This course offers a chronological survey of the social history of the founding and growth of the colonies in British North America. We will explore the difficulties that European and African emigrants faced in creating new societies, economies, and polities in an unfamiliar and already inhabited environment, the impact of cultural contact on Native Americans, and the effects of diverse and often conflicting cultural goals and expectations on the early settlement and development of the colonies. We will also examine the gradual adaptations and changes in European, Native American, and African cultures, and their separate, combined, and often contested contributions to a new “provincial,” increasingly stratified (both socially and economically), and regionally disparate culture. We will conclude by exploring later problems of maturity and stability as the thirteen colonies began to outgrow the British imperial system and become a new “American” society.

Course requirements: The course consists of two class meetings each week. The readings assigned for each class should be completed by that class meeting. (Note: you are not required to read the “further readings” listed in the syllabus and/or the Reading Guide). You are expected to attend class and to come to all class meetings prepared to discuss and analyze the readings [20% of final grade]. The History 231 Reading Guide—available on Blackboard and through the course website—provides questions to help focus your reading for the class discussions as well as electronic links to all of the assigned articles, either through e-reserve or an online Library database. If you miss a discussion-section meeting (noted in the syllabus), you are expected to write a thoughtful evaluation (3-4 pages) of the assigned book (monograph). You are encouraged to purchase the assigned books from the bookstore; one copy of each book is on reserve in the library.

The essay assignments are an integral part of the course. Two critical analyses of primary documents (5-7 pages each) will be due during the semester [together, 40% of final grade]. A final take-home essay (8-10 pages) is due by the scheduled final-exam date for the course [40% of final grade].

All students are expected to read, understand, and abide by the rules of citation outlined in Sources: Their Use and Acknowledgement (Dartmouth College, 1998) and by the Bowdoin College Academic Honor Code.

Barry Levy, Quakers and the American Family: British Settlement in the Delaware Valley (1988)
James Deetz, In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life (1977, revised and expanded 1996)

All online Resources are available through Blackboard and/or the History 231 website:
http://www.bowdoin.edu/faculty/S/smcmahon/courses/hist231/index.shtml
1. **INTRODUCTION TO NORTH AMERICAN COLONIAL HISTORY**

1/24 **THE AGE OF DISCOVERY AND THE EXPANSION OF EUROPEAN EMPIRES**


2. **ENGLISH HERITAGE: Society, economy, and politics in the 16th and 17th centuries**


   *Guidelines for Writing a Critical Analysis of a Primary Document (LINK)*

1/31 **FIRST SETTLERS—FIRST SETTLEMENTS: “The Importance of Being English”**


The “New World” and the Mixing of Cultures

3. **NATIVE NORTH AMERICANS: The first inhabitants of North America**


2/7 **DISCUSSION: THE CONTACT OF CULTURES**


4. **THE CHESAPEAKE BAY: The instability of a tobacco society**

Establishing Colonial Settlements

2/14 THE ORIGINS OF THE SLAVE SYSTEM IN THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CHESAPEAKE

5. 2/19 NEW ENGLAND: The covenant ideal and the New England Mind
documents: Plymouth Colony, “Mayflower Compact” (1620), *Avalon Project at Yale Law School* (LINK)
John Winthrop, “A Modell of Christian Charity” (1630), *Hanover Historical Texts Project* (LINK) or *The Winthrop Society* (LINK)


First Critical Analysis Due: Choose a document written between 1607 and 1700

2/21 THE NEW ENGLAND TOWN

6. 2/26 THE PURITAN FAMILY AND THE WELL-ORDERED COMMUNITY

2/28 DISAFFECTED NEW ENGLANDERS: Alienated affections and the “declension” of Puritan New England

7. 3/4 DISCUSSION: WITCHCRAFT IN A CONTENTIOUS SOCIETY: The Late 17th century

3/6 THE MID- ATLANTIC COLONIES IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania as the “Motley Middle”


3/27 PROVINCIAL SOCIETY: The search for identity

Eighteenth Century: Provincial Society

9. 4/1 DISCUSSION: AMERICAN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE CONVERGENCE OF REGIONS IN THE 18TH CENTURY

4/3 SOUTHERN SOCIETIES IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

10. 4/8 AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Second Critical Analysis Due: Choose a document written between 1701 and 1760

4/10 DISCUSSION: EVOLUTION OF A CHESAPEAKE COMMUNITY

11. 4/15 NEW ENGLAND IN THE 18TH CENTURY
4/17 **THE MID- ATLANTIC COLONIES IN THE 18TH CENTURY**

**British Colonial America at Mid-Century**

12. 4/22 **DISCUSSION: THE ORGANIZATION OF SOCIETY IN THE MIDDLE COLONIES**

4/24 **THE EMPIRE AND THE COLONIES AND THE FEAR OF “CREOLEAN DEGENERACY”**

14. 4/29 **THE FEAR OF “CREOLEAN DEGENERACY”:** American culture and American identity in the 18th century

5/1 **DISCUSSION: THE EVOLUTION OF COLONIAL AMERICA:** Evidence from everyday life

15. 5/6 **AMERICA AT 1750: Toward The American Revolution?**

*Final Take-home Essay Due:* Tuesday, May 13, 5:00 pm