

Master of Arts in American History and Government
Ashland University

AHG 603 01A

Colonial America

Saturdays, August 22 – October 10
9:30 AM to 12:45 PM EST

Sarah Morgan Smith and David Tucker

Course focus: This course focuses on the development of an indigenous political culture in the British colonies. It pays special attention to the role of religion in shaping the American experience and identity of ‘New World’ inhabitants, as well as to the development of representative political institutions and how these emerged through the confrontation between colonists and King and proprietors.

Learning Objectives: To increase participants' familiarity with and understanding of:

1. The reasons for European colonization of North America and some of the religious and political ideas that the colonists brought with them, as well as the ways those ideas developed over the course of the 17th-18th centuries
2. The “first contact” between native peoples and newcomers emphasizing the world views of Indians and Europeans and the way each attempted to understand the other.
3. The development of colonial economies as part of the Atlantic World, including servitude and slavery and the rise of consumerism.
4. Religion and intellectual life and the rise of an “American” identity.

Course Requirements:

- Attendance at all class sessions.
- Presentation/Short Paper: 20%
 - Each student will be responsible for helping to guide our discussion during one session of the courses by making a short presentation to the class and developing additional focus/discussion questions related to the readings (beyond those listed in the syllabus). On the date of their presentation, the student will also submit a three page paper and a list of (additional) discussion questions. Details will be distributed during the first week of class, and sign-up will be completed then as well.
- Final Paper: 70%
 - A fifteen (15) page paper on a topic approved by the instructor. Details on the paper will be distributed during the first week of class.
- Class Participation: 10%
 - Participation in class discussions and analysis of common readings, primary documents, artifacts and works of art.
- Students must have a functioning webcam; webcams must be turned on for the duration of all course sessions.

IMPORTANT NOTES TO STUDENTS:

- It is strongly recommended that you complete as much of the reading as possible before the course begins. In particular, you should **read Taylor, *Colonial America* and Franklin, *Autobiography* before the course begins.** We will be referring to these texts throughout the class.
- **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Any willful plagiarism on papers or cheating on exams may result in an “F” for the course. For more information on what constitutes plagiarism, students should consult the Academic Integrity Policy in the Graduate Catalog, available at <http://www.ashland.edu/registrar/>.

Required Texts:

- John Demos, *Remarkable Providences: Readings on Early American History*, Revised Editions (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991), ISBN: 1-55553-098-2. **You must have the 1991 edition.**
- Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*, edited by Joyce E. Chaplin (New York: W. W Norton and Company, 1986), ISBN: 978-0393935615. **Please read this book before the class starts. If you don't have this edition, it will be difficult to follow page references in the syllabus and in class.**
- Thomas Kidd, *The Great Awakening: A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007), ISBN: 978-0312452254.
- Alan Taylor, *Colonial America: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), ISBN: 978-0199766239. **Please read this book before the class starts; we will be referring to it throughout the course.**
- Betty Wood, *Slavery in Colonial America: 1619-1776* (Rowman and Littlefield: 2005), ISBN: 978-0-7425-4419-2.
- Course Packet (**CP**) of additional reading materials. These materials (including the images) are required texts for the course.

Inexpensive copies of these books are available on Amazon.

Schedule

Week 1 | Saturday, August 22, 9:30 AM to 12:45 PM EST

SESSION A: European justifications for colonization

Focus: Why did Europeans colonize other parts of the world? What motivations and justifications are presented in the documents? What motivations and justifications are conspicuous by their absence? What is the significance of religion in these discussions?

What did colonists expect their experience would be like in the New World (that is, what did they think they would be accomplishing, for themselves or for their nation of origin in emigrating)? What sort of people were likely to emigrate? How did they imaginatively and practically prepare themselves for this experience?

Required Reading:

- Taylor, *Short History*, Introduction and Chapters 2-3
- Course Pack Readings:
 - Patricia Seed, "Taking Possession and Reading Texts: Establishing the Authority of Overseas Empires," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Apr., 1992), pp. 183-209 [26 pgs]
 - Richard Hakluyt (the younger), excerpts from *Discourse of Western Planting* (1584), [11 pgs]
 - Thomas Hariot, *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1588), [32pgs] (Note: we will also discuss this reading in the second session, with an emphasis on the portrayal of the native population.)
 - Francis Bacon, "Of Plantations," (1625), [5 pgs]
 - Bishop Berkeley, "On the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America," (1728), [1 pg]
- Readings in *Remarkable Providences*
 - Robert Cushman, *Reasons and Considerations* (1622), pp 4-10
 - List of Passengers to the New World, pp 12-17
 - Francis Higginson, "Catalogue of Such Needful Things," (1630), pp. 18-19.
 - Cornelius Van Tienhoven, "Taking Up Land in New Netherland," (1650), pp. 20-29.

BREAK

SESSION B: Encounters between Natives and English populations

Focus: Most of the English colonial charters mentioned the conversion of the native population to Christianity as among the primary ends of colonization. How does this goal appear to have shaped the colonists' interactions with the native population? What were some of the possible political repercussions of this evangelistic attitude?

Required Reading:

- Taylor, Short History, Chapter 1: "Encounters"
- Course Pack Readings
 - [ALREADY READ FOR SESSION 1: Thomas Hariot, *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1588)]
 - Seal of Massachusetts Bay Colony (1629), [1 pg]
 - John Wilson, The Day-breaking, if not the sun-rising of the Gospell with the Indians in New-England, 1647, [9 pgs]
 - R. Todd Romero, "Formerly...a harmlesse man," Chapter 6 of *Making War, Minting Christians: Masculinity, Religion, and Colonialism in Early New England* (2011), pp. 90-106. [16 pgs]
- Readings in *Remarkable Providences*
 - John White, "An Aged Manne in His Winter Garment," pp 313-314.
 - Theodore DeBry, Algonquian Indian Village, pp 315-316
 - John Rolfe, Letter to Sir Thomas Dale (1614), pp. 317-322.
 - Josiah Cotton, "Vocabulary," 328-335.
 - Treaty Negotiations, VA & MD and the Six Nations (1744), pp. 336-343.
 - Solomon Stoddard, Letter to Joseph Dudley, (1703), pp. 372-374.

SESSION A: The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century

Focus: How would you characterize life in early Virginia based on the documents excerpted here? How does this compare with Kukla's description? Is there, in effect, an 'order of disorder' that emerged in the Chesapeake? What elements of

Required Reading:

- Taylor, Short History, Chapter 4
- Course Pack Readings
 - Jon Kukla, "Order and Chaos in Early America: Political and Social Stability in Pre-Restoration Virginia," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 90, No. 2 (Apr., 1985), pp. 275-298 [25 pgs]
 - R.G., "Virginia's Cure," (1661), [3 pgs]
- The documents below are in *Remarkable Providences*
 - Edward Maria Wingfield, *A Discourse of Virginia* (1608), pp. 35-45.
 - Richard Frethorne's Letter from Jamestown to his Parents in England (1623), pp. 46-51.
 - Life of Reverend Devereux Jarratt, (1733-1762), pp. 104-122.
 - John Clayton to the Royal Society (1688), pp. 379-387.

BREAK

SESSION B: Bacon's Rebellion

Focus: What happened in Bacon's Rebellion? What grievances were raised and what legacies can we ascribe to the event? What conclusions about Virginia in the early 18th century can we draw based on the 'narrative' and 'proclamations'? What were the political repercussions of the competitive, individualistic nature of Virginia's colonial society?

Required Reading:

- All readings for this session are in the Course Pack:
 - Brent Tarter, "Bacon's Rebellion, the Grievances of the People, and the Political Culture of Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 119, No. 1 (2011), pp. 2-41 [37 pgs].
 - Nathaniel Bacon, "Proclamations," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Jul., 1893), pp. 55-63 [10 pgs]
 - Narrative of Bacon's Rebellion, *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Oct., 1896), pp. 117-154 [39 pages, but mostly footnotes]

SESSION A: Slavery

Focus: What were some of the justifications offered for black chattel slavery? What were some of the critiques? How did black slaves resist? How did they create a sense of community and identity in the midst of their enslavement? Are there any discernable regional differences in the establishment/evolution of slavery as an institution?

Required Reading:

- Betty Wood, *Slavery in Colonial America: 1619-1776* (Rowman and Littlefield: 2005), Chapters 1 and 7. Please also skim/review the “Documents” section.
- Readings in Course Pack:
 - Robert Beverley, “Of the Servants and Slaves in Virginia,” excerpt from *The History and Present State of Virginia*, 1705 (first ed.) along with excerpts from *An Act concerning Servants and Slaves*, (VA: October 1705) [4 pgs].
 - Samuel Sewall, *The Selling of Joseph: A Memorial* (1700) [5 pgs]
- Readings in Remarkable Providences
 - All of Chapter 32, pp. 299-309.

Recommended Reading: The remainder of Wood, *Slavery in Colonial America*.

BREAK

SESSION B: The Messy Middle Colonies

Focus: What is the “myth of the middle colonies” according to Bodle? How is liberty best understood and preserved according to Penn? How does Penn understand the rule of law? How do Robert Turner’s letter to William Penn reflect this understanding of politics? What do the stories of the fictitious settlers in Socialburg tell us about life in the middle colonies? How does this jibe with the “myth” and/or the reconsideration offered by Bodle?

Required Reading:

- Readings in the Course Pack:
 - Wayne Bodle. “The “Myth of the Middle Colonies” Reconsidered: The Process of Regionalization in Early America,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 113, No. 4 (Oct., 1989), pp. 527-548 [23 pgs.]
 - Excerpts from *Pennsylvania Frame of Government*, 1682. (CP).
 - Letter from Robert Turner to William Penn, August 3, 1685.
 - Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, “Origin of the Settlement of Socialburg: Situated to the Northwest of Albany County, in the Colony of New York,” (1786) [Note that although de Crevecoeur wrote his “history” of Socialburg after the American Revolution, he immigrated to New France in 1755—roughly the same year depicted in the story.] [25]

Session A: New England Begins

Focus: What character traits do Winthrop and Cotton believe will be necessary or desirable in the new colony? What expectations do they reveal about the type of community that will be established? How do they expect the citizens to relate to one another? How are these expectations and traits reflected in the documents related to town organization and politics? What does --- Pond add to our understanding of the reality of life in early Massachusetts as compared to the ideals presented by Cotton and Winthrop? What do periwigs have to do with any of the above?

Required Reading:

- Taylor, Short History, Chapter 6.
- Readings in the Course Pack:
 - John Cotton, *Gods Promise to His Plantation* (1630)
 - John Winthrop, *Model of Christian Charity* (1630)
- The documents below are in *Remarkable Providences*
 - --- Pond, To His Parents (1630), pp. 51-53.
 - Agreement Among the Settlers of Exeter, NH (1639), pp. 229-231
 - Bylaws of Town Meeting, Dorchester, MA (1645), pp. 232-238.
 - Nicholas Noyes, “Against Periwig,” pp. 252-261.

Session B: Law and Liberty: The Massachusetts Way

Focus: What is arbitrary government, according to Winthrop? How does he defend the government of Massachusetts Bay against the accusation of being arbitrary? What understanding of liberty seems to be enshrined in the *Body of Liberties*? What sort of government would be compatible with such a vision? Is what Winthrop describes compatible with it? How does the *Declaration of Grievances* compare with either of the previous documents?

Required Reading:

- Readings in the Course Pack:
 - John Winthrop, *Arbitrary government described and the Government of the Massachusetts vindicated from that aspersion* (1644) [11 pgs]
 - *Body of Liberties* (1641) [13 pgs]
 - Cotton Mather, *Declaration of Grievances* (1689) [6 pgs]

Session A: Education in New England

Focus: What does John Barnard's life story tell us about the various types of education offered in colonial New England, and their purposes? How did his education shape the way he viewed the world, and his role in it? How did it influence the way others viewed him?

Required Reading:

- Readings in *Remarkable Providences*:
 - John Barnard, "Life History," pp. 70-102
 - Cotton Mather, "Some Special Points Relating to the Education of My Children," (1706), pp. 146-149.
 - Thomas Shepard, Letter to His Son, (1672), pp. 151-157.

Session B: Worlds of Wonder and Nature: 'Providences,' Witchcraft, and Science

Focus: What was the nature of Ann Hibbins' conflict with the church in 1640? How, if at all, does that appear to relate to her later execution for witchcraft? Is there a plausible explanation for the witch trials? What, if anything, do they tell us about religion and society in New England? How did Cotton Mather understand science? How did he understand magic?

Required Reading:

- Reading in *Remarkable Providences*:
 - Proceedings of Excommunication of Ann Hibbins (1640), pp. 262-282.
- Course Pack:
 - The Case of Ann Hibbins, Executed for Witchcraft (1656) [6 pgs]
 - Cotton Mather, excerpt from "A Discourse on Witchcraft," (1689)
 - Documents related to witch trials in New England, 1630-1692
 - List of possible causes
 - Winton U. Solberg "Science and Religion in Early America: Cotton Mather's 'Christian Philosopher'," *Church History*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (Mar., 1987), pp. 73-92 [20 pgs]

SESSION A: Popular Religion in Early America

Focus: How does David D. Hall’s presentation of Samuel Sewall’s “mental world” enhance our understanding of the role of religion in colonial America? In what ways does Sewall’s religious belief and experience seem to differ from that of colonial Virginians as described by Blosser? In what ways is it similar? What themes or topics seem most important to the people described?

Required Reading:

- Readings in Course Pack:
 - David D. Hall, “The Mental World of Samuel Sewall,” *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Third Series, Vol. 92 (1980), pp. 21-44 [23 pgs]
 - Jacob M. Blosser, “Pursuing Happiness in Colonial Virginia: Sacred Words, Cheap Print, and Popular Religion in the Eighteenth Century,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 118, No. 3 (2010), pp. 209-245 [37 pgs]

BREAK

SESSION B: The Great Awakening

Focus: What was the Great Awakening? What qualities of character and community life did it encourage? What criticisms are leveled against the Awakening? Are they primarily theological or cultural? What are the possible social and political ramifications of “enthusiasm”? How did the Awakening serve to both unite and divide the American people? What long lasting effects did the Awakening have on America?

Required Reading:

- Readings from Thomas Kidd, *The Great Awakening: A Brief History with Documents:*
 - Jonathan Edwards, A Faithful Narrative (1737), pp. 31-38.
 - George Whitefield, Journals (1735-1740), pp. 43-49.
 - Stephen Bordley, On George Whitefield (1739), pp. 50-52.
 - Yale College, Declaration of the Rector and Tutors (1745), pp. 56-57
 - Nathan Cole, A Farmer Hears Whitefield Preach (1740), pp. 60-64.
 - Samson Occum, Conversion (1740), pp. 64-67.
 - Jonathan Edwards, The Distinguishing Marks (1741), pp. 89-93.
 - A. M., The State of Religion in New England (1742), pp. 94-98.
 - Boston Evening-Post, James Davenport’s Book and Clothes Burning (1743), pp. 107-109.
 - James Davenport, Confession and Retractions (1744), pp. 109-111.
 - George Whitefield, To the Inhabitants of Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina(1740), pp. 112-115.
 - Samuel Davies, Of Virginia’s Christian Slaves (1757), pp. 117-119.

SESSION A: Anglicization and Empire

Focus: Continuing our discussion of America's role within the British Empire, what themes emerge from Addison and Cato's essays, and how might these themes have shaped the colonists' understanding of their relationship with England socially and politically? What do Governor Pownall and Governor Bernard think about the Americans?

Required Reading:

- Taylor, Short History, Chapter 7 & 8
- Addison, Spectator, No. 169, 287 (1710)
- Addison, Freeholder, No. 16, 29 (1710)
- Cato, NO. 106. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1722.
- Cato, NO. 115. SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1723.
- Gov. Thomas Pownall, excerpts from *The Administration of the Colonies*, (1764)
- Governor Francis Bernard, "Principles of Law and Polity, Applied to the Government of the British Colonies" (1764) (CP)
- Craig Yirush, "English Rights in an Atlantic World," Chapter 1 of *Settlers, Liberty and Empire: The Roots of Early American Political Theory, 1675-1775* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 29-50. (CP)

BREAK

SESSION B: Franklin

Franklin

Focus: During the period in between the Glorious Revolution (1689) and the French and Indian War, scholars have argued that Americans became increasingly "Anglicized" (that is, committed to traditional English political and legal ideals) while at the same time becoming ever more tightly enmeshed in the trade, culture, and politics of the British Empire. What does Franklin's story tell us about the world within which he lived? What, specifically, does it help us understand about the politics of empire in the period leading up to the American Revolution?

Required Reading:

- Franklin, 1-76

SESSION A: Franklin, continued

Focus: What does Franklin believe are the most important political principles? In what ways are his principles similar to or different from those we have discussed elsewhere in the course? How did the “Albany Plan” reflect them?

Required Reading:

- Franklin, 77-147
- Franklin, “Albany Plan of Union” (1754) (CP)

BREAK

SESSION B: Wrap-Up – What’s American about Colonial America?

Focus: What have we learned about America from our study of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? What themes, continuities, or discontinuities emerge? How does understanding the colonial era inform our understanding of what it meant to be an American in 1776/what it means to be an American in 2015?

Required Reading:

- Both Readings are in the Course Pack:
 - Kathleen M. Brown, “Antiauthoritarianism and Freedom in Early America,” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 85, No. 1 (Jun., 1998), pp. 77-85 [12]
 - Michael Zuckerman, “The Fabrication of Identity in Early America,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Apr., 1977), pp. 183-214 [33]