

Hist. 651: Readings in Revolutionary American History

Instructor Info:

Dr. T. Cole Jones

Email: colejones@purdue.edu

Office: UNIV 222

Course Modality

Synchronous Online

Class Time and Location:

Spring 2021

Mondays

4:00—6:00 PM

Online via Zoom

Office Hours:

By appointment

I. Course Overview:

This course will introduce graduate students to the latest works in the historiography of the American Revolutionary Era. We will explore this dynamic period by analyzing the ways in which historians have interpreted the causes, conduct, and consequences of the Revolution. While the course is organized chronologically, our readings highlight the main thematic approaches historians have employed to understand this transformative period in American history. Our discussions will probe the social, political, economic, cultural, and military changes that shook the Atlantic world and gave rise to the United States in the late eighteenth century. By concentrating on recent scholarship, we will assess the state of the field and ponder possibilities for further research.

II. Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

1. Identify the key problems, methodologies, and debates in the historiography of the American Revolution.
2. Evaluate relevant scholarship in the field of Revolutionary American studies.
3. Critique historians' uses of source material.
4. Engage with complex historical and historiographical arguments.

5. Assess the ways in which the field has developed over time.
6. Understand how historians transform dissertations into published monographs.
7. Write clearly and persuasively.

III. Course Requirements:

Active participation is the key component of a graduate seminar. I expect you to carefully read each week's required text and to come to class prepared to discuss the book's argument, its strengths, weaknesses, source material, and its overall contribution to the field. Additionally, it is highly advisable for you to read reviews of the books in order to understand how other scholars evaluate their contributions. Reviews, however, are no substitute for actually reading the book. Trust me, I will know if you have just read reviews (I have read them all too).

IV. Assignments:

Discussion Leadership:

In order to hone your pedagogical skills, each of you will be assigned two weeks in which you will lead the discussion. You will prepare a list of questions to help guide the conversation. It is your job to elicit trenchant critique and ardent engagement from your classmates.

Short Book Review:

You will write a short review of a relatively recent (last twenty years) scholarly book in the field. Your review should follow the model of those in the *American Historical Review*. Here are their instructions to reviewers: "We expect reviewers to write thoughtful and engaging critiques that explain the basic argument of a book, assess its strengths and weaknesses, and place the work in historiographical context. We prefer that they do so in a way that addresses readers outside the confines of their own area of specialization." (≈ 500 words) **Due. Monday, March 15, by 4pm on Brightspace.**

"Referee Report":

For your final assignment, you will compose a mock peer-review report of a relatively recent (last twenty years) book in the field. You will need to pretend that the book has been submitted to you by the press in evaluation for publication. You will then compose a report that outlines the book's argument, contribution to the field, as well as offering constructive criticism. Your report should address all the questions below, which are taken verbatim from Oxford University Press's *Guidelines for Manuscript Reviews*. (≈ 2,000 words) **Due. Monday, April 26, by 4pm on Brightspace.**

"1) What do you regard as the purposes and main arguments of the proposed manuscript?; 2) Is it likely to be a significant contribution to the field(s)? Please compare it to other works in the field; 3) Do the premise and argument seem to be sound? Are the sources used to their best effect?; 4) Do you have any suggestions to make as to style, content, or organization? Are there

places where you would suggest expansion or contraction?; 5) Who do you think will be the primary audience for this manuscript?; 6) Is it appropriate in subject, substance, level, and organization for course adoption?; If so, what level and type of course?; 7) Do you recommend offering a contract?"

OVERALL GRADE BREAKDOWN:

Class Participation: 10%

Discussion Leadership: 40%

Short Book Review: 20%

“Referee Report”: 30%

Grading Scale:

97-100	= A+
93-96	= A
90-92	= A-
87-89	= B+
83-86	= B
80-82	= B-
77-79	= C+
73-76	= C
70-72	= C-
67-69	= D+
63-66	= D
60-62	= D-
< 60%	= F

V. Classroom Policies

My policies are simple:

Show up.

Do the reading.

Do the assignments.

Be respectful.

Use common sense.

Do your own work. Do not plagiarize or cheat.

Do not use contractions in formal writing.

If you have a question, ask me in person or via Email.

Late papers will be penalized **one-third grade per day** [example: an A paper that is one day late becomes an A- paper]

If you cheat or plagiarize, you will fail this course. Period. I use Turnitin.com to monitor all your assignments.

For a more detailed explanation of the above, see the University Policies:

“Purdue prohibits ‘dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty.’ [Part 5, Section III-B-2-a, Student Regulations] Furthermore, the University Senate has stipulated that ‘the commitment of acts of cheating, lying, and deceit in any of their diverse forms (such as the use of substitutes for taking examinations, the use of illegal cribs, plagiarism, and copying during examinations) is dishonest and must not be tolerated. Moreover, knowingly to aid and abet, directly or indirectly, other parties in committing dishonest acts is in itself dishonest.’ [University Senate Document 72-18, December 15, 1972]”

<https://www.purdue.edu/odos/academic-integrity/>

Attendance Policy:

Students should stay home and contact the Protect Purdue Health Center (496-INFO) if they feel ill, have any symptoms associated with COVID-19, or suspect they have been exposed to the virus. In the current context of COVID-19, in-person attendance will not be a factor in the final grades, but the student still needs to inform the instructor of any conflict that can be anticipated and will affect the submission of an assignment or the ability to take an exam. Only the instructor can excuse a student from a course requirement or responsibility. When conflicts can be anticipated, such as for many University-sponsored activities and religious observations, the student should inform the instructor of the situation as far in advance as possible. For unanticipated or emergency conflict, when advance notification to an instructor is not possible, the student should contact the instructor as soon as possible by email, through Brightspace, or by phone. When the student is unable to make direct contact with the instructor and is unable to leave word with the instructor’s department because of circumstances beyond the student’s control, and in cases of bereavement, quarantine, or isolation, the student or the student’s representative should contact the Office of the Dean of Students via email or phone at 765-494-1747. Our course Brightspace includes a link on Attendance and Grief Absence policies under the University Policies menu.

Academic Guidance in the Event a Student is Quarantined/Isolated

If you become quarantined or isolated at any point in time during the semester, in addition to support from the Protect Purdue Health Center, you will also have access to an Academic Case Manager who can provide you academic support during this time. Your Academic Case Manager can be reached at acmq@purdue.edu and will provide you with general guidelines/resources around communicating with your instructors, be available for academic support, and offer

suggestions for how to be successful when learning remotely. Importantly, if you find yourself too sick to progress in the course, notify your academic case manager and notify me via email or Brightspace. We will make arrangements based on your particular situation. The Office of the Dean of Students (odos@purdue.edu) is also available to support you should this situation occur.

Students with Disabilities:

Students who need special accommodations to participate fully in class should contact me as soon as possible. While I will do everything in my power to accommodate your needs, Purdue University requires you to provide me with appropriate written documentation and to have that documentation on file with Student Services. Students should be aware that Services for Student Disabilities are available at 494-1247 if you need further assistance.

VI. Course Outline:

Week 1

Mon., Jan. 18, 2021: No Class, MLK Day

Week 2

Mon., Jan. 25, 2021

Alfred F. Young and Gregory H. Nobles, *Whose American Revolution Was It? Historians Interpret the Founding* (New York: NYU Press, 2011).

Week 3

Mon., Feb. 1, 2021

Justin du Rivage, *Revolution Against Empire: Taxes, Politics, and the Origins of American Independence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017)

Week 4

Mon., Feb. 8, 2021

Serina Zabin, *The Boston Massacre: A Family History* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2020)

Week 5

Mon., Feb. 15, 2021

Michael Hattem, *Past and Prologue: Politics and Memory in the American Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020)

Week 6

Mon., Feb. 22, 2021

Mary Beth Norton, *1774: The Long Year of Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 2020)

Week 7

Mon., Mar. 1, 2021

Christopher Pearl, *Conceived in Crisis: The Revolutionary Creation of an American State* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020)

Week 8

Mon., Mar. 8, 2021

Joseph M. Adelman, *Revolutionary Networks: The Business and Politics of Printing the News, 1763–1789* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2019)

Week 9

Mon., Mar. 15, 2021 **SHORT BOOK REVIEW DUE by 4PM**

T.H. Breen, *The Will of the People: The Revolutionary Birth of America* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2019)

Week 10

Mon., Mar. 22, 2021

T. Cole Jones, *Captives of Liberty: Prisoners of War and the Politics of Vengeance in the American Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020)

Week 11

Mon., Mar. 29, 2021

Donald F. Johnson, *Occupied America: British Military Rule and the Experience of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020).

Week 12

Mon., Apr. 5, 2021

Colin Calloway, *The Indian World of George Washington: The First President, the First Americans, and the Birth of the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018)

Week 13

Mon., Apr. 12, 2021

Jonathan Gienapp, *The Second Creation: Fixing the American Constitution in the Founding Era* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2018)

Week 14

Mon., Apr. 19, 2021

Lindsay M. Chervinsky, *The Cabinet: George Washington and the Creation of an American* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2020)

Week 15

Mon., Apr. 26, 2021 **“REFEREE REPORT” DUE by 4PM**

Mathew Lockwood, *To Begin the World Over Again: How the American Revolution Devastated the Globe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019)