American Society in the New Nation, 1763-1840

This course offers a chronological survey of the social history of the United States from the Revolution to the Age of Jackson. A number of themes organize the first part of the course: the complex social and economic structure of mid-eighteenth century America; various and often divergent cultural, political, and ideological roots of the movement for American independence; the struggle to determine the scope of the Constitution and the political shape of the new republic; and the emergence of and contest over the new social and cultural order and the nature of American “identity” in the early years of nationhood. The second part of the course examines the diverging histories of regions (North, South, and trans-Appalachian West) and peoples (African Americans, Anglo- and Euro-Americans, and Native Americans) in the first half of the nineteenth century. Topics include the evolution and impact of urbanization, industrialization, and the development of new forms of social and political organization in the North; increasing religious diversity and the Second Great Awakening; the westward expansion of the nation and the continuing contest over land; the southern plantation economy and slave communities; and the growth of the reform impulse in the Jacksonian era as various groups of Americans attempted to grapple with tensions and strains in the new nation.

No prior coursework in revolutionary and early national American history is required. Students will be introduced to the range of historical literature—both monographs (books) and articles—in the field and to the reading and analysis of primary source materials.

Course requirements: The course consists of two class meetings each week. The reading assignments for each class should be completed by that class meeting. (The “further readings” listed in the Reading Guide are not required.) You are expected to attend class and to come to all class meetings and discussion sections prepared to discuss and analyze the readings [20% of final grade]. The History 2123 Reading Guide on Blackboard 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 (2-3 pages) of the assigned book. You are encouraged to purchase the assigned books from the bookstore; a copy of each of the assigned books is on reserve in the library.

All three essay assignments are integral parts 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 (10-12 pages) is due by the scheduled final-exam date for the course [in most cases, 40% of final grade]. For guidelines and exceptions, see the Extension, Deadline, and Grading Policy on the Blackboard course home page.

All students are expected to read, understand, and abide by The Bowdoin College Academic Honor Code and by the rules of citation described on the Colby, Bates, and Bowdoin Academic Honesty website at http://www.bowdoin.edu/studentaffairs/academic-honesty/index.shtml.

Charles Joyner, *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (2009 ed.)

The History 2123 Reading Guide and other online resources can be found on Blackboard at http://blackboard.bowdoin.edu/ or at http://www.bowdoin.edu/faculty/s/smcmahon/courses/hist233/index.shtml.
WEEK 1
9/7  Introduction

Era of the American Revolution
9/9 REGIONAL VARIATIONS: Economic and Social Structure of Eighteenth-Century American Society  
William and Mary Quarterly 3d Ser., 45.1 (1988), 124-134.  (JSTOR)  

WEEK 2
9/14 Discussion: PROVINCIAL MENTALITY In The Eighteenth Century  

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

9/16 UNREST: Imperial Decisions and Colonial Reactions  
reading: Pauline Maier, “Popular Uprisings and Civil Authority in Eighteenth-Century America,”  
William and Mary Quarterly 3d. Ser., 27.1 (1970), 3-35.  (JSTOR)  
History 233: Collections of Primary Documents (LINK)  
Extension Policy (LINK)

WEEK 3
9/21 “Origins” of the American Revolution  

9/23 Discussion: Rebellion - Revolution  

WEEK 4
9/28 Gun Culture, Historical Methods, and Academic Honesty  
reading: James Lindgren, “Fall From Grace: Arming America and the Bellesiles Scandal,” Yale Law Journal 111.8 (June 2002).  (JSTOR)

The New Republic
9/30 FRAMING THE NEW REPUBLIC: Federalists, Anti-Federalists, and the Constitution  
readings: Isaac Kramnick, “The Great National Discussion: The Discourse of Politics in 1787,”  
William and Mary Quarterly 3d Ser., 45.1 (1988), 3-32.  (JSTOR)  

First Critical Analysis due (primary document written between 1760 and 1800)

WEEK 5
10/5 JEFFERSONIAN AMERICA: Toward a “Republican” Vision  
reading: John R. Howe, “Republican Thought and the Political Violence of the 1790s,” American Quarterly 19.2, Part I (1967), 147-165.  (JSTOR)
10/7 Discussion: The Revolutionary Generation

WEEK 6
10/12 Fall Break

10/14 American Society in Transition: Changing Systems of Hierarchy and Association
readings: Daniel Vickers, “Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3d Ser., 47.1 (1990), 3-29. (JSTOR)

The Early Nineteenth Century: Urbanization, Industrialization, Modernization

WEEK 7
10/19 The War of 1812 and the Era of Good Feelings: American Identity, Economic Nationalism, Regional Economic Specialization

10/21 The Northeast: Changing Spatial Relationships and the Rise of the City

WEEK 8
10/26 The Rise Of The Urban “Middle Class” Family

10/28 Republican Religion: The Evangelical Age and the Second Great Awakening

WEEK 9
11/2 Discussion: Native American Religion And Culture In The New Republic
reading: Joel Martin, *Sacred Revolt* (1991)
11/4 Industrialization And The Industrial Community

WEEK 10
11/9 The Opening Of The Trans-Appalachian West

11/11 TBD
   Second Critical Analysis due (primary document written between 1801 and 1840)

Toward the Mid-Nineteenth Century
Week 11
11/16 Southern Economy And The Plantation System

11/18 Discussion: Slave Communities And African-American Culture

WEEK 12
11/23 THE REFORM IMPULSE: Old Ideals and New Realities

11/25 Thanksgiving Break

WEEK 13
11/30 The Perfectionist Impulse In Antebellum Reform: Utopian Alternatives

12/2 Discussion: Inheriting the Revolution

WEEK 14
12/7 THE JACKSONIAN PERSUASION: Abolitionism, Feminism and Jacksonian Politics as Responses to American Society

12/9 JACKSONIAN “DEMOCRACY”: Toward Mid-Nineteenth-Century America

*Final Take-home Essay:* due Thursday, December 17, noon