questions have multiple parts, so this should allow you to provide a unique answer. The second post will be a response to another student's answer to a different question from a different primary source, when applicable. Each post is worth 5 points.

Discussion Post Deadlines:

1st Post: Wednesday @ 11:59 pm

2nd Post: Friday @ 11:59 pm

Guidelines

1. As in the essay exams, the posts involve more than merely regurgitating information. You still need to know who, what, where, and when about the historical events discussed in the documents, but you must also compose an argument using specific details from the documents. Therefore, it is likely that students will disagree over the answers to particular questions (This is why I require students to write one post as a response), which is fine, so long as you provide evidence from the documents to defend your

analysis. In other words, do not simply write “I agree completely” or “I like your post” or “Yes” or “No,” with a vague and general reference to the document. At the same time, do not rely entirely on direct quotes. You are allowed no more than one sentence of direct quotes. Put the arguments of the document in your own words by paraphrasing what is written.

2. Credit will not be given for late posts. Issues with your computer or internet connection are not valid excuses for failing to submit a post. Incomplete sentences will result in a substantially reduced grade. Quotations from sources other than the required primary documents are not allowed. Basic writing conventions apply to the posts. Frequent misspellings, lack of punctuation, and other writing errors will result in a reduced grade for the posts.
3. Even though you are required to make a discussion post only for two of the documents assigned for any given week, you must read every document on the syllabus in preparation for the essay exams. Doing well on the exams requires a clear understanding of how the documents “talk” to one another, or how they are linked thematically.

Quizzes

You will be required to complete **SIX** ten-question quizzes based on the weekly lectures posted on YouTube. The quizzes will include a mix of multiple choice and True-False questions. The quizzes will be opened for students to complete **FIVE** days prior to the deadline. Once begun, you will have 30 minutes to complete the quiz. Questions on each quiz are randomly selected from a bank of 50+ questions. These quizzes are automatically graded. For security reasons, and out of fairness to all students, quiz answers will not be provided to students following completion of the quizzes. Issues with your computer or internet connection are not valid excuses for failing to submit a quiz. The lowest quiz grade of the semester is dropped. NOTE: It is recommended that you complete and take notes on the readings prior to taking the quiz.

Exams (Midterm: March 19 / Final: May 18 (11:59 pm deadline))

There will be two essay exams. These exams are not cumulative. These exams are based entirely on the primary source documents. Answering the question, which will be given to you one week in advance, will require you to do the work of a historian. You must look through the wide-ranging set of primary source documents available to you in this course and formulate an answer using this evidence. In short, these exams will require you to *think*, as opposed to simply regurgitating historical facts, by analyzing the primary source documents and looking at the ways in which they interact with one another and makes it possible to develop a cogent argument to answer the exam question.

A Note on Sources

Successful completion of the coursework requires an understanding of the differences between primary and secondary sources. Every reading in this course is a primary source.

Primary Sources

The majority of books written by historians rely on these types of sources, which serve as evidence for a particular argument advanced by a historian. Historians interpret and evaluate these sources, which, on a much smaller scale, you will be doing with your discussion posts and on the essay exams. Primary sources are documents and artifacts created during the time under investigation by persons alive when the event occurred. Primary documents provide first-hand testimony and contemporary accounts of these moments in history.

Secondary Sources

These are historians' interpretations and analyses of various primary sources. Secondary sources also include discussion of other secondary sources, but mainly to challenge, affirm, or correct them by adding new information, using previously undiscovered or unused primary documents, or offering new perspectives (This is why, for instance, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of books on George Washington and myriad other historical figures and events.). These sources often provide background information (Who, What, Where, and When).

Course Lectures

By Sunday of each week, I will post abridged lectures on YouTube. The lectures will provide you with the historical background needed to interpret and understand the primary source documents that we will be analyzing in class. The links to these videos are available under the "Modules" tab on Canvas.

Course Readings

All readings are available on Canvas. The links to these readings are available under the "Modules" tab on Canvas.

Deadlines

All deadlines indicated in the syllabus and on Canvas are Central Time (CST). Late work will generally not be accepted, though exceptions may be made due to the ongoing COVID outbreak.

Course Outline

Week of January 25: Introduction

*****Complete Quiz #1 by Friday, January 29 at 11:59 pm*****

- Course Syllabus

Week of February 1: The French-Indian War: Imperial Conflict & Britain's Empire

*****Complete 1st Set of Discussion Posts*****

- The State of the English Colonies (1755)
- Recommendations on Countering French Efforts to Win Indian Support (1754)
- Frederick Post's Indian Diplomacy (1758)
- Benjamin Franklin on "The Interest of Great Britain Considered" (1760)
- Colonial Reactions to British Victories During the French-Indian War
- South Carolina Governor on Role of Indians in the French-Indian War (1761)
- Pontiac's Speech (1763)
- William Trent's Journal on Pontiac's Rebellion (1763)

Week of February 8: British Citizens or Subjects? The Debate Over Colonial Taxation

*****Complete Primary Source Analysis #1 by Friday, February 12 at 11:59 pm*****

- A British Politician Defends the Sugar Act (1765)
- British Colonial Official Warns of Opposition to Sugar Act (1764)
- Colonial Opposition to Sugar Act (1764)
- Boston Merchants Demand Repeal of Sugar Act (1764)
- Massachusetts Petition Against the Stamp Act (1764)
- Parliament Debates the Stamp Act (1765)
- Virginia Resolves on the Stamp Act (1765)
- Stamp Act Congress Declarations (1765)
- Stamp Act Riots (1765)
- Benjamin Franklin on Stamp Act Protests (1766)

Week of February 15: The Spoils of War? The Fight for the Frontier

*****Complete Quiz #2 by Friday, February 19 at 11:59 pm*****

- George Washington on Frontier (1754)
- A Colonist Supports Frontier Defense (1754)
- Proclamation of 1763
- George Washington on Proclamation of 1763 (1767)
- Petition from the Paxton Boys (1764)
- Benjamin Franklin on Paxton Boys (1764)
- A Supporter of the Paxton Boys (1764)
- Petition from North Carolina Regulators (1769)
- Herman Husband and the North Carolina Regulators (1769)
- Report on Western Settlement (1772)

Week of February 22: The Long Road to Revolution

*****Complete Primary Source Analysis #2 by Friday, February 26 at 11:59 pm*****

- Massachusetts Circular Letter in Response to Townshend Acts & British Response (1768)
- Violators of the Non-Importation Agreement (1769)
- George Mason on the Non-Importation Agreements (1769)
- George Washington on the Non-Importation Agreements (1769)
- An Account of “First Blood” in New York City (1770)
- A Newspaper Reports on the Boston Massacre (1770)
- The “Boston Pamphlet” (1772)
- Colonists Debate the Tea Act (1773)
- Public Protest in Boston Against the Tea Act (1773)
- A British Officer Describes Conditions in Boston (1774-1775)
- George Washington on Boston Patriots (1774)
- The Suffolk Resolves (1774)

Week of March 1: The Daughters of the American Revolution

*****Complete 2nd Set of Discussion Posts*****

- Daughters of Liberty Spinning Bee (1769)
- Abigail Adams Letters (1771-1776)
- Edenton Ladies Tea Boycott (1774-1775)
- Esther de Berdt Reed Letters (1766-1775)
- Ladies Association of Philadelphia Activities (1780)
- George Washington's Response to Philadelphia Ladies Association Efforts (1780)
- Criticism of Ladies Association of Philadelphia (1780)
- The Sentiments of an American Woman (1780)
- The Sentiments of a Lady in New Jersey (1780)
- Benjamin Rush on Female Education (1787)

Week of March 8: An Independent America? From Resistance to Revolution

*****Complete Quiz #3 by Friday, March 12 at 11:59 pm*****

- First Continental Congress Bill of Rights & Letters to Colonists and British Citizens (1774)
- First Continental Congress Petition to King George III (1774)
- Declaration of Rights & Grievances (1774)
- British General Thomas Gage's Response to Continental Congress (1774)
- Founding Fathers on First Continental Congress (1774)
- Continental Congress to British General Gage (1774)
- Colonial Accounts of Lexington & Concord (1775)
- A British Officer at Lexington & Concord (1775)
- British General Thomas Gage's Proclamation (1775)
- Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms (1775)
- Olive Branch Petition to King George III (1775)
- Paine's *Common Sense* (1776)
- Delegates to the Second Continental Congress on the Declaration of Independence (1776)

Week of March 15: Midterm Exam

*****Midterm Exam Due Friday, March 19 at 11:59 p.m.*****

Week of March 22: Spring Break

Week of March 29: The British Are Coming! The War for America

- George Washington Reflects on the Challenges Facing the Continental Army (1776)
- Continental Congress Delegate Robert Morris on War Effort (1776)
- George Washington's War of Posts Strategy (1776)
- George Washington's General Orders for Valley Forge (1777)
- George Washington Describes the Conditions at Valley Forge (1777-1778)
- George Washington on the Dire State of the Continental Army (1778)
- Continental Congress Addresses the Six Nations (1776-1777)
- Continental Congress on the Indian Problem (1776-1778)

- Treaty of Fort Pitt (1778)
- Delaware Nation Address to Continental Congress (1779)
- Benjamin Franklin on French-American Alliance (1778)
- George Washington & Rochambeau Yorktown Strategy Meeting (1781)
- Peace of Paris Treaty (1783)

Week of April 5: Reform or Revolution? Loyalists, Patriots, & War

*****Complete Quiz #4 by Friday, April 9 at 11:59 pm*****

- A Loyalist & Patriot Debate the Continental Congress (1774-1775)
- A Moderate's Perspective on the Continental Congress (1774)
- A Loyalist & Patriot Debate War with Britain (1774-1775)
- Loyalists Oppose War with Britain (1775)
- Loyalist Rebuttal to Common Sense (1776)
- Loyalist Rebuttal to Declaration of Independence (1776)
- A Loyalist Writes to George Washington (1777)
- Anti-Loyalist Violence (1774-1775)
- Continental Congress Discusses Loyalists (1777)
- Loyalists Respond to Defeat of Britain (1782-1786)

Week of April 12: An Imperfect Union: The Articles of Confederation

*****Complete Primary Source Analysis #3 by Friday, April 16 at 11:59 pm*****

- John Adams Calls for New Constitutions (1775)
- Debates on the Articles of Confederation (1777-1781)
- Alexander Hamilton Decries the Weakness of Congress (1780)
- Founders on the Defects of the Articles of Confederation (1780-1787)
- Massachusetts Governor's Proclamation on Shay's Rebellion (1786)
- George Washington on Shay's Rebellion (1786-1787)
- Militia Leader on Shay's Rebellion (1787)
- Thomas Jefferson on Shay's Rebellion (1787)

Week of April 19: America's Second Revolution: The Making of the Constitution

*****Complete Quiz #5 by Friday, April 23 at 11:59 pm*****

- Debates On Changing the Articles of Confederation (1782-1787)
- Annapolis Convention Resolution (1786)
- Benjamin Franklin Addresses the Constitutional Convention (1787)
- Federalist Papers (No. 51)
- An Anti-Federalist Critique of the Constitution (1787)
- Ratification Debates in Pennsylvania (1787)
- Debating a Bill of Rights (1787-1791)

Week of April 26: Slavery in the Age of Revolution

*****Complete 3rd Set of Discussion Posts*****

- Slaves Petition for Freedom (1773-1777)
- Dunmore's Proclamation & Response of Colonists (1775)
- Henry Laurens's Campaign to Create Slave Regiment (1776-1781)
- The Constitutional Convention Debates Slavery (1787)
- Pennsylvania Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery (1780)
- A French Visitor on Manumission Laws (1788)
- Northern Protest Against Kidnapping and the Slave Trade (1788)
- Virginia Petitions Against Emancipation (1785)
- Free African American to Thomas Jefferson (1791)
- Congressional Debate Over Quaker Petition on Slavery (1790)
- Fugitive Slave Act (1793)

Week of May 3: What Comes Next? Contesting the American Revolution

*****Complete Primary Source Analysis #4 by Friday, May 7 at 11:59 pm*****

- Hamilton & Jefferson Debate Economics
- Alexander Hamilton & Thomas Jefferson Debate the Constitutionality of the National Bank (1791)
- Alexander Hamilton's Report on the Whiskey Rebellion (1794)
- Washington's Proclamation on the Whiskey Rebellion (1794)
- Commissioners' Report to Washington Whiskey Rebellion (1794)
- A Defense of the Whiskey Rebellion Insurgents (1796)

Week of May 10: Semester Wrap-Up

*****Complete Quiz #6 by Friday, May 14 at 11:59 pm*****

*****Final Essay Exam Due Tuesday, May 18 at 11:59 pm*****

Students with disabilities. If you have a disability and need special assistance or accommodations, please see me within the first week of class. All student requests for accommodation must be made through the Accessibility Resource Center. Faculty may not grant disability accommodations without a written request. Information on accommodations can be found at <http://www4.uwm.edu/arc>.

As per UWS 17 of the University of Wisconsin Colleges Student Rights & Regulations, no form of harassment or discrimination is allowed in this class on the basis of identity, including but not limited to race, gender, class, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, immigration status, veteran status, gender identity, nationality, and/or ethnicity. While this class seeks to foster an environment in which ideas and beliefs can be challenged in the spirit of academic inquiry, such challenges must be respectful and civil so that all class members are welcome and empowered to participate in this learning process. For information on discriminatory conduct, please visit the website at https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discrimina_duct_Policy.pdf

Academic misconduct. Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University. Information on academic misconduct can be found at <http://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/facultystaff/policies/academic-misconduct/>. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with it. If a student violates this policy in any way, I reserve the right to impose a sanction of failure on the assignment/assessment or failure in the course. If you have questions about appropriate citations, please ask.

The following link contains important additional information on the UWM course policies listed above and others: <http://uwm.edu/secu/wp-content/uploads/sites/122/2016/12/Syllabus-Links.pdf>

The instructor and the University reserve the right to modify, amend, or change the syllabus (course requirements, grading policy, etc.) as the curriculum and/or program require(s).

Academic Advising in History

All L&S students have to declare and complete an academic major to graduate. If you have not yet declared a major, you are encouraged to do so, even if you are at an early stage in your college education. If you are interested in declaring a major (or minor) in History, or if you need academic advising in History, please visit the Department of History undergraduate program web page at <http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/history/undergrad/> for information on how to proceed.