

HISTORY/GWS 248  
Fall 2009  
MW 11:30-12:55, Sills 109

McMahon  
Hubbard Hall S11  
[smcmahon@bowdoin.edu](mailto:smcmahon@bowdoin.edu)

### 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 reading assignments for each class should be completed by that class meeting. The “further readings” listed in the syllabus and 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/GWS 248 Reading Guide on Blackboard* provides questions to help focus your reading for the class discussions. If you miss a discussion section meeting, you are expected to write a thoughtful evaluation (2-3 pages) of the assigned monograph. All reading assignments are available either on e-reserve through the Library Reserves link on *Blackboard* or by link to an online source or database from the *Reading Guide on Blackboard*. You are encouraged to purchase the assigned texts from the bookstore; a 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 Bowdoin College Academic Honor Code and by the rules of citation described on the Colby, Bates, and Bowdoin Academic Honesty Site at <http://library.bowdoin.edu/1st/CBBhonesty.shtml>.

- Texts: John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (1970, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2000)  
Timothy Silver, *A New Face on the Countryside: Indians, colonists, and slaves in South Atlantic forests, 1500-1800* (1990)  
Nancy Grey Osterud, *Bonds of Community: The Lives of Farm Women in Nineteenth-Century New York* (1991)  
John Mack Faragher, *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* (1979, revised 2001)  
James Borchert, *Alley Life in Washington: Family, Community, Religion, and Folklife in the City, 1850-1970* (1982)  
Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890; reprint 1971)

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

Week 1.

9/7 INTRODUCTION

9/9 THE PATRIARCHAL FAMILY IN ENGLAND AND EUROPE

readings: Frederick Engels, from *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884), in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader* (1978), 734-751.

Lawrence Stone, "The Rise of the Nuclear Family in Early Modern England: The Patriarchal Stage," in Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Family in History* (1975), 13-57.

*Colonial America*

Week 2.

9/14 THE NEW ENGLAND TOWN IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES: The Intensification of Familiar Ideals and the Seeds of Change

readings: Stephen Baskerville, "The Family in Puritan Political Theology," *Journal of Family History* 18.2 (1993), 157-177.

Patricia J. Tracy, "Re-Considering Migration Within Colonial New England," *Journal of Social History* 23.1 (1989), 93-113. (Academic Search Premier)

9/16 DISCUSSION: The Puritan Family and the Well-Ordered Community

reading: John Demos, *A Little Commonwealth* (1970).

Guidelines for Writing a Critical Analysis of a Primary Document. (Reading Guide)  
History 248 Primary Document Collections. (Reading Guide)

Week 3.

9/21 WHITE SOCIETY IN THE CHESAPEAKE, 1607-1750

readings: Kevin Kelly, "In Dispers'd Country Plantations: Settlement Patterns in 17th century Surry County, Virginia," in Thad Tate, ed., *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century* (1979), 183-205.

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

9/23 AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND CULTURE IN THE COLONIAL SOUTH: The Origins of the Slave System

readings: Ira Berlin, "From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African-American Society in Mainland North America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3<sup>rd</sup> Ser., 53.2 (1996), 251-288. (JSTOR)

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

Week 4.

9/28 NATIVE AMERICAN FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

readings: James A. Brown, "America before Columbus," in Fred Hoxie, ed., *Indians in American History* (1988), 19-45.

Emerson W. Baker, "Finding the Almouchiquois: Native American Families, Territories, and Land Sales in Southern Maine," *Ethnohistory* 51.1 (2004), 73-100. (Project Muse)

9/30 DISCUSSION: The Contact of Cultures  
reading: Timothy Silver, *A New Face on the Countryside* (1990).

*The Revolution and the Early Republic*

Week 5.

10/5 THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA: The Rise of New Domestic Values and the End of the Old Hierarchy  
readings: T. H. Breen, "Narrative of Commercial Life: Consumption, Ideology, and Community on the Eve of the American Revolution," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3<sup>rd</sup> Ser., 50.3 (1993), 471-501. (JSTOR)  
Toby L. Ditz, "Ownership and Obligation: Inheritance and Patriarchal Households in Connecticut, 1750-1820," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3<sup>rd</sup> Ser., 47.2 (1990), 235-265. (JSTOR)

10/7 CHILD REARING AND EDUCATION IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD AND THE EARLY REPUBLIC  
readings: Rodney Hessinger, "Problems and Promises: Colonial American Child Rearing and Modernization Theory," *Journal of Family History* 21.2 (1996), 125-143.  
Maris A. Vinovskis, "Family and Schooling in Colonial and Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of Family History* 12.1-3 (1987), 19-37.

*First critical analysis* (document written between 1600 and 1800) due: October 7

*The Nineteenth Century*

Week 6.

10/12 Fall Break

10/14 THE RISE OF THE CITY: New Forms of Community  
reading: Stuart M. Blumin, "Explaining the New Metropolis," Perception, Depiction, and Analysis in Mid-Nineteenth-Century New York City," *Journal of Urban History* 11.1 (1984), 9-38.

Week 7.

10/19 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* 3<sup>rd</sup> Ser., 63.2 (2006), 345-372. (History Cooperative)  
Catherine E. Kelly, "'Well Bred Country People': Sociability, Social Networks, and the Creation of a Provincial Middle Class, 1820-1860," *Journal of the Early Republic* 19.3 (1999), 451-479. (JSTOR)

10/21 INDUSTRIALIZATION: Technological Developments and the Reorganization of Production  
reading: Thomas Dublin, "Rural-Urban Migrants in Industrial New England: The Case of Lynn, Massachusetts, in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *Journal of American History* 73.3 (1986), 623-644. (JSTOR)

Week 8.

10/26 DISCUSSION: Rural Families and Communities in an Industrializing World  
reading: Nancy Grey Osterud, *Bonds of Community* (1991).

- 10/28 THE "SEPARATION OF SPHERES": Womanhood and Manhood  
readings: E. Anthony Rotundo, "Body and Soul: Changing Ideals of American Middle-Class Manhood, 1770-1920," *Journal of Social History* 16 (1983), 23-38. (Academic Search Premier)  
Anya Jabour, "Masculinity and Adolescence in Antebellum America: Robert Wirt at West Point, 1820-1821," *Journal of Family History* 23.4 (1998), 393-416.

Week 9.

11/2 STRAINS IN MIDDLE CLASS FAMILY LIFE IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

readings: Robert Griswold, "Divorce and Legal Redefinition of Victorian Manhood," in Mark Carnes, ed., *Meanings for Manhood* (1990), 96-110.

Lawrence M. Lipin, "Burying the 'Destroyer of One Happy Home': Manhood, Industrial Authority, and Political Alliance Building in the Murder Trial of Ira Strunk," *Journal of Social History* 28.4 (1995), 783-800. (Academic Search Premier)

11/4 UTOPIAN ALTERNATIVES TO FAMILY AND COMMUNITY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

recommended: Jeanette C. Lauer and Robert H. Lauer, "Sex Roles in Nineteenth-century American Communal Societies," *Communal Societies* 3 (1983), 16-28.

*Second critical analysis* (document written between 1800 and 1900) due: November 4

Week 10.

11/9 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)

Susan Sessions Rugh, "Civilizing the Countryside: Class, Gender, and Crime in Nineteenth-Century Rural Illinois," *Agricultural History* 76.1 (2002), 58-81.

11/11 DISCUSSION: The Transmission of Ideals to the Trans-Mississippi West

reading: John Faragher, *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* (1979).

Week 11.

11/16 SLAVERY AND THE SHAPING OF ANTE- AND POST-BELLUM SOUTHERN SOCIETY

readings: Anthony E. Kaye, "Neighborhoods and Solidarity in the Natchez District of Mississippi: Rethinking the Antebellum Slave Community," *Slavery and Abolition* 23.1 (2002), 1-24.

John William Graves, "Jim Crow in Arkansas: A Reconsideration of Urban Race Relations in the Post-Reconstruction South," *Journal of Southern History* 55.3 (1989), 421-448. (JSTOR)

11/18 DISCUSSION: African-American Experience in Urban Society

reading: James Borchert, *Alley Life in Washington* (1980). *Note*: read the conclusion first.

Week 12.

11/23 FAMILY, WELFARE, AND THE STATE

readings: Steven Mintz, "Regulating the American Family," *Journal of Family History* 14.4 (1989), 387-408.

Michael Grossberg, "Who Gets the Child? Custody, Guardianship, and the Rise of a Judicial Patriarchy in Nineteenth-Century America," *Feminist Studies* 9 (1983), 235-260.

Week 13.

*The Late Nineteenth Century*

11/30 IMMIGRATION, ASSIMILATION, AND NATIVISM: Becoming “American” in the Nineteenth Century  
reading: James R. Barrett, “Americanization from the Bottom Up: Immigration and the Remaking of the Working Class in the United States, 1880-1930,” *Journal of American History* 79.3 (1992), 996-1020. (JSTOR)

12/2 DISCUSSION: “How the other half lives”  
reading: Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890).

Week 14.

12/7 SUBURBANIZATION, SEGMENTATION, AND CONSUMERISM: The Evolution of Mass Culture in America

readings: Margaret Marsh, “From Separation to Togetherness: The Social Construction of Domestic Space in American Suburbs, 1840-1915,” *Journal of American History* 76.2 (1989), 506-527. (JSTOR)

Kris Bulcroft and Richard Bulcroft, “The Social Construction of the North American Honeymoon, 1880-1995,” *Journal of Family History* 22.4 (1997), 462-490

12/9 THE CHANGING BOUNDARIES OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

reading: *Food for Thought: The Changing Boundaries of Family and Community*.

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