Course Description: Different scholars in different eras have presented the American Revolution as either a radically egalitarian movement in favor of universal human rights or as a fundamentally conservative rebellion led by elite men striving to protect their wealth and political power from both the British Parliament and those occupying the lower rungs of American society. Unraveling the often varied (and sometimes competing) motives of Americans during the Revolution requires understanding the words and actions of Revolutionaries in light of their contemporary cultures and societies. Often this means putting aside modern claims about what “the Revolution means” in order to better understand the political ideologies and goals that underlay this foundational era of American history.
Assignments:

**Primary Source Analysis Paper** – TWO-page essay (double-spaced, 1 in. margins, 12 pt. Times New Roman font) analyzing a theme or themes contained in the readings.

**Two Discussion Leader Analyses Papers** – Each student will be responsible for leading two class discussions. On each occasion the student will submit a ≈5-page analysis paper on the day’s readings. This paper should identify the thesis of the assigned readings, outline the arguments and evidence used to prove that thesis, and explain how the readings relate analytically to one another and to previous readings.

**Discussion Participation** – Regular participation in class discussions is central to a seminar of this nature. While not every student will necessarily be required to speak during every class period, students will be graded on whether they make regular and substantive contributions to discussion over the course of the semester.

**Research Proposal** - ≈2-page proposal for an independent research paper. Should identify the historical question to be pursued, as well as some potential sources. These final papers should focus on some aspect of the Revolution in historical memory.

**Final Research Paper** – ≈10-page research paper on a topic chosen in consultation with professor

**Grading:**
Primary Source Paper worth 15%; Two Discussion Leader Papers together worth 30%; Research Proposal worth 5%; One Final Research Paper worth 30% ; Discussion Participation worth 20%

**Attendance:**
You will not receive any credit directly for attendance, but unexcused absences will likely impact your final participation grade. Moreover, for every three unexcused absences your final course grade will be penalized by one full letter grade.

**Required Texts:**
5. All other readings will be available online through Blackboard or E-Reserve
INTRODUCTION – UNDERSTANDING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

WEEK 1: Introduction
Aug 31: Welcome to Class

WEEK 2: Understanding the Revolution
Sept 5: What Everybody Knows About the Revolution

Sept 7: Interpreting the Revolution
- IN-CLASS: Jefferson and Adams on Reverencing the Founding Generation

PART I – HISTORY IN THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA

WEEK 3: The Political Uses of History
Sept 12: Using History During the Revolution
- Thomas Jefferson, “The Rights of British America,” [≈10 pages]
- Peter Oliver, Origin and Progress of the American Rebellion, Intro & Ch1 [≈40 pages]
- IN-CLASS: Benjamin Franklin Before the House of Commons

Sept 14: Thomas Paine’s History of Imperial Abuse
- Thomas Paine, Common Sense [≈60 pages]

WEEK 4: The Revolution’s Earliest History
Sept 19: The Hydra of Rebellion: The Revolution’s First Historian
- Peter Oliver, Origin and Progress of the American Rebellion, Chs 2-3, 6-7 [≈70 pages]

Sept 21: The Revolution and National Progress

PART II – HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE REVOLUTION

Week 5: Fast Forward
Sept 25: PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS PAPER DUE MONDAY BY 5:00pm

Sept 26: A Liberal Revolution (The Consensus School)
- IN-CLASS READING: Lexington & Concord and “The Army of Wild Irish Asses”

Sept 28: A Republican Revolution (The Neo-Whig School)
- IN-CLASS: John Dickinson, "Letters from a Farmer, X and XII"
WEEK 6: Radically Conservative

Oct 3: A Republican/Radical Revolution (Neo-Whigs: The Next Generation)
- IN-CLASS: Thomas Young and James Cannon

Oct 5: The Conservative (or Illiberal) Revolution
- IN-CLASS: Mutiny in the Continental Army

WEEK 7: It’s the Economy, Stupid

Oct 10: **No Class: Fall Break**

Oct 12: Economics and Class (Neo-Progressives)
- IN-CLASS: Stamp Act Teapot and “Address to the Ladies”/“Young Ladies in Town”

Submit Proposal for Individual Research Topic

WEEK 8: Social History and the American Revolution

Oct 17: Forgotten Revolutionaries
- IN-CLASS: Salem Poor, Slave Petition, and Runaway Slave Ad

Oct 19: Women and War
- IN-CLASS: Lord Rawdon, Abigail Adams, and “The Alternative of Williams Burg”
PART III – TOPICS IN THE HISTORY OF THE REVOLUTION

WEEK 9: Accommodating the Mob
Oct 24: Urban Mobs
- IN-CLASS: Gouvernour Morris

Oct 26: An Angry Countryside
- IN-CLASS: Janet Schaw

WEEK 10: The Boston Tea Party
Oct 31: No Class: Arrange Individual Meetings

Nov 2: The Destruction of the Tea

WEEK 11: The Constitution: Culmination or Counter-Revolution?
Nov 7: An Elite Document

Nov 9: “We the People” and the National State
- Pauline Maier, “Narrative, Interpretation, and the Ratification of the Constitution,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no.2 (April 2012), 382-390 [≈10 pages]
PART IV: THE REVOLUTION TODAY
WEEK 12: The Revolution on Film
   Nov 14: An Inglorious Revolution (No Class)
   - Watch REVOLUTION!
   Nov 16: Inglorious… And Yet Dashing
   - Watch The Patriot
WEEK 13:
   Nov 21: No Class: Work on Individual Project
   Nov 23: No Class: Thanksgiving Break
WEEK 14: Project Discussions
   Nov 28: In-Class Discussion of Projects
   Nov 30: In-Class Discussion of Projects
WEEK 15: The Revolution Today
   Dec 5: The Revolutionary Era in Popular Culture
   Dec 7: The Political Legacy of the Founding Era
   - Lepore, Whites of Their Eyes, 98-End [≈60 pages]
WEEK 16: Reading Period
WEEK 17: FINALS WEEK
   Dec18: Final Papers due at 5:00pm

WARNINGS AND DISCLAIMERS

BLACKBOARD: Blackboard will be an integral part of this course. The syllabus, descriptions of assignments, useful guides, and any changes hereafter will be posted there. You are required to check Blackboard regularly and will be responsible for all material on the course site.

CITATION OF SOURCES: When referring to sources (primary and secondary) in your papers, you should provide a complete citation including author, title, publisher, place and date of publication, and page numbers. Citations should follow the “Chicago-style” format commonly used by historians. I ask that you use footnotes with all of your paper assignments. The library website has citation information under “Get Started,” and I have included several links on Blackboard. Please see me if you have any questions.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: All students must read and abide by the Academic Honor and Social Code (http://www.bowdoin.edu/studentaffairs/student-handbook/college-policies/index.shtml). Suspected cases of plagiarism will result in a conference me, and, if unresolved at that point, will be referred to the Judicial Board. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, please consult a reference librarian or ask me.