

SYLLABUS

AMERICAN REVOLUTION

HIST 3504-001

FALL 2016



Instructor: Dr. Jamie H. Eves, jamie.eves@uconn.edu; themillmuseum@gmail.com

Office: 312 Wood Hall

Student Hours: T/Th 1:00-2:30 and a half hour before class in the hallway outside the classroom

Classroom: 109 Laurel Hall

Class Meetings: T/Th 3:30-4:45 PM

Subject: What we'll be doing

HIST 3504 is an upper-level undergraduate history course, designed primarily for History majors and majors in related fields. I assume that you already have a good general background in American history, American government, American society, and the history of Western Civilization. We will be exploring the American Revolution as a key event in the history and formation of the United States – its political systems, its society, and its culture – and in the histories of other peoples – Canadians, Latin Americans, Europeans, and others. We will also be considering the topic of revolutions in general, the differences between revolutions and reform movements, and common patterns found in all – or most -- revolutions. As professional historians do, we will discuss both facts (objective data about the Revolution) and interpretations (subjective explanations for the Revolution and its meaning proposed by various historians who have studied it). We will begin with a general examination of the social/political/cultural/economic context of Britain and British America the mid-1700s, move on to an exploration of the French and Indian War (1754-63) as a causative factor, trace the political events of 1764-75 that led up to the Revolution, examine the decision to declare independence in 1776, discuss the War for Independence (1775-83), explore the Critical Period that immediately followed the war (1783-87), ask what happened to both patriots and loyalists in the immediate aftermath of the war, and finally look at the creation and ratification of the

Constitution of 1787. That's a lot of stuff to cover in one short semester, so we will be moving pretty quickly.

Outcomes: What you'll get out of this

1. **A structure of the history of the American Revolution:** You will acquire a basic outline of the events that led up to the American Revolution, the events that comprised the Revolution itself, and the events that immediately followed it.
2. **Theoretical tools to help you interpret (explain/analyze) the American Revolution:** You will learn basic revolutionary theory as it has been developed by historians and political scientists, and apply it to the American Revolution.
3. **A better understanding of the meaning of the American Revolution, both to the generation that lived through it and to the generations that followed:** We will examine the political, social, religious, and economic ideas of the Revolutionary generation (the "Founding Fathers" ... and "Mothers"), and how those ideas have been reinterpreted by later generations of Americans.
4. **Greater familiarity with the historiography of the American Revolution:** You will learn how some of our generation's best historians have interpreted the Revolution, and why they believe that a continual reexamination of the Revolution and its meaning is always needed.
5. **Improved critical thinking and writing skills:** You will improve your ability to think and write critically about complex subjects.
6. **Learning to think and behave like a professional:** You will have an opportunity to practice being a professional historian.

Method: How all this happens

To achieve these outcomes, we will use a variety of learning techniques, including analytical lectures, storytelling, reading books by leading historians, examining primary sources, guided discussions, taking exams, and writing short papers. The reason that we will be doing so many different things is because different students learn best in different ways, and there will be a lot of diversity in this class.

On most days, I will deliver analytical lectures and/or tell stories. I do not intend to repeat or summarize the factual material from the readings. Rather, I will supplement them by providing broad interpretive frameworks into which the material in the readings can be fit. For this reason, I expect you to do the assigned readings, attend each class, take good notes, review those notes frequently, and think critically about what I have said and what you have read. Exams and papers will give you the opportunity to integrate your class notes with the readings. I encourage you to speak out in class, especially to challenge any ideas, information, or viewpoints that seem wrong to you. I especially want you to challenge me (I'm a husband and father, so I'm used to it). But I also expect you to be able to back up what you say with hard data; historical interpretation (or explanation) is not simply a matter of having an opinion, but is

instead an honest and thorough application of logic and historical methods to empirical evidence.

Required readings: The tools we'll use to do this

1. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) – [any version; available free online]
2. Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1776) – [any version; available free online]
3. Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *The Men Who Lost America: British Leadership, the American Revolution, and the Fate of the British Empire* (2013)
4. Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (2011)
5. James Madison, *Journal of the Federal Convention* (1839) [any electronic version that is word searchable; available free online]
6. Pauline Maier, *Ratification: The People Debate the Constitution, 1787-1788* (2011)
7. Various materials on Blackboard

Practice and assessment: Helping you test yourself and improve

I will grade you on the following activities.

Class participation (10%)

You will actively contribute to class discussions.

Online posts (12%)

Six times during the semester you will use Blackboard to post online blog-style responses to questions that I will have placed there for you. You must log your posts by midnight on the day before they are due. Each post should be at least a good, solid paragraph in length; thorough, original posts will receive better grades than cursory responses that don't say anything significant, or which merely repeat something that one of your classmates has already written. Each post will be worth 2% of your grade.

Papers (40%)

You will write four short papers: you may choose any four from the topics on the list below. Each paper will be worth 10% of your semester grade. Your papers should be typed, double spaced, and about five pages long, using standard one-inch margins and an eleven-point Times New Roman font, which is the default setting for Microsoft Word. Late papers will be penalized one-half letter grade for each class day they are late. (Exceptions may be made if you can present empirical evidence of a genuine emergency. The acceptance of any and all such excuses is solely up to me.) Papers delivered to me by any means other than handing them to me during class are at your risk. Bally, unreliable word processors and printers are your problem, not mine. ***For every quote, idea, example, or fact that you use, you must cite the source and page (or electronic data point reference number) where that quote, idea, example, or fact can be found.*** For learning purposes, I ask that you base your papers solely on class materials – please do not use any outside sources unless I have given you permission to do so.

First paper. According to Crevecoeur, what was an American?

Second paper. What were Paine's arguments in favor of revolution?

Third paper. According to Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, was the American Revolution "lost" (by the British) because of poor military leadership, poor political leadership, inevitable historical forces, American military genius, or a combination of factors?

Fourth paper: Who were the loyalists and how did the exile of many of them after the revolution transform world history?

Fifth paper: According to Maier, what arguments did the antifederalists use to oppose the Constitution, and how did the federalists counter those arguments (with logic, with rhetoric, and with organizing skill)?

Examinations (38%)

You will take two exams, a midterm exam (worth 15% of your semester grade) and a final exam (worth 23% of your semester grade). You will write the midterm in ink during class, in exam booklets that I will provide for you. The final exam will be take-home. I will post a study guide in advance of the midterm on Blackboard. You will be allowed to bring one 8 ½ x 11" sheet of paper with notes to the midterm exam, which you will hand in with the exam.

Instructor: Who am I?

My name is Jamie Eves, and I have been teaching history at the university level for more than twenty-five years. I have a Ph.D. in American History from the University of Connecticut, as well as an M. A. in American History from the University of Maine. My research specialties are eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American environmental history, the history of New England, and public history – although over the years I have taught more than a dozen different subjects. My doctoral dissertation was a study of the interrelationship of nature and culture in the Piscataquis River Valley in northern Maine, 1760-1870; my M.A. thesis traced a migration of farm families from Cape Cod in Massachusetts to the lower Penobscot River Valley in Maine, 1760-1820. I am also the Director of the Windham Textile and History Museum in Willimantic, CT, and the official town historian of Windham, CT. Most of my published articles have been about Maine and Connecticut history – some have appeared in professional history journals, while others have been in publications aimed more at popular audiences. I was drawn to history by a love of the narrative form, and I try to emphasize good storytelling in all my classes. I believe that history belongs to the people, and that everybody has a right to know their history – that history has to be accessible, readable, local, and affordable. I am particularly annoyed at "junk history" – history that is inaccurate, oversimplified, and/or bent towards some political, religious, or philosophical agenda. I am a husband, father, and grandfather. Like most professional historians, most of what I do is easily available to the public at little or no cost. If you want to see some of the history I have written, check out the website of the Windham Textile & History Museum (www.millmuseum.org) – most of the history content

posted there is mine. My doctoral dissertation is shelved in Babbidge Library. I have published articles in *Technology and Culture*, *Connecticut History*, and *Maine History*, and book reviews in a variety of journals. I'm also pretty sure that you can read all about me on ratemyprofessor.com.

Schedule: What you need to do for each class

- Week of 8/29: Introduction to the Course; Theories of Revolutions.
- Week of 9/5: More Theories of Revolutions. **First online post due Thursday.**
- Week of 9/12: British America in 1750. **First discussion paper and discussion of Crèvecoeur Thursday.**
- Week of 9/19: French and Indian War, 1754-63. **Second online post due Thursday.**
- Week of 9/26: The Reform Stage, 1763-74. **Third online post due Thursday.**
- Week of 10/3: The Reform Stage, 1763-74, Cont'd. **Fourth online post due Thursday.**
- Week of 10/10: Choosing Independence, 1775-76. **Second discussion paper and discussion of Paine Tuesday. (NO CLASS ON THURSDAY, 10/13.)**
- Week of 10/17: Choosing Independence, 1775-76. **Midterm examination Thursday.**
- Week of 10/24: The War for Independence, 1775-83.
- Week of 10/31: The War for Independence, 1775-83. **Fifth online post due Thursday.**
- Week of 11/7: The War for Independence, 1775-83, Cont'd. **Third discussion paper and discussion of O'Shaughnessy Thursday. (NO CLASS ON THURSDAY, 11/10.)**
- Week of 11/14: The Impact of the Revolution on American and Global Society. **Fourth discussion paper and discussion of Jasanoff on Thursday.**
- Week of 11/21: NO CLASSES! THANKSGIVING RECESS.
- Week of 11/28: The Critical Period, 1783-87. **Sixth online post due Thursday.**
- Week of 12/5: The Constitution, 1787-88 (and Beyond). **Discussion of Madison on Tuesday; fifth discussion paper and discussion of Maier on Thursday.**

Week of 12/12: **Final exam.** Due Friday at noon via e-mail.

Classroom management: Other important things to remember

Accessibility

If you have a disability that you believe will require accommodations, it is your responsibility to contact the appropriate University official and obtain an accommodation letter. I cannot provide accommodations based on your disability without an accommodation letter.

Cheating

As always, cheating – including plagiarism – is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Plagiarism includes quoting someone else without quotation marks and/or without proper citation; using someone else’s ideas without proper attribution; and “close” paraphrasing. In your papers, you **MUST** cite all of the sources you have consulted. (Because of time and space constraints, I will not require you to use proper citations on exams, except in the case of direct quotes.) Unless it is enclosed in quotation marks and properly cited, all of the material included in your papers and exams **MUST** be in your own words. If you are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, you should seek guidance from me. The penalty for plagiarism in this class will be: (1) For papers, you will receive a grade of “0” for the assignment. (2) For exams, you will receive a grade of “0” for the exam question on which the plagiarism occurred. (3) For a second offense, you will receive a grade of “F” for the course. Cases of plagiarism and other forms of cheating may also be reported to the Dean of Students for further action. For the full University of Connecticut Policy on Academic Misconduct, see <http://www.sp.uconn.edu/~m1201vc/misconduct.html>.

Etiquette

Although your participation is encouraged and your comments are welcome, I nevertheless expect you to treat me, your classmates, and the material with respect. I expect you to arrive on time, pack up to leave only after the class is dismissed, and refrain from getting up in the middle of class and wandering around. I reserve the right to remove disruptive and/or unprepared students from the classroom. I do not expect you to agree with everything I say or laugh at my lame jokes. I greatly respect and admire students who are able to present their own positions, provided that they do so in a rational, logical, and well-spoken manner.