

HSTA 311: The American Revolutionary Era

Fall 2017—Tuesday and Thursday, 8:00-9:15 a.m.

Roberts Hall 218

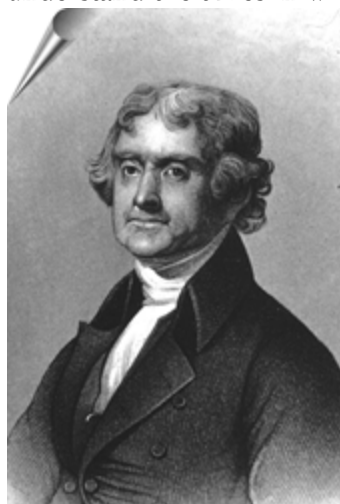
Instructor: Jeff Bartos

Email: jeffrey.bartos@montana.edu

Office and Hours: Wilson 2-166, Tuesday and Thursday 9:30-10:30 & By Appointment

Course Description: In this course, we will interrogate the social history and politics of the American Revolutionary Era, beginning roughly in 1750 and ending sometime around 1800. To do so, we are going to examine some of the biographies of both ordinary and famous people of the era, and their influence and experience. They lived through, or died during, the transformation of eastern North America from British colony to independent nation-state. We will interrogate whether the conflicts between 1775 and 1784 were merely a war of independence or a true “Revolution,” and for whom. We will also look at the Constitutional Convention, the Ratification of the US Constitution, and ideas of liberty, independence, and freedom, and compare the American Revolution to the other major revolutions of the era, namely the French and Haitian Revolutions. We are going to take the experiences of a variety of groups of Americans—including famous dead white men, women of various races and socioeconomic classes, free and enslaved African Americans, and Native Americans—as a means of exploring this era of American History.

This period is a fundamental era, but its meaning and legacy is often misconstrued and subject to a variety of interpretations. How can the study of the origins of the United States help us understand the times in which we exist and persist? Do we have a radical and revolutionary past, or



*Thomas Jefferson:
Revolutionary Slave Owner*

a conservative heritage? What, precisely, is our system of government—what did words such as “democracy” and “republic” mean at the time, and how has that changed? What does “All men are created equal” mean, and what about that annoying pursuit of happiness clause? How did the lives of women, Blacks, and Indians change during this era?

The format of this course may be a bit different from other courses you have taken in that it emphasizes the assigned readings and class discussions quite heavily. You will need to read quite carefully and take notes to participate in the weekly discussions, and you must keep up with the weekly readings to engage with the material and your peers. We are meeting twice a week (Tuesday and Thursday) for most of the semester, holidays excluded. Each day, I will likely spend 15-20 minutes on a topical mini-lecture that relates to the readings. On Tuesdays, we will discuss the readings for the week, and on Thursdays, we will have one or two presentations from your peers that interprets a set of primary documents, and then a discussion led by that week’s presenter(s).

As this class and its participants are effectively codependent, I expect attendance at every meeting. I realize that the course meets very early in the day, and therefore recommend bringing your favorite caffeinated beverage, or several. If, for some reason, you cannot attend a class meeting, you need to contact me in advance. I may excuse your absence if you are dead, grievously injured or ill, or otherwise indisposed, provided you have proper documentation.

Learning Objectives:

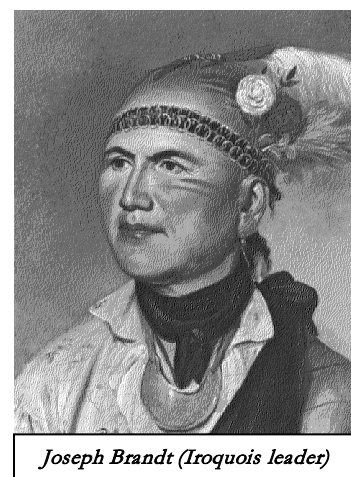
- Discuss and debate the origins and outcomes of the American Revolution for members of different social groups.
- Analyze and assess primary sources, write an in-depth interpretation of the sources, and present findings and conclusions to peers.
- Interpret the arguments of the course materials and your peers, and write an essay with an evidence-based cogent argument.
- Present a written argument on the origins, outcomes, and legacy of the American Revolution as a final exam.

The Course Materials!

Readings: Consider the assigned readings to be indispensable, and arguably the most important component for understanding the American Revolutionary Era. We're looking at secondary pieces from distinguished scholars in the field, including MSU's infamous Dr. Billy G. Smith, as well as the recorded experiences of the people of the era. The best readers are active readers, meaning there is a certain interaction with the readings by taking notes, asking questions, and interrogating the author's argument and method. These books, especially Billy's, are not definitive, and I encourage you to question the claims of the authors.

Lectures: My lectures will present only one interpretation of American History. It is not necessarily right, and by no means definitive. Listen critically, ask questions, take notes, and relate them to the larger materials. Approach them not as the word of God to be copied and regurgitated in your essays, but as an invitation to develop your own interpretation of the Revolutionary Era. If, however, you do hear the voice of the divine, whether in lecture or from a specter, be sure to take notes. At the very least, you might score a book deal and a speaking tour. I discourage martyrdom.

Class Discussions: You can expect to spend 30-45 minutes per class period engaged in a discussion with your peers. Since we meet rather early in the day, I'm scheduling the discussion to occur at the end of the class period, once everyone's adenosine receptors are feeling the sweet tickle of the caffeine molecule. These discussions are vital to your learning experience and development as a human being, as learning to express your ideas orally is essential to being an educated and erudite person. A full 25% of your grade is based on participation in these discussion, and the occasional surprise quiz. Attendance is also factored into the discussion grade—if you have perfect attendance yet do not speak up, expect no better than a C- for your discussion grade. I will be grading your discussion comments based on the quality, not the quantity of your participation. If you are shy or have other issues with participating in a class discussion, please come visit with me and we can work out another assignment. Generally, on Tuesdays, we will have a free-form discussion of the week's reading. I will give a lecture for the first part of the course, and then I will step back, and we will have a discussion of the readings. On Thursdays, we will have a presentation from one of your peers (or you!), and then a discussion of the primary sources examined and the presentation.



Joseph Brant (Iroquois leader)

Presentations and Essays Analyzing Primary Documents: Besides the weekly secondary source readings, we will be reading additional pieces that contain primary documents written by people of the Revolutionary Era. Each student will write **one** paper (750-1000 words, double spaced, typed, etc.) that analyzes a set of weekly documents, and create a 15 to 20-minute presentation to the class

about the topics raised in the documents. Depending on course enrollment, you may form a “revolutionary cell” for the presentations, in which your group will be responsible for the presentation. The week’s presenters will be responsible for moderating the subsequent discussion that follows their presentation. You may choose any means of presentation that is appropriate, imaginative, educational, and/or humorous, as long as it interprets the materials for the rest of the class. Your primary source essay will be due via the assignments tab on D2L/Brightspace by 12:00 p.m. on the **TUESDAY** of your presentation week, and it will be posted to D2L for your peers to read, consume, and consider before your presentation. The paper will be worth 15% of your final grade, and your presentation will be worth 10% of your final grade, for a grand total of 25% of your grade. Late papers will be penalized, and, barring impressment, death, dismemberment, and/or plague, late presentations are untenable. Topics and detailed instructions for the primary source paper and presentations will be on a separate handout.

Midterm Essay: The midterm essay will count for 25% of your final grade, and is due to D2L before 11:59 p.m. on October 26th. You will be given the choice of several questions at least two weeks before the due date, and you will write a 750-1000 word essay that addresses one of the questions. This essay must be typed, free of errors of style and grammar, well-organized, and draw on the course materials through the use of direct quotations and evidence. They will be submitted to the assignments tab on D2L and run through TurnItIn to check for plagiarism. Further details on the Midterm Essay will be on a handout distributed with the questions.

Final Exam: University policy mandates a sit-down final exam, and so that’s what we will be doing. Block off the hours of **4:00-5:50 p.m. on Wednesday, December 13th**, for our final. You will write a cogent, well-considered essay at this time, based off one of several questions distributed a week or two before the exam. The final exam is worth 25% of your grade. Further instructions for the final will be distributed beforehand.

Grading Breakdown:

Active class discussion and attendance:	25%
Primary Source Interpretation Paper:	15%
Primary Source Interpretation Presentation:	10%
Midterm Essay:	25%
Final Exam:	25%
Total:	100% (I think.)

Required Books: All of these books are available at the MSU Bookstore, but you may be able to find cheaper, used copies on Amazon or other internet retailers. I understand the travails of college life and the necessity to save money for ski passes and other *expenses*.

1. David Fischer, *Paul Revere's Ride*
2. Ray Raphael, Alfred Young, & Gary Nash, eds., *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*
3. Edmund Morgan, *The Meaning of Independence: John Adams, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson*
4. Billy G. Smith, ed., *Life in Early Philadelphia*
5. Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*. (Widely available online, .pdf on D2L; print edition useful for shaking above head during spirited debate.)
6. Wim Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World: A Comparative History*

Required Readings: There will be additional readings posted to D2L under weekly headings. As a

prerequisite for the course, you must have access to D2L and be familiar with how to access content and submit essays. See me with questions.

1. Thomas Paine, "The Age of Reason" (excerpts)
2. Ira Berlin, "The Revolution in Black Life"
3. Colin Calloway, "Corn Wars and Civil Wars: The American Revolution Comes to Indian Country"
4. Jon Butler, "Does the First Amendment Separate Church and State?"
5. Marcus Rediker, "'Under the Banner of King Death': The Social World of Anglo-American Pirates, 1716 to 1726"
6. Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (2008), Chapters 1 and 2.
7. The Declaration of Independence (1776); The US Constitution (1789); the Bill of Rights (1791).

Course Schedule:

Week One (August 29 & 31) Introductions, Syllabus, and the Course Preview

Tuesday: Syllabus, Course Introduction, Icebreaker round.

Thursday: Individual material introductions, sign-up for presentations

Readings: Acquire books, begin week two readings.

Week Two (September 5 & 7) Early America, Pirates, and Democracy

Tuesday: Smugglers, Pirates, and Maritime Democracy

Reading: Rediker, "'Under the Banner of King Death'" (pirates)

Thursday: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Colonial America

Reading: Rediker, *The Slave Ship*, Chs. 1 and 2. (D2L)

Week Three (September 12 & 14) Paul Revere, John Adams, and Boston

Tuesday: Colonial Boston and Paul Revere.

Reading: *Paul Revere's Ride*, Introduction and pages 1-77

Thursday: John Adams and the Boston Elite

Reading: *Meaning of Independence*: Chapter 1: John Adams

Week Four (September 19 & 21) Paul Revere & Beginnings of Revolution

Tuesday: Paul Revere continued

Reading: *Paul Revere's Ride*, 78-173

Thursday: War comes to Massachusetts

Reading: Finish *Paul Revere's Ride*

Week Five (September 26 & 28) Ebenezer Macintosh & Ordinary People

Tuesday: The Lower Sorts and Mechanics

Reading: *Revolutionary Founders* Intro and Chapter 1,

Thursday: Presentation: The Boston Massacre.

Reading: Boston Massacre Sources (D2L) and analytical essays.

Week Six (October 3 & 5) Daily Life, Poverty, Inequality, and Democracy

Tuesday: Philadelphia's Radicals

Reading: *Revolutionary Founders*, ch. 4; Smith, *Life in Early Philadelphia*, ch. 1.

Thursday: Presentations: 1) Poverty, and 2) Equality and Justice in Philadelphia

Reading: Analytical essays and *Life in Early Philadelphia*, chs. 2, 9, and 10.

Week Seven (October 10 & 12) **Thomas Paine & Radicalism**

Tuesday: Thomas Paine and Radical Ideologies

Reading: *Revolutionary Founders*, ch. 6: "A World of Paine,"

Thursday: *Common Sense*, The Declaration of Independence

Reading: Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*; The Declaration of Independence (D2L),

Week Eight (October 17 & 19) **Revolutionary War and Loyalists**

Tuesday: War, Dissent, and Loyalties

Reading: *The Meaning of Independence*, ch. 2; *Revolutionary Founders*, ch. 7.

Thursday: Presentations: Wartime Experiences and Loyalists (2 presentations)

Reading: Primary sources for Wartime Experiences and Loyalists, Analytical essays

Week Nine (October 24 & 26) **Writing Week.**

Essays Due to D2L on October 26th before 11:59 p.m. No Class Meetings. Extended Office Hours 8-11 on Tuesday.

Week Ten (October 31 & November 2) **African Americans in the Revolutionary Era**

Tuesday: Liberty for all? Slavery in a Republic.

Reading: Berlin, "The Revolution in Black Life," (D2L); *Revolutionary Founders*, ch. 18.

Thursday: Presentations: Runaways and Prisoners (2 presentations)

Reading: Smith, *Life In Early Philadelphia*, chs. 3, 4; Analytical Essays.

Week Eleven (November 7 & 9) **Women in the Revolution**

Tuesday: Proto-Feminism? Or something else?

Reading: *Revolutionary Founders*, chs. 6 & 16; *The Meaning of Independence*, 64-66

Thursday: Presentations: Two Women; Marriage & Death (2 presentations)

Reading: Smith, *Life In Early Philadelphia*, chs. 5-7, Analytical Essays.

Week Twelve (November 14 & 16) **Indians in the Revolutionary Era**

Tuesday: Wars in Indian Country

Reading: Calloway, "Corn Wars and Civil Wars" (D2L)

Thursday: Presentation: Native Americans

Reading: Primary sources for Native Americans (D2L), Analytical Essays.

Week Thirteen (November 21—Pilgrim Awareness and Prevention Week, Online Assignment, No Class Meeting)

Documentary and Quiz on D2L, to be determined. Begin reading Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World*.

Week Fourteen (November 28 & 30) **Comparative Revolutions in The Atlantic World**

Tuesday: Turmoil in the Atlantic World

Reading: Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World*, 1-10; 45-116.

Thursday: The Value of Comparative History

Reading: Klooster, *Revolutions in the Atlantic World*, 117-174

Week Fifteen (December 5 & 7) **The Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the New Nation.**

Tuesday: The State, the Church, and the Nation.

Reading: Butler, “Does the First Amendment Separate Church and State?” (D2L); *Meaning of Independence*, ch. 3; Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason* (D2L)

Thursday: Unruly Americans and the Constitution

Reading: The US Constitution and Bill of Rights (D2L)

FINAL EXAM IS SCHEDULED FOR 4:00-5:50 P.M. ON DECEMBER 13TH.

Policies, Practices, and Other Important Stuff That You Should Read:

Communications with Instructor:

Communicate with me early and often. The best means for this are my email, jeffrey.bartos@montana.edu, or cornering me after class or during office hours. You can expect a reply within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends, and if you do not get a reply, please email me again. I have assumed the office of Billy Smith, who is on sabbatical. It is in Wilson Hall, Room 2-166. Wilson hall is a maze, but go to the second floor and the northwest corner of the building. I also have a cube in the GTA carrels in Wilson 2-169. I maintain student confidentiality in all aspects, and you may consider my office to be a safe space. If you have a disability, are a student-athlete, nontraditional student, veteran, or have any other issues that may affect your course performance, come see me.

The Art of the Power-Skim®:

Part of a university education is developing the ability to process large amounts of information in a short amount of time, and to develop theories based on incomplete information. As historians, we often attempt to flush out a narrative based on small amounts of information from a source, while incorporating it into our larger base of knowledge and information access. Often, these pivotal details are buried in a mountain of other information. You need to develop the ability to Power-Skim® through some of the readings that may be marginally relevant. This will be particularly useful in the primary sources that are not for your assigned group.

Brightspace/D2L:

This course uses the Brightspace/D2L platform, which means you need to be able to access the internet and have a basic familiarity with D2L. If you have questions or issues with D2L, come see me. <https://ecat.montana.edu>

Grade Translation:

In the interest of uniformity, I assign standard number grades to each letter rather than parsing points. For example: An A is 95 points, a B+ is 88 points, and a C- is 72 points. This translates across all grade categories (A-D), with the exception of an F, which is 50 points.

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct: All students are expected to abide by the university conduct guidelines: http://www2.montana.edu/policy/student_conduct/

All work submitted for this class must be written in your own words and give appropriate acknowledgement to the source of any ideas or arguments that are not uniquely your own. Paraphrasing or quoting another's work without citing the source is a form of academic misconduct. Even inadvertent or unintentional misuse or appropriation of another's work (such as relying heavily on source material that is not expressly acknowledged) is considered plagiarism. If you read this sentence, send me an email with the phrase “Section 420” in the subject, and I'll add a point to your

final grade. If you have any questions about using and citing sources, you are expected to ask for clarification. All of the essays will be submitted through TurnItIn, a highly effective plagiarism-checking application in D2L that checks your work against other submitted materials and internet sources.

Section 420 of the Student Conduct Code describes academic misconduct as including but not limited to plagiarism, cheating, multiple submissions, or facilitating others' misconduct. Possible sanctions for academic misconduct range from an oral reprimand to expulsion from the university. Any instance of plagiarism will result in a zero on the assignment and an academic misconduct report filed with the Dean of Students.

Inclusion and Diversity:

Colonial America and the Revolution was not an affair only of dead straight white dudes. People from many ethnicities, socioeconomic classes, religions, gender identities, and sexual orientations participated. Our contemporary times are similarly heterogenous. It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, religion, culture, perspective, and other background characteristics. Your suggestions about how to improve the value of diversity in this course are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. Debate and difference is welcome, discriminatory rhetoric or behavior shall be met with tar and feathers, canister and grapeshot. Or a stern warning, in the form of a mandatory meeting with the Dean of Students.