EARLY AMERICAN HISTORY

This course is designed to introduce students to important themes in the history of the United States between the earliest history of European colonization in North America and the U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction. An emphasis of the course will be on the cultural history of the colonial era, the American Revolution, and the first century of the new republic.

These are the principal learning objectives of this course:

• Expose students to the art of critical reading and historical analysis of primary source documents.
• Allow students to develop their own interpretative frameworks for understanding the significance of various developments in the United States' first century.
• Provide students with a strong conceptual background to interpret conflict and change in American culture both in the past and in the present.
• Expose students to the geography and genealogy of cultural change in America

REQUIRED READINGS:
The following books are available to purchase at the College Bookstore:
Marcus Rediker, The Fearless Benjamin Lay.
Alfred F. Young, The Shoemaker and the Tea Party.
Eric Foner, Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction.

Moodle: The vast majority of the required readings for this course, as well as the supplemental readings for the writing assignments, are available on the course’s Moodle site.

We will also read significant sections of a primary-source reader: Bruce Dorsey and Woody Register, eds., Crosscurrents in American Culture. (Available on Moodle.)

Students are responsible for bringing copies of the week’s assigned readings to class, since classroom discussions will focus on the interpretation and discussion of the primary-source documents in that reader.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
Class participation & Attendance: Students are required to attend all class meetings, complete all assigned readings, and be prepared to discuss the readings each week. Students are expected to contribute actively to the collective learning experience of the course.

Writing Assignments:
Papers: Two papers (approximately 5-6 double-spaced pages [2,000 words maximum]) will be written throughout the semester. The expectations and requirements for the papers, as well as the choice of topics and supplemental readings, are described under Paper Assignments on Moodle.
Reflection Essays: Several short essays (about two-double-spaced pages) will be written on various “problems to consider” in Crosscurrents in American Culture. Thoughtful reflection and analysis are expected for these brief writing assignments. For a description of the Reflection Essay assignments, see the course Moodle page.

Final Examination: A comprehensive final examination covering the material for the entire semester will be given on the scheduled exam date.

Evaluation/Grading:
Class participation: 10%
Papers: 50%
Reflection Essays 20%
Final Examination 20%

Note: Students must complete all writing assignments (including the Final Exam & all Reflection Essays) to pass this course.

POLICIES:

Attendance & Communication: The following is the History Department policy on attendance & communication: “Students are required to attend all classes. Unexcused absences will result in a lower grade for the course. If you are having a medical or personal emergency, please contact the Dean’s Office as well as the instructor of the course. It is your responsibility to inform your instructor as soon as possible. It is essential that you check your email on a regular basis since History professors will contact you via email. We also expect you to use email to contact History professors.”

Laptops & Electronic Devices: To facilitate discussion and to avoid distractions, I am going to ask that you do not use a laptop or any other electronic device in class. Please silence and put away your phone during class. (Disability accommodations requiring the use of a computer are not covered by this policy.)

Accommodations for disability: If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (Parrish 113W) or email studentdisabilityservices@swarthmore.edu to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs. As appropriate, the Office will issue students with documented disabilities a formal Accommodations Letter. Since accommodations require early planning and are not retroactive, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services as soon as possible. For details about the accommodations process, visit the Student Disability Service website at http://www.swarthmore.edu/student-life/academic-advising-and-support/welcome-to-student-disability-service. You are also welcome to contact me privately to discuss your academic needs. However, all disability-related accommodations must be arranged through the Office of Student Disability Services.
CLASS SCHEDULE:

WEEK 1:
Sept. 4 – INTRODUCTION

Sept. 6 – COLONIAL DREAMS: IMAGININGS OF EXPLORATION, CONQUEST & RELOCATION
Readings:
Bruce Dorsey & Woody Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture (2009), 8-19.

Sept. 8 – SEEING NEW PEOPLES: VISUAL IMAGES OF COLONIZATION
Readings:
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 22-35.

WEEK 2:
Sept. 11 – NEW WORLDS AND OLD WORLDS: CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS IN THE AMERICAS
Readings:
Alan Taylor, American Colonies (2001), ch. 3.
Kupperman, Indians and English, ch. 2.

Sept. 13 – RACE AND GENDER IN ENGLAND’S COLONIZATION OF VIRGINIA
Readings:
Taylor, American Colonies, ch. 6.
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 41-54.
Reflection Essay 1 Due: Crosscurrents, p. 50.

Sept. 15 – COVENANTS, JEREMIADS, & WHITE INDIANS: PURITAN CULTURE IN NEW ENGLAND
Readings:
Taylor, American Colonies, ch. 8.
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 54-71.

WEEK 3:
Sept. 18 – ORIGINS OF SLAVERY IN NORTH AMERICA
Readings:
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 72-85.

Sept. 20 – MIDDLE PASSAGE: TALES OF THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE
Readings:

Sept. 22 – PENNSYLVANIA & THE MIDDLE COLONIES: PLURALISM & DIVERSITY
Readings:

**WEEK 4:**

Sept. 25 – QUAKERS, SLAVERY & THE EARLIEST VOICES OF ABOLITIONISM

Readings:

Sept. 27 – COCK FIGHTS, HORSE RACES, & REVIVALS: COLONIAL AMUSEMENTS & THE GREAT AWAKENING

Readings:
Dorsey & Register, *Crosscurrents in American Culture*, 96-107.

Sept. 29 – EMPIRE AND REBELLION IN THE BRITISH COLONIES

FIRST PAPER DUE [by 5pm]

**WEEK 5:**

Oct. 2 – THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Readings:

Oct. 4 – MEMORY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION & CONTEMPORARY POLITICS

Readings:
Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party* (1999), 7-13; 85-120; 143-65; 180-207.

Oct. 6 – COMPETING VISIONS OF FREEDOM IN THE AGE OF REVOLUTION

Readings:

**WEEK 6:**

Oct. 9 – CONSTITUTION AND THE RACIAL ORIGINS OF THE NEW NATION

Readings:
**Reflection Essay 2 Due: Crosscurrents, p. 129.**

Oct. 11 – SIGNS AND LANGUAGES OF A NEW NATIONALISM

Readings:
Oct. 11 – FIELD LECTURE IN U.S. HISTORY: (4:30pm, Scheuer Rm, Kohlberg Hall)
Marcus Rediker, Distinguished Professor of Atlantic History, University of
Pittsburgh. “Benjamin Lay and the Surprising Origins of Revolutionary
Abolitionism” **ATTENDANCE REQUIRED

Oct. 13 – NO CLASS MEETING

FALL BREAK: OCTOBER 16 THRU 20

WEEK 7:
Oct. 23 – A MARKET REVOLUTION: CREATING CONSUMER DESIRE & DEBATES
OVER MANUFACTURING
Readings:
Freeman, Affairs of Honor, 199-261.
Paul E. Johnson, The Early American Republic (2007), 3-53
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 141-50.

Oct. 25 – INDUSTRIALIZATION & THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY IN THE
NORTH
Readings:
Daniel Walker Howe, What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-
1848 (2007), 1-7; 525-69.
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 151-70.

Oct. 27 – SLAVERY IN THE SOUTH: THE ECONOMICS OF SLAVERY
Readings:
Foner, Forever Free, ch. 1 (pp. 3-33).

WEEK 8:
Oct. 30 – SLAVERY IN THE SOUTH: AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE & SLAVE
RESISTANCE
Readings:
Stephanie Camp, Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 171-85.
Reflection Essay 3 Due: Crosscurrents, p. 179

Nov. 1 – SLAVERY IN THE SOUTH: SLAVE RESISTANCE & PRO-SLAVERY IDEOLOGY
Readings:
Video: Nat Turner, A Troublesome Property
The Confessions of Nat Turner [“as fully and voluntarily made to T. R. Gray”]
(1832).
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 185-99.

Nov. 3 – REFORMING AMERICA: RELIGIOUS REVIVALISM, TEMPERANCE, &
ABOLITIONISM
Readings:
Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 200-220; 223-31.
John Stauffer, The Black Hearts of Men: Radical Abolitionists and the Transformation of
Race (2001), 1-44.
WEEK 9:
Nov. 6 – REFORMING AMERICA: NATIVISM (ANTI-IMMIGRATIONISM)
   Readings:
   Bruce Dorsey, Reforming Men and Women (2002), ch. 5.
   Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk (1836) & other anti-immigrant documents.

Nov. 8 – INDIAN REMOVAL & "CIVILIZATION"
   Readings:
   Perdue and Green, Cherokee Removal, 1-97.

Nov. 10 – INDIAN REMOVAL & "CIVILIZATION" (continued)
   Readings:
   Perdue and Green, Cherokee Removal, 98-189.

WEEK 10:
Nov. 13 – NATURE’S VISTAS & VISAGES: CULTURAL MEANINGS OF EXPANSIONISM & THE WESTERN FRONTIER
   Readings:
   Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 232-41.
   Davy Crockett Almanacks (1835-41).

Nov. 15 – "MANIFEST DESTINY": EXPANSIONISM & CONQUEST
   Readings:
   Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 241-51.
   Tammany Hall, All Mexico (1848) & Ostend Manifesto (1854)

Nov. 17 – CULTURE OF DEMOCRACY – COMMERCIAL POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT
   Readings:
   Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 252-66.
   Reflection Essay 4 Due: Crosscurrents, p. 255

WEEK 11:
Nov. 20 – CULTURE OF DEMOCRACY – PARTISAN POLITICAL CULTURE
   Readings:
   Dorsey & Register, Crosscurrents in American Culture, 266-71.

Nov. 22 – SECTIONAL CULTURES & CONFLICTS
   Readings:
   David Blight, Frederick Douglass’ Civil War (1989), ch. 2.

Nov. 24 – NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING BREAK)

WEEK 12:
Nov. 27 – SECTIONAL CONFLICT & SECESSION
   Readings:

Nov. 29 – JOHN BROWN’S BODY: SYMBOLS & MEANINGS OF THE CIVIL WAR
Readings:
Edward Ayers, *What Caused the Civil War* (2005), 131-44.

Dec. 1 – INTERPRETING THE CIVIL WAR
Readings:
“Jeff Davis in Drag,” draft, 2 nd ed., *Crosscurrents in American Culture*.

WEEK 13:
Dec. 4 – FREE AT LAST!: AFRICAN AMERICAN FREEDOM & THE CULTURE OF BLACK POLITICS & COMMUNITY
Readings:
Foner, *Forever Free*, 41-75.
Steven Hahn, *A Nation under Our Feet* (2007), 216-41; 249-64.
Dorsey & Register, *Crosscurrents in American Culture*, 300-322.

Dec. 6 – RECONSTRUCTION: REBIRTH OR REMAKING OF A NATION?
Readings:

Dec. 8 – RECONSTRUCTION AND A NEW NATIONALISM
Readings:
Foner, *Forever Free*, 189-238.
Dorsey & Register, *Crosscurrents in American Culture*, 322-335.

WEEK 14:
Dec. 11 – REVIEW OF THE COURSE – PREPARATION FOR FINAL EXAM

SECOND PAPER DUE: Dec. 12 [by 5pm]

FINAL EXAMINATION: Day/Time _____________________________________________