The University of Western Ontario  
Department of History  
2017-2018  

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

Fall 2017  Class Meets: Mondays 1:30-3:30 p.m. Lawson Hall (LwH) 2270C  

Prof. Nancy L. Rhoden  
Associate Professor  
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Office Hours: Monday 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Thursday 10:30-11:30, or by appointment  

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 (4-5 pages each):  10% each (totals 40% of the final grade)  
Major Paper (15-20 pages), due Dec 11, 2017:  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. *Included in seminar participation grade is a brief oral presentation in week 9 (Nov 6) or week 10 (Nov 13) on students’ work-in-progress for major paper; the length of that oral presentation will depend on the number of students in the class and will be announced in class.  

Four Book Reviews. Students are required to submit 4 book reviews (to be selected from the books that are required reading for our course). The titles that may be used for these reviews are: Kupperman (Week1), Hall (Week3), Greene (Week7), Butler (Week7), Norton (Week8), Breen (Week10), Klooster (Week12), DuVal (Week12) and Freeman (Week13). 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!) Students are cautioned not to write all of their book reviews in the last few weeks. If you find yourself wanting to write reviews of later material because it interests you more, then use your best time management skills to write these reviews earlier in the semester, so that you still have plenty of time to work on your major paper.

**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) that either (a) answers a significant (and “doable”) research question or (b) provides a literature review. A literature review may be considered an assessment of the state-of-the-field on a particular topic-- 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 most cases, it will be appropriate to refine and limit the research question or the literature review so it is narrower than the topics covered in one of our weekly sessions (narrower in content or geographic coverage, etc.) It is necessary for the paper to consider the impact of Atlantic, international, and/or multi-racial perspectives. Use of some primary sources is highly recommended, and some research questions may require extensive consideration of primary sources. Students will submit a **two-page proposal** (outlining their intended topic) and also a bibliography) by email on or before **November 3, 2017**. The proposal will not be graded, but should be taken seriously, since its purpose is allow the professor to give feedback and suggestions on the topic, the approach, and relevant sources. Paper topics must be approved by the professor. Students will also give **brief oral presentations (on November 6, 2017 and Nov 13, 2017)** describing their work-in-progress on their major paper; this will count toward participation grade. **The major paper is due Monday, December 11, 2017.** Students should submit one paper copy to Professor Rhoden (in person or to the History Department drop box) and submit another copy electronically to the OWL course website (so that it is submitted to turnitin.com).*** The electronic submission date will be used as the official submission date. **Late papers will be subject to a penalty of 2% per day** it is late (including Sat. & Sunday).


***All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com. http://www.turnitin.com.
Required Books/Readings:


EITHER


OR


EITHER


OR


These books are available at the bookstore. Any edition is fine. Other readings assigned for discussion are available by accessing the electronic link within the syllabus (where supplied), or by accessing D.B. Weldon electronic course reserves (Go to lib.uwo.ca and go to “Course Readings” to get the electronic list (with links to full pdfs) for our class by looking it up by course number or professor’s name), or through our OWL course website (access through: https://owl.uwo.ca).

Major Weekly Course Themes and Readings:

Sept. 11, 2017.

Week 1. Exploration and Settlement

Required Readings:


**Sept 18, 2017.**

**Week 2. Early Newcomer-Indigenous Relations**

Required Readings:


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 Bercovich or Bozeman]


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 9, 2017–Week 5. Thanksgiving. No class meeting. Oct 9-13 Fall Reading Week

Oct 16, 2017

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


Oct 23, 2017

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 30, 2017

Week 8 Gender


Either


**OR:**

**NOTE:** two-page proposal (outlining intended topic for major paper) and also a bibliography is due by email on or before **November 3, 2017**

**November 6, 2017**

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


**NOTE:** Some students will give brief oral presentations in class on **November 6, 2017** describing their work-in-progress on their major paper.
November 13, 2017

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


Either:


OR


**NOTE:** Some students will give brief oral presentations in class on November 13, 2017 describing their work-in-progress on their major paper.

November 20, 2017

**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 27, 2017**

**Week 12: The American Revolution from the Frontier or From Without**

**EITHER**

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.


**OR**


**December 4, 2017**

**Week 13: Nationalism and Identity in the Early Nineteenth Century**


**December 11, 2017: No Class. (Fall Classes end on Dec 8, and Dec 9 is a Study Day). Major Paper is due on December 11.**

**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 14, 2017. There may be slight alterations to the syllabus made before the end of August, but the major readings and assignments will not change.

***TO Prospective Students***:

If you are thinking about taking this course and have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Prof. Rhoden at nrhoden@uwo.ca