Community in America: 1600-1900

In this history “problems” course, we will explore the ideals and the social, economic, and cultural realities of community in American history, focusing on change, continuity, and racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity in community experience from the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries. We will study the formation of new communities on a “frontier” that began on the Atlantic seaboard and gradually moved westward across the continent; the attempts to create alternative communities either separate from or contained within established communities; and the changing face of community that accompanied cultural diversity, expansion, modernization, urbanization, and suburbanization.

Course expectations and requirements: The course will be held as a seminar, meeting once a week for three hours. For most classes, our discussion will focus on a monograph; students are encouraged but not required to explore the further reading for each class meeting—primary sources (documents) and/or secondary sources (articles). The History 332 Reading Guide—available on Blackboard and through the course website—provides electronic links to both the e-reserve and the online database articles. In preparation for each class meeting, students should read and begin to analyze the assigned texts; they should come to class with specific questions and some preliminary answers. The Reading Guide provides questions to help you focus your reading and prepare you for the class discussions. In the process of reading and participating in class discussions, students develop an understanding of the research process and practice the analytical skills that they will use to pursue independent research in history. If a student misses a class meeting, the student is expected to write a 3-4 page analysis of the readings for that class. Class participation counts for 50% of the final grade.

Throughout the semester, students will engage in the process of designing and pursuing their own primary research projects. Early in the semester, each student will formulate a thesis question and a preliminary hypothesis about some aspect of community history. In October, students will submit a research paper prospectus which presents a preliminary thesis statement or hypothesis, a briefly annotated bibliography of the primary and secondary sources that they will analyze, and a preliminary outline. The penultimate draft of a section of the paper will be due in November. At the end of the course, students will present work-in-progress reports to the class. The research paper (20-25 pages) will be due on the scheduled final-exam date for the course. Research methodology and progress count for 25%, and the essay counts for 25% of the 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).

Course texts:
Sarah Deutsch, Women and the City: Gender, Space and Power in Boston (2000)

All online Resources are available through Blackboard and/or the History 332 website: http://www.bowdoin.edu/faculty/S/smcmahon/courses/hist332/
1. 9/4 PREVIEW

2. 9/11 INTRODUCTION: Historical Visions and Sociological Models of Community
   Darrett Rutman, “Assessing the Little Communities of Early America,” William and Mary Quarterly 3d ser. XLIII (1986), 163-178. (JSTOR)

   Documents: Plymouth Colony, “Mayflower Compact” (1620), Avalon Project at Yale Law School (LINK)  
   John White, “The Planters’ Plea” (1630), The Winthrop Society (LINK)
   John Winthrop, “A Modell of Christian Charity” (1630), Hanover Historical Texts Project (LINK) or The Winthrop Society (LINK)

3. 9/18 NEW ENGLAND COMMUNITIES: Witchcraft as a Community Phenomenon
   Guidelines for Writing a Research Paper in History (Blackboard or course website LINK)

   Documents: Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, Salem Witchcraft Papers: Verbatim Transcripts of the Legal Documents, 3 volumes (sample the transcripts)


4. 9/25 THE CHESAPEAKE: Culture and Values in the Colonial South

5. 10/2  LIBRARY TOUR AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES: Ginny Hopcroft
   Readings: Ellen Somekawa and Elizabeth Smith, “Theorizing the Writing of History Or, ‘I Can’t
   Think Why It Should Be So Dull, For a Great Deal of It Must Be Invention’,” Journal of
   Social History 22.1 (1988), 149-161. (Academic Search Premier)
   Robert Dykstra and William Silag, “Doing Local History: Monographic Approaches to the
   Smaller Community,” American Quarterly 37.3 (1985), 411-425. (JSTOR)
   T.J. Jackson Lears, “Power, Culture, and Memory,” Journal of American History 75.1
   (1988), 137-40. (JSTOR)

   Further reading: Lorena S. Walsh, “The Historian as Census Taker: Individual Reconstitution and
   the Reconstruction of Censuses for a Colonial Chesapeake County,” William and Mary
   Quarterly 38.2 (1981), 242-260. (JSTOR)
   Darrett Rutman, “New England as Idea and Society Revisited,” William and Mary
   Quarterly 41.1 (1984), 56-61. (JSTOR)
   Ellen Fitzpatrick, “Caroline F. Ware and the Cultural Approach to History,” American
   Quarterly 43.2 (1991), 173-198. (JSTOR)

6. 10/9  FALL VACATION: No class meeting

7. 10/16  NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES: Anthropological Models

   Further reading: David J. Silverman, “‘We chuse to be bounded’: Native American Animal
   Husbandry in Colonial New England,” William and Mary Quarterly 60.3 (2003), 511-548.
   (History Cooperative)
   James Axtell, “Ethnohistory: An Historian's Viewpoint,” in Axtell, The European and the
   reserve)
   Alfonso Ortiz, “Indian-White Relations: A View from the Other Side of the ‘Frontier’,” in
   Frederick E. Hoxie, Indians in American History: An Introduction (1988), 1-16. (e-
   reserve)
   Nancy Shoemaker, “The Rise or Fall of Iroquois Women,” Journal of Women’s History 2.3
   (1991), 39-57. (e-reserve)

8. 10/23  INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES: discuss research progress and prospectuses
   Research Paper Prospectus Due Friday, Oct. 26

9. 10/30  THE FRONTIER IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC: Community, Biography, Fiction, Myth
   Reading: Alan Taylor, William Cooper’s Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the
   Early American Republic (1996) NOTE: read Introduction, Chapters 1-4, 8, 10, 13-15
   (pp. 3-114, 199-228, 256-291, 346-427); skim chapters 5-7, 9, 11, 12

   Further reading: David Hackett Fischer, Paul Revere’s Ride (1994), Introduction: Paul Revere
   Remounted; Historiography: Myths After the Midnight Ride, xiii-xviii, 327-344. (e-
   reserve)

10. 11/6 **URBAN LIFE I: Environmental History**
    Donald Worster, et. al., “A Round Table: Environmental History,” *Journal of American History* 76.4 (March 1990), 1087-1147. (JSTOR)

11. 11/13 **URBAN LIFE II: Gender, Class and Community**

12. 11/20 **Penultimate Draft Due: Introduction and first section of Research Paper**

13. 11/27 **WORK-IN-PROGRESS REPORTS**

14. 12/4 **WORK-IN-PROGRESS REPORTS**

*Research Paper Due*, Thursday, Dec. 13, 2007, 5:00 p.m.