History 9307A: Early America & the Atlantic World, 1600 to 1820

Fall 2016  Class Meets: Mondays 9:30-11:30 a.m., Lawson Hall (LwH) 2270C

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Course Description:
This graduate course on early American history examines the settlement of the mainland British colonies of North America in the 1600s and 1700s, their development in the context of a British Atlantic world, the American Revolution, and the formation of the early U.S. republic. Particular attention is paid to understanding the character and diversity of British colonialism and the formation of the United States through comparisons with other New World empires as well as the rich context of the multi-national, multi-ethnic Atlantic World.

Course Requirements and Grading:
Seminar Participation 20% of the final grade
Four Book Reviews (5-7 pages each) : 10% each (totals 40% of the final grade)
Major Paper (15-20 pages), due Dec 12, 2016: 40% of the final grade

Seminar Participation should be effective, relevant, and frequent. Students should come to class having read all the reading each week and prepared to offer comments, ask questions, describe arguments, and make connections between readings. Informed, weekly participation is vital to the success of the seminar.

Book Reviews. Students are required to submit 4 book reviews (to be selected from 6 books that are required reading for our course). The six titles that may be used for these reviews are: Hall (Week3), Greene (Week7), Butler (Week7), Norton (Week8), Breen (Week10) and Klooster (Week12). Due Dates for Book Reviews: Book reviews must be submitted at the beginning of the class in which the material is to be discussed. Late book reviews, under normal circumstances, will not be accepted. If a student chooses to write more than 4 book reviews, the top 4 grades will be counted. The end of this syllabus contains some additional thoughts on book reviews. (A student who really wants to write a book review on Kupperman could do so, if he or she brings the completed book review to our first class. If you have questions, email me!)
Major Paper: For the major research paper, students are encouraged to select one of the weekly themes below (or another theme* selected by the student and approved by the professor) and write a draft article (a.k.a. major research paper) on the state-of-the-field – e.g. what have been the major developments in this field over the past several decades, and what are the current trends and opportunities. Students will need to read additional books and articles beyond the assigned readings, although the material assigned for that week certainly can (and should) be a part of the research. In some cases, it may be appropriate to limit the scope of the weekly topic so that it is narrower in content or geographic coverage. Nonetheless, it is necessary for the paper to at least consider the impact of Atlantic, trans-national, and/or multi-racial perspectives. Use of some primary sources is recommended. Students will submit a one-page proposal (outlining their intended topic and bibliography) by email on or before November 9, 2016. The major paper is due Monday December 12, 2016.


Required Books/Readings:


EITHER


OR


These books are available at the bookstore. Any edition is fine. Other readings assigned for discussion are available by accessing the websites indicated in the lecture schedule below, through D.B. Weldon electronic course reserves (www.lib.uwo and go to course reserves list for our class by looking it up by course number or professor’s name), or through our OWL course website.
Major Weekly Course Themes and Readings:

Sept. 12, 2016.

Week 1. Exploration and Settlement

Required Readings:


Sept 19, 2016.

Week 2. Early Newcomer-Indigenous Relations

Required Readings:


**Sept. 26, 2016.**


Sacvan Bercovitch, “Rhetoric as Authority: Puritanism, the Bible and the Myth of America,” *Social Science Information* Vol 21 Issue 1 (Jan 1982), 5-17. [read either Bercovitch or Bozeman]


**Oct. 3, 2016.**

**Week 4. Servitude, Slavery & Labor Systems**

(To follow more easily developments in different periods of 17th century and early 18th century, students probably will want to read these materials in the order listed below.)


Oct 17, 2016

Week 6: Uprisings and Unrest in Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries


Week 7: Anglicization & Americanization: Political and Cultural Development, 1688-1750

Questions to consider: Was a pattern of British convergence overcoming the diverse origins of the British colonies in North America? Was each British North American colony or region a unique example of British colonialism? Was this period, 1688-1750, characterized less by convergence (anglicization or Europeanization) than by a process of Americanization?

Read EITHER Greene & Bumsted OR Butler & Murrin/Silverman


October 31, 2016

Week 8 Gender


**Either**


**OR:**
Linzy Brekke, “‘To Make a Figure’: Clothing and the Politics of Male Identity in Eighteenth-Century America,” in John Styles and Amanda Vickery, eds., *Gender, Taste, and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830, Studies in British Art*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 225-246.

November 7, 2016

**Week 9: Religion and Religious Pluralism in mid-eighteenth century**


November 14, 2016

**Week 10: Material Culture, Consumerism, and Identity**

Nancy Christie, “Merchant and Plebeian Commercial Knowledge in Montreal and Quebec, 1760-1820,” *Early American Studies* Vol 13 Issue 4 (Fall 2015), 856-880. [Read either Christie or O’Connor]


**November 21, 2016**

**Week 11: American Revolution: Anglo-American Dispute vs. Internal Conflict?**


Vernon P. Creviston, “‘No King unless it be a Constitutional King’: Rethinking the Place of the Quebec Act in the Coming of the American Revolution,” *Historian* Vol 73 Issue 3 (Fall 2011), 463-479.


November 28, 2016

Week 12: The American Revolution within the Age of Revolutions in Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries

Wim Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World: A Comparative History* (2009).*

*This is a synthesis comparing revolutions in the British, French and Spanish Atlantic worlds in the late eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.

December 5, 2016

Week 13: Nationalism and Identity in the Early Nineteenth Century


Some of Prof. Rhoden’s Thoughts on Book Reviews

Book reviews should acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of a book, its argument, its significance, methods/approach, and sometimes the selection and use of sources. A short descriptive summary is usually typical, to acquaint the reader with the scope of the book, but that description of its contents should be brief. Book reviews should contain far more analysis than description of contents. Still, describing the argument clearly and succinctly can be, I think, somewhat analytical, even if it has a bit of a summary quality.
It is important to describe the book's strengths, in terms of its argument and also the significance and various possible implications of the argument. You may be relying on the author, who will tell you directly or indirectly what he/she thinks is the significance of the work. I realize many of you have not read many other books on this topic, and so you may not have a lot of precisely relevant reading for comparison. You may choose to read other reviews (j-stor and other databases like “America: History and Life” will help you find them) so that you get a sense of what others have thought of the book. Yet this is optional. Of course, if you use their perspectives you'd need to cite them. I have read them. Typically published book reviews do not reference other book reviews, but you are welcome to do so. Or you could merely read them to get a sense of how the book has been received. You'll notice that published book reviews vary a lot in terms of their style and contents. Sometimes it is hard to tell they are reviewing the same book! I do not believe that your book reviews must follow a specific pattern or template. You can do things differently.

You are welcome to write about the book's weaknesses, and every book has some. When discussing the argument, consider its effectiveness, its flaws, perils and pitfalls, its limitations as well as its strengths. Could some other details have been included, or others left out? (Remember, though it is not useful to state merely that it could have been a whole lot shorter. The author chose to write a book, not an article.) Are there any leaps in judgment between the proven and the argued? What is overlooked, overemphasized, underemphasized, or omitted? One important tip to take away: consider assessing whether the author managed to achieve the goals he/she set for the book-- did it do what it set out to do, and did it prove what it set out to prove effectively and convincingly? Why, or why not? All of these analytic matters are suitable for inclusion in your review, but I realize that one can't cover everything. Reviews, like all papers, take a specific angle or make a specific argument, and that shapes the content.

So, overall, an analysis of the strengths & weaknesses of a book (and its argument) is key to a review. You can and likely should also discuss its significance and/or implications. Beyond that, what you focus on is up to you, and depends on what angle or argument you are making overall.

Hope this is helpful, and best of luck!

_Syllabus Last Revised: June 3, 2016. This is a draft. There may be slight alterations to the syllabus made before the end of August, but the major readings and assignments should not change._

_TO Prospective Students: If you are considering this course and have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Prof. Rhoden at nrhoden@uwo.ca_