

# Teaching American History

## America and the Atlantic World, 1450-1787

SPRING 2008

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Mondays 4-7 pm  
Office Hours: after class and by appointment

**Goals** This course, like all courses in the Teaching American History program, has a dual objective. As a graduate history course, it will examine colonial and Revolutionary-era America within the context of the Atlantic world that shaped it so profoundly. Through readings, discussions, and occasional lectures, you will not only secure a basic knowledge of many of the major themes of Atlantic history, but you will also examine and debate some of the central questions that recent historians have attempted to answer about the Atlantic world. Of equal importance is the TAH mission to help middle- and high-school teachers adapt the course content to their classrooms. Those without previous experience with the program should note that this is not an education course; we will neither read nor discuss pedagogical theory. It is graduate-level history and will reflect the subject matter, rigorous workload, and high standards of scholarship associated with such a course. However, it is graduate-level history tailored to teachers. You will develop specific strategies for teaching students early American history from this fascinating and important perspective and also for giving them a sense of what studying history means and how historians go about doing it: analyzing primary sources, applying critical thinking skills to one's analysis, and effectively expressing one's ideas.

**Format** The course will be conducted primarily as an oversized seminar; that is, it will utilize a discussion format, with some occasional informal lecturing. Much of our time will be spent in using a combination of assigned readings, projects, audiovisual presentations, and internet explorations as the basis for small- and large-group sessions. We will also host guest speakers and engage in virtual field trips.

### Requirements

- **Attendance** I expect you to attend all class meetings, to have all assigned readings prepared ahead of time, and to participate actively and intelligently in class discussions, group exercises, and response sessions. Each unexcused absence after the first will result in the loss of three points from a student's final grade.

• **Written** All written requirements of the course revolve around the construction of a **teaching module**, an integrated, in-depth unit of study focusing on one particular topic. Its basic structure will include the following five (5) components:

**1. Overview:** A 6-8 page narrative summarizing the historical background, major events, and short- and long-term significance of your topic.

**2. Annotated Primary Sources:** Four to six primary sources, with a one- to two-page general introduction conveying the broad historical context of the documents and a smaller (one- to two-paragraph) introduction for each source offering a more specific historical context.

**3. Historiography:** An 8-10 page discussion of at least five (5) key secondary sources on your topic. These must include at least three (3) works on the broad subject area **and** two to three (2-3) works specific to your topic, *all of which must be major studies* with regard to the current historical understanding of or principal debate surrounding your topic.

**4. Unit Plan/Project:** This component may be approached in **either one of two ways:**

(A) Provide one week's (five days') worth of lesson plans describing precisely what the goals of the unit are, how you will teach this module to your students, and how you will evaluate their learning.

(B) Submit a project assignment sheet (accompanied by whatever supporting materials students will be given) **and** your own completed project based on that assignment.

**5. Review:** The final piece of the module may be **any ONE of the following three options:**

(A) Review four to six (4-6) websites linked to your topic.

(B) Review one to two (1-2) historical sites (museums, etc.) linked to your topic.

(C) Review your visit to an historical archive or a major printed collection of primary sources linked to your topic.

**Note:** All components of the module are due at our last class meeting, but I would be happy to accept individual pieces at any time before that.

**Evaluation Criteria** The following criteria will be used for grading purposes. To receive a 4.0, a student must perform at the highest level on all assignments, demonstrating historical imagination, creativity, and a deep understanding of the subject matter. Students must also demonstrate in their assignments clear and well-developed thoughts from their research, proficient, clear and effective communications and writing skills. To receive a 3.5, a student must perform at a high level on all assignments. To receive a 3.0, a student must perform at an acceptable level on all assignments. A grade below 3.0 is considered probationary for graduate work. The following will be used to calculate the grade.

- **Teaching modules** **85%**
  - Narrative Overview 10%
  - Annotated Primary Sources 20%
  - Historiography 25%
  - Unit Plan/Project 20%
  - Review 10%
- **Attendance and Participation:** **15%**

**Additional Needs** Students who need accommodations because of a documented disability, who have emergency medical information they need to share with me, or who need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated should discuss this with me *before the second class meeting*.

### Required Texts

James Axtell, “Imagining the Other: First Encounters in North America” (1991)  
 Anthony Pagden, *Lords of all the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France* (1995)  
 Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, ed. Richetti (1719; 2001)  
 C. Daniels and M.V. Kennedy, eds., *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas* (2002)  
 Allan Greer, ed., *The Jesuit Relations* (1632-73; 2000)  
 William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (2003 ed.)  
 John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1998)  
 Jill Lepore, *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan* (2005)  
 Vincent Carretta, *Equiano: The African* (2005)  
 Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* (1987)  
 Eve Kornfeld, *Creating an American Culture* (2001)  
 Laurent Dubois and John D. Garrigus, eds., *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean* (2006)

### Schedule of Class Meetings

→ All classes meet from 4:00-7:00 unless otherwise noted

**JANUARY 28**      **INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS ATLANTIC HISTORY?**

#### I. CONQUEST

**FEBRUARY 4**      **IMAGINING EMPIRE: THE EUROPEANS’ NEW WORLD**

Reading:    Thornton, intro & ch. 1 (pp. 1-42)  
                          Pagden: intro & ch. 1-2 (pp. 1-62)  
                          Defoe: all

**FEBRUARY 11**    **ADAPTING TO EMPIRE, PART I: THE AFRICANS’ NEW WORLD**

Reading:    Thornton: ch. 2-11 (pp. 43-334)

\* *Guest Speaker:* Thomas Lincoln, the Royall House and Slave Quarters, Medford

**FEBRUARY 18**      **NO CLASS MEETING – PROJECT AND ASSIGNMENT PREPARATION**  
→ Investigate potential topics for your Teaching Module

**FEBRUARY 25**      **ADAPTING TO EMPIRE, PART II: THE INDIANS' NEW WORLD**  
Reading:      Daniels and Kennedy: Weber essay (pp. 79-103)  
Greer: intro & ch. 2-4 (pp. 1-19, 37-118)  
Cronon: all

→ TOPICS DUE FOR TEACHING MODULE ←

## II. CULTURE

**MARCH 3**              **SCENES FROM THE ATLANTIC WORLD, PART I: NEW YORK, 1741**  
Reading:      Lepore: all

**MARCH 10**          **SCENES FROM THE ATLANTIC WORLD, PART II: OUT OF AFRICA (?)**  
Reading:      Carretta: all

**\*MARCH 15\***          **SCENES FROM THE ATLANTIC WORLD, PART III: BEFORE THE MAST**  
**[SATURDAY,**              Reading:      Rediker: all  
**8:00 – 3:00]**          \* *Guest Speaker:* Willem Klooster, Clark University, on the Dutch in the Atlantic World

**MARCH 17**          **NO CLASS MEETING (MWCC SPRING BREAK)**

## III. RULE

**MARCH 24**          **IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT: NEGOTIATING CONTROL ON THE FRONTIER**  
Reading:      Pagden: ch. 3-5 (pp. 63-155)  
Daniels and Kennedy: TePaske, Klooster, Choquette, Boucher, &  
Mancke essays (pp. 29-42, 171-266)

**MARCH 31**          **REVOLUTION IN AN ATLANTIC CONTEXT, PART I: MAINLAND**  
Reading:      Pagden: ch. 6-7 (pp. 156-200)  
Daniels and Kennedy: Greene, Bowen, & Onuf essays (pp. 267-319)  
Kornfeld: all

**APRIL 7**              **REVOLUTION IN AN ATLANTIC CONTEXT, PART II: CARIBBEAN**  
Reading:      Dubois and Garrigus: all

**APRIL 14-28**      **NO CLASS MEETINGS – PROJECT AND ASSIGNMENT PREPARATION**

**\*MAY 5\***              **BEST PRACTICES SHARING**  
**[4:00 – 8:30]**

→ TEACHING MODULES DUE ←