In the late eighteenth century, thirteen North American colonies severed their colonial ties to Britain and constituted a new nation. This course will assess the causes of these changes, as well as the extent to which they altered the political, diplomatic, social, and cultural landscape of North America. We will address major conflicts of the period from 1763 to 1815, including the tensions between libertarian ideology and institutionalized slavery, household dependence and national independence, centralized authority and local control, enlightenment rationalism and evangelical religion, private property and communal interests, and Indian sovereignty and American expansionism.

Within this broad framework, this course emphasizes two aspects of the recent historiography of the American Revolution. First, we will consider how people on the margins of British colonial society (including slaves, Indians, workers, and women) shaped and were shaped by the transformations of the late eighteenth century. Second, we will study recent texts that situate the Revolutionary years in continental, Atlantic, international, or imperial contexts, thereby countering “exceptionalist” narratives that have long held sway in this field. In addition to reading secondary works in these two strands of Revolutionary historiography, we will read numerous primary sources produced by eighteenth-century Americans, including political tracts, autobiographies, newspaper advertisements, and a novel. We will consider how the images of the late eighteenth century that these sources create compare to the mythic narratives of the founding era perpetuated after the Revolution.

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- identify major events, figures, and ideas in American history in the period 1763-1815;
- describe and analyze scholarly debates concerning Revolutionary America, especially relating to social history and to the global turn in recent historiography;
- interpret primary documents from Revolutionary America with reference to their social, cultural, and political context.

**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 for 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 three 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. Late work will be penalized and will receive minimal comments. Failure to complete all written assignments will put you at risk of failing the course.

Reading responses. Beginning in the second week, you will be assigned on a bi-weekly basis to post to the course email list a brief response (no more than 200 words) to the readings. These responses are due by 10 a.m. the day of the conference at which the readings will be discussed. On days when you are not assigned to comment on readings, you should be sure to review your classmates’ comments in preparation for conference. All students are expected to complete four responses by the end of the semester.

Two short papers. 1500 words each; due at my office by 5 p.m. on Friday, February 20 and Friday, March 13.

Preparatory assignments for final paper. You should email me a brief proposal for your final paper by 8 p.m. on Friday, April 3. In addition, a report of 1000-1500 words on the primary source you will use for your final paper is due by 5 p.m. on Saturday, April 18 (submit electronically).

Final paper. The paper will require you to make a historical argument about a primary source (or set of primary sources) of your own choosing. 4000-4500 words; due by 5 p.m. on Friday, May 8.

Reading
The required books are on order at the bookstore and on reserve at the library:


Most of the additional readings are available electronically, either through online journals, public websites, or the course e-reserves; the appropriate site or link is marked below. 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 links to the online readings, is available via Moodle (log on to moodle.reed.edu and go to History 362). The Moodle site also provides access to additional information about the course and the topics covered.

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

**Week 1: Introduction**

**M 1/26 American scripture**

**W 1/28 Setting the scene**


**Week 2: The Revolutionary man (and woman)**

**M 2/2 Virtue and freedom**


b) Elopement advertisements and other newspaper items. [on Moodle]

RESPONSE: Group A.

**W 2/4 Ben Franklin: representations and representativeness**


RESPONSE: Group B.

**Week 3: The transformation of empire**

**M 2/9 Mapping a new world order**


RESPONSE: Group C.

**W 2/11 The stuff of revolution**


RESPONSE: Group D.

**Week 4: Breaking away**

**M 2/16 Cities in revolt**


RESPONSE: Group A.

W 2/18 What did the declaration declare?
RESPONSE: Group B.

F 2/20 FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE by 5 p.m. to Vollum 124.

Week 5: Taking sides

M 2/23 Opting for freedom
   b) Felix’s petition (1773): [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part2/2h22t.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part2/2h22t.html)
   c) Petition of January 1777: [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part2/2h32t.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part2/2h32t.html)
   d) Explore the following websites, and bring to class a page of notes recounting your discoveries (further instructions in class):
      [http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/index.html](http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/index.html) and
RESPONSE: Group C.

W 2/25 Strange alliances and intimate enemies
   c) Documents from Nicholas Hawwawas pension file. [on Moodle]
RESPONSE: Group D.

Week 6: War

M 3/2 Honor and violence
RESPONSE: Group A.

W 3/4 War at home
   b) Letters of John and Abigail Adams. [handout]

RESPONSE: Group B.

**Week 7: Another look at the war years**

**M 3/9 The invisible enemy**

a) Fenn, *Pox Americana*, 3-134.

RESPONSE: Group C.

**W 3/11 Continental perspectives**


RESPONSE: Group D.

**F 3/13 SECOND SHORT PAPER DUE by 5 p.m. to Vollum 124**

**M 3/16-F 3/20 SPRING BREAK**

**Week 8: Making states**

**M 3/23 The politics of “the people”**

a) John Adams, “Thoughts on Government” (1776):

b) [For reference] Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (1780):
   [http://www.mass.gov/legis/const.htm](http://www.mass.gov/legis/const.htm)

c) [For reference] “John Adams and the Massachusetts Constitution”:


e) “To the Publick,” *Massachusetts Gazette* (January 1788):
   [http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6213](http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6213)

RESPONSE: Group B.

**W 3/25 State of states, nation among nations**


b) Constitution of the United States of America and Bill of Rights:
   [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/charters/constitution_transcript.html)

RESPONSE: Group A.
**Week 9: Party politics**

**M 3/30 The transformation of political culture**

a) James Madison, Federalist No. 10 (1787):
   
   http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa10.htm


   
   http://www.jstor.org/stable/3123352


RESPONSE: Group D.

**W 4/1 Dueling and dining**

a) Catherine Allgor, introduction and “President Thomas Jefferson in Washington City,” in *Parlor Politics: In Which the Ladies of Washington Help Build a City and a Government* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 1-47. [e-reserves]

   
   http://www.jstor.org/stable/2947402

c) Use America’s Historical Newspapers to identify newspaper coverage of the Burr-Hamilton duel. Bring notes to class.

RESPONSE: Group C.

**F 4/3 FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL due by 8 p.m. via email**

**Week 10: Ironies of freedom I**

**M 4/6 Dangerous liberty**

a) Foster, *The Coquette*.

RESPONSE: Group B.

**W 4/8 Killing slavery and conceiving race**


b) Petition of Primus Grant and others (1798). [on Moodle]

RESPONSE: Group A.

**Week 11: Ironies of freedom II**

**M 4/13 Enlightenment and empire**  

RESPONSE: Group D.

**W 4/15 Searching the globe for freedom**  
   a) Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom*, 75-205.

RESPONSE: Group C.

**S 4/18 PRIMARY SOURCE REPORT due by 5 p.m. via email**

**Week 12: New horizons**

**M 4/20 Writing workshop**

**W 4/22 The wars of 1811**  
http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1086/ahr.113.3.647
   d) Tecumseh, “Address to the Osages” (1811):  

RESPONSE: Optional/make-up.

**Week 13: Legacies**

**M 4/27 Remembering the Revolution**  

RESPONSE: Optional/make-up.

**W 4/29 Do we still need the American Revolution?**  
http://www.common-place.org/vol-08/no-01/talk/


RESPONSE: Optional/make-up.

EXAM WEEK
F 5/8 FINAL PAPER DUE by 5 p.m. to Vollum 124