This course examines the interactions among Indians, Africans, and Europeans in the centuries after they first encountered each other on the North American continent. Many of our readings draw from the historiography of the mainland colonies of British America, but we will also explore how recent historians have sought to expand the temporal, geographical, and theoretical boundaries of “colonial America.” By the end of this course, you should be able to

- Explain how various scholars have interpreted what counts as “colonial American” history. (*For example… What does “colonial” mean in a North American context? Where was colonial America, and when did its history begin and end?)

- Describe regional variation in colonial America, especially with reference to modes of colonization, labor regimes, and social relations. (*For example… What were the differences in how the Spanish and the English established colonial rule in the Americas? How did slavery in Virginia differ from slavery in South Carolina? Why did these differences matter?)

- Identify broad transformations and continuities in colonial experience over time, with an emphasis on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. (*For example… How did relations between Europeans and Native Americans change from the early period of colonization to the eighteenth-century wars for empire? Over time, did the social, economic, and political landscape of the British colonies come to look more or less like Britain itself?)

- Analyze the relationship between primary sources and scholarly interpretations in the study of colonial America. (*For example… How have historians’ interpretations of the Salem witchcraft crisis of 1692 changed over time? Was there really a “Great Awakening,” or is this just a convenient label for historians to use?)

**Expectations and assignments**

**Honor principle**
Reed’s honor principle governs our conduct in this course in two ways:

- **Respect for others.** If you don’t agree with what someone else has to say, you are welcome (and encouraged) to express your point of view, but you must do so respectfully, and you must support your claims with textual evidence.

- **Intellectual honesty.** If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, don’t hesitate to ask. In your written work, please follow the Chicago Manual of Style’s suggested format for citation in the humanities (footnotes, not in-text citations).
There is an abbreviated guide to Chicago style here:  
http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Conference attendance and participation  
You are expected to come to conference on time and prepared to participate in discussion of the assigned readings. Participation includes both expressing your own ideas and questions and listening carefully to those of others. Please bring copies of each day’s reading to conference with you. Missing more than four conferences will put you at risk of failing the course.

Written assignments  
You will receive detailed descriptions of all written assignments ahead of their due dates. All late work will be penalized, although I will consider requests for extensions on a case-by-case basis. (The earlier you ask for an extension, the more likely I am to grant it.) In cases in which your written work will be circulated to other members of the conference as a basis for class discussion (specifically, the colonial research odyssey and the primary source report), I will grant no extensions and accept no late work.

- **Discussion questions.** Beginning in the second week, you will be assigned on a rotating basis to post discussion questions to the course email list. These questions are due by 8 p.m. the day before the conference meets. On days when you are not assigned to comment on readings, you should be sure to review your classmates’ comments in preparation for conference.

- **Colonial research odyssey.** This assignment will require you to locate and annotate primary sources in colonial American history available either physically or digitally at Reed. 2-3 page research memo plus primary sources; due 2/15.

- **Map paper.** This paper will give you a chance to exercise the historian’s skills of close reading and contextualization of a primary source. 5-7 pages; due 3/12.

- **Final paper proposal and bibliography.** 1-2 pages; due 4/4.

- **Primary source report.** This paper will be a close reading of a primary source that you plan to use in your final paper. 3-4 pages plus the primary source; due 4/18.

- **Final paper.** This paper will require you to make a historical argument about a primary source (or set of primary sources) of your own choosing. 12-15 pages; due 5/9.

Reading  
As you will learn, colonial America is a huge and diverse place, and its history spans several hundred years. We won’t be able to cover this history in its entirety. Instead, I have chosen a series of provocative and influential readings that touch on many of the major problems in colonial American history. The first four weeks of the course raise some “big picture” questions; starting in the fifth week, we will move through a roughly chronological study of the seventeenth
and eighteenth centuries. In general, I have stressed thematic coherence over following a strict narrative. If you would like a narrative introduction to colonial America, you should consult a textbook (good options include Out of Many by John Mack Faragher et al and A People and a Nation by Mary Beth Norton et al) or a synthetic history (Alan Taylor’s American Colonies is a good place to start). These books are also useful references for learning more about the events, transformations, people, and places you will encounter in the more specialized readings.

The books listed below are required, as we will be reading them in their entirety. They are on order at the bookstore and on reserve at the library. Earlier editions than the ones listed below are fine (and may be less expensive).


The other readings include journal articles, primary sources, chapters from edited volumes, and excerpts from longer monographs. Many of these readings are available electronically, either through online journals, public websites, or the course e-reserves, and the appropriate site or link is marked below. Books marked with an asterisk (*) are on reserve at the library. I strongly advise making photocopies or printouts of reserve and online readings so that you can bring hard copies of the readings to conference. A digital version of the syllabus, with active links to the readings, is available via Moodle (log on to moodle.reed.edu and go to History 361).

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

**Week 1: Beginnings**

**M 1/28 How shall we begin?**

**W 1/30 Where and when was colonial America?**

F 2/1 What’s colonial?
      http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/wm/64.2/greene.html

Week 2: The colonial archive

M 2/4 Researching colonial America
      Conference meets in the library (L-17) to discuss research strategies for early American history.

W 2/6 Places and things
      Questions: Group A.

F 2/8 Words and images
      http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0678%28199412%2946%3A%3C479%3ADMTNTJ%3E2.0.CO%3B2-H
      http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0043-5597%28199607%29%3A%3C487%3AT%22IKAT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-S
      Questions: Group B.

Week 3: Encounters and empires

M 2/11 Claiming empire
      http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0043-5597%28199204%29%3A%3C183%3ATPARTE%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Q
http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0021-8723%28199306%2980%3A1%3C9%3ASLASMT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-%23

http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0043-5597%28199707%293%3A54%3C549%3AMAECAC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-C

Questions: Group C.

**W 2/13 New worlds for all**

http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0043-5597%28198410%293%3A4%3C537%3AIM%3E2.0.CO%3B2-7


Questions: Group D.

**F 2/15 Charting empire**

Conference will meet in 2 sessions, either 1:00 or 2:00 p.m., in L41 to look at the library’s antiquarian map collection. No additional assigned reading.

COLONIAL RESEARCH ODYSSEY DUE to my office (CC124), 5 p.m.

**Week 4: Newcomers**

**M 2/18 Research roundtable I**

a) Colonial research odyssey sources: please read the research memo and primary sources posted on Moodle by the two people listed alphabetically after you, PLUS three other sets of memos and documents relevant to your interests.

b) Choose one primary source (not one of your own) and be prepared to present it to the class on Monday. What is interesting about the source? What historical questions does it raise? If you were to build a paper around it, what sort of argument might you make? What additional research would you do to develop your interpretation of this source? Please come to class with a set of notes addressing these questions. In thinking through these questions, it might help to consider how the scholars we have read so far (especially Ulrich, Deetz, Lepore, Hinderaker, and Seed) built historical arguments out of their close reading and questioning of primary sources.

**W 2/20 Peopling British America**


Questions: Group A.
F 2/22 Unwilling migrants

Questions: Group B.

F 2/22 Research roundtable I
a) Colonial research odyssey sources (as assigned).

Week 5: English colonization in the seventeenth century

M 2/25 Virginia
a) Townsend, Pocahontas and the Powhatan Dilemma.
Questions: Group C.

W 2/27 New England
a) John Cotton, God’s Promise to His Plantations (London, 1634; reprint, Boston, 1686). <E-reserves>
Questions: Group D.

F 2/29 Reconsiderations
b) Review Greene excerpt assigned for 1/30.
Questions: Group A.

Week 6: The Salem witchcraft crisis (case study)

M 3/3 Setting the scene
In class: discussion of Salem witchcraft crisis primary sources.
MAP PAPER DUE in conference.

W 3/5 Community disorder

Questions: Group B.

F 3/7 Colonial dilemmas

Questions: Group C.

Week 7: Slavery and rebellion

M 3/10 The worlds the slaves made

Questions: Group D.

W 3/12 Anatomy of a revolt
a) Smith, Stono, xi-xvii, 1-29.

Questions: Group A.

F 3/14 Interpreting a revolt
a) Smith, Stono, 59-123.

Questions: Group B.

3/15-3/23 SPRING BREAK

Week 8: Liberty and rebellion

M 3/24 Sweet liberty
a) Begin Lepore, New York Burning.

In conference: discussion of expectations for final paper.
W 3/26 Comparing slave conspiracies  
   Questions: Group C.

F 3/28 Morality and methodology  
      [http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/reviews_in_american_history/v034/34.3mcconville.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/reviews_in_american_history/v034/34.3mcconville.html)  
   Questions: Group D.

Week 9: Workers and markets

M 3/31 Varieties of (un)free labor  
   b) Excerpts from Gottlieb Mittelberger, *Journey to Pennsylvania in the Year 1750*:  
      [http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5712](http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5712) and [http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5713](http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5713)  
   c) Elizabeth Sprigs, letter home (1756): [http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5796](http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5796)  
   d) William Moraley, excerpt from *The Infortunate* (1743):  
      [http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6229](http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6229)  
   Questions: Group A.

W 4/2 Capitalism begins at home  
      [http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0043-5597%28199807%293%3A55%3A5%3C51%3AMACFIE%3E2.0.CO%3B2-V](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0043-5597%28199807%293%3A55%3A5%3C51%3AMACFIE%3E2.0.CO%3B2-V)  
   Questions: Group B.

F 4/4 Workers of the Atlantic world, unite!  
   FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE in conference.

Week 10: George Whitefield in America (case study)

M 4/7 What’s all the fuss about?  
http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0021-8723%28198209%2969%3A2%3C305%3AEDADTG%3E2.0.CO%3B2-W

http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0028-4866%28199512%2968%3A4%3C650%3AATFGAWI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-D

d) (Optional) “Religion in 18th-Century America”:  
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/religion/rel02.html

Questions: Group C.

**W 4/9 Communication, commercialization, and God**

http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0021-8723%28199012%2977%3A3%3C812%3A%22IDGWA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-G

b) Search on “Whitefield” in *America’s Historical Newspapers*. Bring a page of notes to class: do your discoveries support Lambert’s argument? What patterns do you discern in the newspaper coverage of Whitefield? How did you focus or limit your search in order to find those patterns?

**F 4/11 Whose awakening? [Rescheduled to M 4/14]**

a) James Albert Ukawsaw Groniosaw, *Narrative* (1774):  

Questions: Group D.

**Week 11: Imperial reckoning**

**M 4/14 War and empire I**


Questions: Group A.

**W 4/16 War and empire II**


Questions: Group B.

**F 4/18 After the settlement**


b) Herman Husband, excerpt from *An Impartial Relation of the First Rise and Causes of the Recent Differences in Public Affairs* (1770):  
http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6233

FINAL PAPER PRIMARY SOURCE REPORT DUE. Post to Moodle by 5 p.m.
**Week 12: Toward independence**

**M 4/21 Was the American Revolution anti-colonial?**

a) Joseph Brant on “The Disturbances in America” (1776): http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/8071

b) Mary Jemison on the Revolutionary War in Seneca country: http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5826

http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0275-1275%28200221%2922%3A1%3C55%3ATDGUCN%3E2.0.CO%3B2-2

Questions: Group C.

**W 4/23 Research roundtable II**

a) Read and critique primary source reports (as assigned).

**F 4/25 When does colonial America end?**


Questions: Group D.

**Week 13: Evaluations**

**M 4/28 Where is colonial America going?**


**W 4/30 What’s wrong with this course?**


**F 5/2 Why does colonial America matter?**

**M 5/12 FINAL PAPER DUE** to my office (CC124) by 5 p.m.