Early American Seminar

History 5333.001 summer II 2014

Instructor: Adam Costanzo
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Office: Faculty Center 274A
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 12 to 1pm
Office Phone: 361-825-2217 (the least effective way to reach me)
Course Meeting Time and Place: OCNR 222 MTWTh: 10-11:55am

Course Description and Primary Themes
This course covers the literature of early American history through the colonial and Revolutionary periods. In this class, we will examine a broad range of topics relating to the rise and development of British North America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the cause and nature of the American Revolution itself. The course is fairly narrowly confined to Anglo-American history. This is meant to prevent overlap with the History Area’s other offerings in colonial Mexico and Mexican American History.

The course reflects many of the major themes in early American historiography, including interaction between British colonists and Native Americans; the importance of regionalism in the development of the British American colonies; the role of race, gender, and sexuality in shaping identity in early America; the nature and form of early American economic and labor regimes; and the causes and effects of the American Revolution.

Student Learning Outcomes
Through reading, class discussions and writing assignments, students will:

- Become familiar with the historiography of the Early America, including its major concepts, themes, methods, and theoretical approaches.
- Synthesize and interpret historical arguments and explain these arguments cogently.
- Hone communication skills necessary to write and defend a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation.

Grading
Grades are based upon your performance on the following:
20% - Participation in in our class discussions.
20% - Leading two of our class discussions
10% - Social Media Storify Project and Twitter List
25% - Weekly Book Review Précises
25% - Final Exam

Required Reading
The following books are available at the TAMUCC bookstore or at any number of local or online retailers.

Documents and articles provided via Blackboard will also be required.

Optional Reading
The following texts offer broad overviews of the era and would be of use to those without much knowledge of early America.


Weekly Précis Assignments
Each week you will be responsible for writing a Précis about one of the books we are reading for that week. They are due the day we discuss that book.

Each of these short reviews should be approximately two pages in length (double spaced), briefly covering the main themes and arguments of the reading. In the précis you will clearly and coherently write about the scholar's argument. Your review should include 4 main points: 1) a formal bibliographic citation (used as the title), 2) a discussion of the scholar's thesis and arguments, 3) a discussion of the evidence and sources used to support that argument, and 4) your critique of the work.
A schedule will be developed during the first class that evenly divides the readings amongst the class. After they are turned in, all of these précis will be shared with the entire class so that they can serve as a resource for everyone.

**Social Media Storify Project and Twitter List**

Even in a humanities field like History, a Master’s degree is a professional credential. Few of our students enter the program purely for the sake of gaining knowledge. With that in mind, parts of this course will be geared toward professional development in the various fields where a Master’s in History might be put to use. During the first week of class, we’ll discuss your professional goals and aspirations. And during the course of the term we’ll dedicate time discussing ways to reach those goals. These class periods will focus on professional skill-building and on getting to know the professional communities you are seeking to enter or advance in.

To that end, one of your projects for this class will be to develop an understanding of how your particular professional community interacts and shares information via social media networks. Each of you will develop a list of influential or otherwise useful people in your field who have a social media presence. For most of you this will take the form of a list of people to follow on Twitter. We’ll spend some time talking about how Twitter is used among the academic history community. In addition, each of you will create a Storify page (https://storify.com/) that details what you learned from following that list of people during the term. We’ll discuss this assignment in greater detail during class.

**Participation and Leading Discussions**

I expect everyone to come to class prepared, having completed the assigned reading for the day and ready to discuss the reading critically. As this is a seminar class, your participation in class is a significant determinant in your grade.

As separate part of your grade, each of you will lead two class discussions, usually with a partner. Assignments will be made on the first day of class. As the discussion leader, you will need to prepare an introduction of the assigned readings for the seminar meeting. You may use audio-visual equipment or literature or any other technique to jumpstart the dialogue. You should plan on presenting the scholarly arguments and giving your general impressions. You should also prepare a set of discussion questions for dialogue.

Obviously since the class requires so much participation, attendance is crucial. Unexcused absences will severely diminish your grade.

**Final Exam**

This course will feature a final exam designed to help you practice for your comprehensive exams. Details about the final will be discussed in class.
Course Etiquette
The whole point of a seminar is for students to express their opinions and to learn from those around them. In order to accomplish these goals I will insist on a professional and respectful classroom environment. Anyone unable to maintain that standard will be asked to leave.

Citation, Plagiarism, and Academic Honesty Policies
All work that you turn in for this class must be your own creation and based upon your own ideas. The “Academic Honesty” policies described in the TAMUCC Graduate Catalog apply to all assignments and exams in this course.

Late Policy
Late work will be accepted only with a reasonable explanation.

Communication Policy
Other than visiting my office hours, email is the best way to get in touch with me. It is my goal to respond to inquiries and comments received via email in a prompt and reasonable amount of time. If you send me an email and do not get a response within one business day, you should feel free to send a follow up email.

Before writing to me, please make every effort to answer the question on your own. For example, information on this syllabus is always available to you since it is posted on Blackboard. Similarly, your campus email is capable of saving all messages you might receive about the course. Emailing me to find out what the reading is for a given day or what building my office is in would be quite inefficient (not to mention a bit inconsiderate.)

Hurricane Policy
In the event of a hurricane, I will follow the published policies of TAMU-CC. As an online class, we should be able to continue without much interruption. However, if a storm does major damage to the campus computer systems or the region’s power network, then we will make appropriate changes to the course and its deadlines.

Students with Disabilities and Veterans
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.
**Grade Appeal Process**

Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

**Reading and Assignment Schedule**

The following schedule describes the reading and writing assignments for the class. Note that this list is under development and is subject to change prior to the start of the course.

The required reading load for this course averages out to about two books per week plus a few articles. This is a very high reading load. The short, five-week term makes this necessary. And given the offerings from our department, I'm assuming that for most of you this will be your only class during this term.

You should bear in mind the following questions when you read a work:

1. What is the problem/issue/questions that the author sets out to solve/address/answer?
2. What is the author's central argument?
3. What evidence does the author employ?
4. What methods does the author use to seek and to analyze that evidence?
5. Does the author employ the most appropriate evidence and methods to address the central problem/issue/question?
6. What issues (if any) are left unresolved by the author's approach and argument?
7. How does each author's work fit with the other readings for the week? Is the work compatible/incompatible with the approaches and arguments of the other readings? Look for points of commonality and of tension.
8. How does the work fit into the general scholarly trends within early North American history? What interpretive tradition does the work best represent?

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<th>Week</th>
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<th>Readings and Assignments</th>
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<td>* A schedule of weekly précis and discussion leadership assignments will be developed at the first class meeting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week</td>
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| 1 | M | Native Encounters | Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country*  
| | T | | Professional Development / Skills Workshop (TBD) |
| | W | | Lepore, *The Name of War*  
| | Th | | Early American History Film (TBD) |
| 2 | M | Slavery and the Chesapeake | Morgan, E., *American Slavery, American Freedom* |
| | T | | Professional Development / Skills Workshop (TBD) |
| | W | | Morgan, P., *Slave Counterpoint*  
| | Th | | Early American History Film (TBD) |
| 3 | M | Gender in Colonial America | Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, Anxious Patriarchs* |
| | T | | Professional Development / Skills Workshop (TBD) |
| | W | | Karlsen, *Devil in the Shape of a Woman* |
| | Th | | Early American History Film (TBD) |
| 4 | M | Markets and Labor | Rockman, *Scraping By* |
| | T | | Professional Development / Skills Workshop (TBD) |
| | W | | Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution* |
| | Th | | Early American History Film (TBD) |
| 5 | M | The Revolution and Beyond | Holton, * Forced Founders*  
Gary B. Nash, "Social Change and the Growth of Pre-Revolutionary Urban Radicalism,” in Alfred F. Young, ed., *American Revolution*, 4-36 (to be provided) |
| T | Professional Development / Skills Workshop (TBD)  
  | **Storify and Twitter Project’s presented to the class** |
| W | Ulrich, *A Midwife’s Tale* |
| Th | Final Exam |