FAMILY AND COMMUNITY IN AMERICAN HISTORY, 1600-1900

The course examines the social, economic, and cultural history of American families, across class, and among racial, ethnic, and cultural groups, exploring the changing relationship between families and both their particular communities and the larger society. The course begins with the assumption that changes in the structure, function, and relationships of families and communities offer an indicator of changes in the larger society. Thus, the study of family and community has the potential to revise our understanding about the process—and periodization—of American history.

The course offers a focused survey of the social history of the United States between 1600 and 1900; within a chronological framework, the course is organized topically. We will examine gender relationships; racial, ethnic, cultural, and class variations in family and community ideals, structures, and functions; the purpose and expectations of marriage; philosophies of child-rearing; demographic changes in family structure; organization of work and leisure time; the relationships between nuclear families and kinship networks, neighborhoods, and communities; and the effects of industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and social and geographic mobility on patterns of family life and community organization.

Course requirements: The course consists of two class meetings each week. The readings assigned for each class, noted in the syllabus, should be completed by that class meeting. (Note: students are not required to read the “further readings” listed in 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 248 Reading Guide—available on Blackboard and through the course website—provides questions to help you focus your reading for the class discussions. 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 monograph. The Reading Guide provides electronic links to all of the assigned articles, either through e-reserve or a Library online database. You are encouraged to purchase the assigned texts (monographs) from the bookstore; one copy of each of the assigned books 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).

Texts:
- Timothy Silver, A New Face on the Countryside: Indians, colonists, and slaves in South Atlantic forests, 1500-1800 (1990)
- John Mack Faragher, Women and Men on the Overland Trail (1979, revised 2001)
- Jacob Riis, How the Other Half Lives (1890; reprint 1971)

Online Resources: Blackboard or http://www.bowdoin.edu/faculty/s/smcmahon/courses/hist248/
Introduction

Week 1.

9/3  Introduction

9/5  The Patriarchal Family in England and Europe


Colonial America

Week 2.

9/10  The New England Town in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: The Intensification of Familiar Ideals and the Seeds of Change


9/12  Discussion: The Puritan Family and the Well-Ordered Community


Guidelines for Writing a Critical Analysis of a Primary Document.  (Reading Guide Link)

History 248 Primary Document Collections.  (Reading Guide Link)

Week 3.

9/17  White Society in the Chesapeake, 1607-1750


Jan Lewis, “Domestic Tranquillity and the Management of Emotion among the Gentry of Pre-Revolutionary Virginia,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd Ser., 39.1 (1982), 135-149.  (JSTOR)

9/19  African-American Community and Culture in the Colonial South: The Origins of the Slave System


Jean Butenhoff Lee, “The Problem of Slave Community in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd Ser., 43.3 (1986), 333-361.  (JSTOR)

Week 4.

9/24  Native American Families and Communities


9/26 **DISCUSSION:** The Contact of Cultures  

*The Revolution and the Early Republic*  
Week 5.
10/1 **THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA:** The Rise of New Domestic Values and the End of the Old Hierarchy  

10/3 **CHILD REARING AND EDUCATION IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD AND THE EARLY REPUBLIC**  

First critical analysis (document written between 1600 and 1800) due: October 3

*The Nineteenth Century*  
Week 6.
10/10 **THE MARKET REVOLUTION AND THE RISE OF THE CITY:** New Forms of Community  

Week 7.
10/15 **MIDDLE CLASS FAMILIES IN THE NORTHEAST:** Urbanizing Families and “Provincial” Folks  
readings: C. Dallett Hemphill, “Manners and Class in the Revolutionary Era: A Transatlantic Comparison,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd Ser., 63.2 (2006), 345-372. (History Cooperative)  

10/17 **DISCUSSION:** Rural Families and Communities in an Industrializing World  

Week 8.
10/22 **THE “SEPARATION OF SPHERES”:** Womanhood and Manhood  
10/24 Strains in Middle Class Family Life in the Late Nineteenth Century

Week 9.

10/29 Rural Life in the Northeast, the South, and the Opening of the Midwest
readings: Allan Kulikoff, “The Transition to Capitalism in Rural America,” William and Mary Quarterly 3d. Ser., 46 (1989), 120-144. (JSTOR)

10/31 Discussion: The Transmission of Ideals to the Trans-Mississippi West

Week 10.

11/5 Slavery and the Shaping of Ante- and Post-Bellum Southern Society

11/7 Discussion: African-American Experience in Urban Society
reading: James Borchert, Alley Life in Washington (1980). Note: read the conclusion first.

Week 11.

11/12 Utopian Alternatives to Family and Community in the Nineteenth Century
Second critical analysis (document written between 1800 and 1900) due: November 12

11/14 Industrialization: Technological Developments and the Reorganization of Production

Week 12.

11/19 Discussion: Industrial Community
reading: Jacqueline Dowd Hall, et.al., Like a Family (1987). NOTE: focus on Part I; skim Part II.
Week 13.
The Late Nineteenth Century
11/26 IMMIGRATION, ASSIMILATION, AND NATIVISM: Becoming “American” in the Nineteenth Century

11/28 DISCUSSION: “How the other half lives”
reading: Jacob Riis, How the Other Half Lives (1890).

Week 14.
12/3 FAMILY, WELFARE, AND THE STATE

12/5 SUBURBANIZATION, SEGMENTATION, AND CONSUMERISM: The Evolution of Mass Culture in America
reading: Food for Thought: The Changing Boundaries of Family and Community. (Reading Guide Link)

Final take-home essay due: Sunday, Dec. 16, 5:00 p.m.