

*HIST 241*  
*Colonial America:*  
*Comparative New World Societies*



**Dr. James Paxton**

**Comenius 306**

**Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00–12:00; Thursday 1:00–2:00; or by appointment**

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### **Course Description**

Welcome to 241: Colonial America. For many Americans, colonial history is synonymous with the thirteen English-speaking colonies that became the United States. But colonial America was a large, crowded, and diverse place that stretched from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific and from Hudson's Bay in the north to the tip of South America. Within this arena, Native, English, Spanish, French, Dutch, Russian, Swedish, and African peoples met, intermingled, and jostled for power. The impossibility of

conveying New World societies in all their complexity and variety forces us to focus on a limited number of actors and a narrow range of themes, such as American exceptionalism, the nature of cultural contact, and the rise of racism and race slavery. This broadly comparative course will explore common themes in English, French, and Spanish speaking North America. It will focus on the evolving relationships between America's founding people, Native Americans, Africans, and Europeans, and the societies they created together.

### **Course Objectives**

Students will

- become familiar with the main events and themes in colonial American history.
- become familiar with some of the major schools of thought and historiographical debates that have shaped historians' understanding of the colonial period.
- understand the role of Native peoples and Africans in the development of New World societies.
- learn to critically evaluate secondary sources.
- further develop clear and effective oral and written communications skills.

### **Class Organization**

Classes will be a combination of lecture and discussion. We will usually begin with a brief introduction to the week's topic followed by a student-led discussion of the assigned readings.

### **Required Texts**

Douglas Glover, *The Life and Times of Captain N*. (Fredericton, N.B.: Goose Lane Editions, 1993).

Aaron Spencer Fogleman, *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717-1775* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, & the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

Required texts are available in the Moravian College bookstore. Additional readings are available on JSTOR or will be placed on reserve in Reeves Library.

### **Attendance**

While there is no formal penalty for missing classes, students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes. Success in the course depends upon comprehension of the lecture material and participation in class discussions. Lateness will not be tolerated.

Please turn off or mute all electronic devices in the classroom.

## **Grade Distribution**

Topic and preliminary bibliography	7%
Annotated Bibliography	15%
Final Essay	20%
Journals	18%
Participation	20%
Final Exam	20%

**The participation grade will reflect the quality and quantity of your contributions to class. It is not an attendance grade.**

### **Journals**

Throughout the semester you will be writing weekly journal entries to reflect on the readings. Journal entries must be at least one-and-a-half pages long, double-spaced. Journals serve as a place for you to think about not just the immediate readings but also the larger themes of the course. What does it mean to be American? I will read every journal entry to ensure that you are keeping up your journal entries and taking them seriously. Since we meet twice a week, it is up to you whether you write about Tuesday or Thursday's readings. In terms of format and style, journal entries may be less formal than the essay. They will be graded for content, regularity, and willingness to engage with ideas, rather than for stylistic concerns such as spelling and grammar. Nonetheless, I do expect you to proofread your journals before handing them in. Journals **must** be handed in at the beginning of the class in which they are due.

### **Assignments**

By the end of the course, you will become an expert in one area of colonial history, which you will demonstrate in a 10-12-page historiographical paper. A historiographical essay provides comment and analysis on a number of works pertaining to one subject. Do not summarize the contents of the books. Instead, write a coherent essay with a thesis that assess how historians have interpreted the topic over time. Writing will take place in stages. By week four you will have selected a topic and prepared a preliminary bibliography. In week 8, you will turn in an annotated bibliography containing a minimum of twelve works. You will utilize eight of those books in writing the final essay, which you will turn in week 13.

### **Late Policy**

Papers turned in after the beginning of the class on which they are due will be assessed a penalty of 5% for the first day they are late and 2% for each day thereafter. I do not accept late journals. They must be turned in at the beginning of the class in which they are due. Computer and printing problems are not acceptable reasons for lateness.

### **Important Due Dates**

Topic and preliminary bibliography	September 18
Annotated bibliography	October 16
Final Paper	November 20

### **Academic Dishonesty**

According to the Moravian College Student Handbook, the following constitutes plagiarism: “as the use, deliberate or not, of any outside source without proper acknowledgment.” Plagiarism will result in the offender receiving zero in the course. Please consult the Student Handbook for fuller details.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Students with physical, learning, or medical disabilities should speak to me and contact Laurie Roth, Director of the Learning Center, to arrange the appropriate accommodations. Please make these arrangements in the first weeks of the semester.

**NOTE:** Additional readings may be assigned throughout the semester.

## **Class Schedule**

### **I. Introduction**

#### **Week 1**

Aug. 28 – Introduction: What is colonial history?

Aug. 30 – Historiography

J.R. Pole, “Reconstructing British-American Colonial History,” in *Interpreting Early America: Historiographical Essays* (Charlottesville and London, 1996), 221-239.  
“*Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America – A Symposium*,” in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 260-263, 223-230.

### **II. Old Worlds**

#### **Week 2**

Sept. 4 – America

Neal Salisbury, “The Indians Old World: Native Americans and the Coming of Europeans,” *William and Mary Quarterly* (July 1996): 435-58. JSTOR  
What does Salisbury mean by ‘Indians’ Old World?’ Does this article change the way you think about history? How and why?

Sept. 6 – Europe

Fogelman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 1-65.

Why does Fogelman begin his history in Germany? What are the implications of this for a distinctive American character?

## **II. New Worlds**

### **Week 3**

Sept. 11 – Encounters

James Axtell, “Imagining the Other: First Encounters,” in *Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 15-45.

Nicholas P. Canny, “The Ideology of English Colonization: From Ireland to America,” *William and Mary Quarterly* (Oct. 1973): 575-98.

How do preconceptions shape the nature of contact? To what extent does reality alter these misconceptions? Would you describe the English intrusion into America as settlement, colonization, conquest or something else?

Sept. 13 – Frontiers and Borderlands

Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” *Frontier and Section: Selected Essays of Frederick Jackson Turner*, ed. Ray Allen Billington, 37-62. Reserve.

Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron. “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History.” *American Historical Review* 104 (June 1999): 814-41. JSTOR

W.J. Eccles, “The Nature of the Canadian Frontier,” in *The Canadian Frontier, 1535-1760* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), 1-11. Reserve

Compare frontiers, borderlands, and metropolis? What are the strengths and limitations of the concept of “frontier” for the study of American history?

## **III. American Societies**

### **Week 4**

Sept. 18 – Spanish America

Charles Gibson, “The Borderlands,” *Spain in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 182-204.

Ramon A. Gutierrez, “Franciscan Conversion in New Mexico,” in Karen Ordahl Kupperman, ed., *Major Problems in American Colonial History*, 165-72. Reserve

David J. Weber, “Conflict Within the Spanish Regime and the Pueblo Revolt,” in Karen Ordahl Kupperman, ed., *Major Problems in American Colonial History*, 172-78. Reserve

Why were Spanish colonies in the region that would become the United States less successful than the ones in South and Central America, and the Caribbean? In what ways did the Spanish influence Native societies? To what extent did Native peoples influence colonial society?

**Topic and Preliminary Bibliography Due**

Sept. 20 – French America

Daniel H. Usner, Jr., “Divergence within Colonial Societies,” in *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (1992), 44-76. Reserve

W.J. Eccles, “Institutions and Environment” and “Society and the Frontier,” in *The Canadian Frontier, 1535-1760* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969), 60-102. Reserve

**James Gaines lecture at 7:30pm Peter Hall.**

How and why did French colonies in Canada in Louisiana differ? What were French goals in America? How did the crown achieve them? How do you think French and English colonies differed?

**Week 5**

Sept. 25 – British America: Slave Colonies

Peter Laslett, “The Gentry of Kent in 1640,” in *Shaping Southern Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 32-47.

Martin H. Quitt, “Trade and Acculturation at James Town, 1607-1609: The Limits of Understanding,” *William and Mary Quarterly* (April 1995): 227-258.  
Reserve/JSTOR

Edmund S. Morgan, “The Labor Problem at Jamestown, 1607-1618,” in *Shaping Southern Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 17-31.

Why did English men and women go to Virginia? How did their values and expectations hold up against the reality of Virginia? To what extent were they capable of transferring English culture to America?

Sept. 27 – Slavery and Freedom

Winthrop D. Jordan, “The Unthinking Decision: Enslavement of Negroes in America to 1700,” in T.H. Breen, ed., *Shaping Southern Society*, 100-115.

Edmund S. Morgan, Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox, *Journal of American History* (1972): 5-29.

Did racism result from economic imperatives or a cultural predisposition on the part of the English?

**Week 6**

Oct. 2 – Slave Societies

Allan Kulikoff, “The Origins of Afro-American Society in Tidewater Maryland and Virginia, 1700-1790,” *William and Mary Quarterly* (April 1978): 226-259.  
Reserve/JSTOR

Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, “The Creole Slaves: Origin, Family, Language, Folklore,” *Africans in Colonial Louisiana* (1992), 157-200. Reserve

Graham Hodges, “The Creation of a Slave Society, 1664-1714,” *Slavery and Freedom in the Rural North: African Americans in Monmouth New Jersey, 1665-1865* (1997), 1-32. Reserve

Do you believe that the experiences of African slaves in the different regions of North America were more similar or different? Why? Was America Africanized in the eighteenth century?

Oct. 4 – Immigration

Fogelman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 69-99.

To what extent did the Old World inform the New and/or did the environment transform Europeans into Americans?

### **Week 7**

Oct. 9 – No Class – Fall Recess

Oct. 11 – New England

Virginia DeJohn Anderson, “Religion, the Common Thread of Motivation,” 98-109.

Mark A. Peterson, “The Mythical Opposition Between Piety and Prosperity in Colonial New England,” 109-116.

John Demos, “Communities: The Social Matrix of Witchcraft,” *Entertaining Satan:*

*Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England* (1982), 275-312. Reserve  
English men and women settled both Virginia and New England. Did the two regions more similar or dissimilar? What accounts for the differences? Can we speak about an undifferentiated ‘British America?’

### **Week 8**

Oct. 16 – British West Indies

Michael Craton, “Reluctant Creoles: the Planters’ World in the British West Indies” in Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Strangers Within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1991), 314-362. Reserve

Jack P. Greene, “The Continuing Connection Between Barbados and South Carolina,” in Philip D. Morgan, ed., *Diversity and Unity in Early North America* (London: Routledge, 1993), 245-53. Reserve

### **Annotated Bibliography Due**

Should the West Indies be considered part of colonial America? Why? What is a cultural hearth?

## **V. Revolutions**

Oct. 18 – Religious

Fogelman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 100-126.

Patricia U. Bonomi, “The Hosannas of the Multitude”: The Great Awakening in America,” 92-102. Reserve

Barbara E. Lacey, “The World of Hannah Heaton: The Autobiography of an Eighteenth-Century Connecticut Farm Woman,” *WMQ* (April 1988): 280-304.

What was the significance of the Great Awakening and how did affect colonial society? How did women and immigrants participate in the Great Awakening?

## **Week 9**

Oct. 23 – Consumer

T.H. Breen, “Baubles from Britain: The American and Consumer Revolutions of the Eighteenth Century,” *Past and Present* 119 (1988), 73-104.

James Axtell, “The First Consumer Revolution,” in *Natives and Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 15-45.

What is a revolution? Does increased consumption of consumer goods constitute a revolution? Are the two consumer revolutions related? Why or why not?

Oct. 25 – Political

Fogelman, *Hopeful Journeys*, 127-53.

Holton, *Forced Founders*, 1-76.

What are the sources of revolutionary fervor in Pennsylvania and Virginia? To which school(s) of historiography do you think Holton belongs? Why?

## **Week 10**

Oct. 30 – Holton, *Forced Founders*, 77-129.

Why did Virginians embrace non-importation and non-exportation? What does this tell us about Virginia society in the Revolutionary era?

Nov. 1 – The Imperial Crisis in Britain’s Other Colonies

Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy, “The Stamp Act Crisis in the British Caribbean,” *William and Mary Quarterly* (April 1994): 203-226. Reserve/JSTOR

Gordon Stewart and George Rawlyk, “The Lost Decade,” in *A People Highly Favoured of God: Nova Scotia Yankees and the American Revolution* (Toronto: Macmillan), 3-23. Reserve

To what extent did the experiences of Nova Scotia and the British Caribbean conform to those of the mainland colonies? Why did Britain’s other colonies not join the Revolution?

## **Week 11**

Nov. 6 — Woody Holton, *Forced Founders*, 131-220.

Why did Virginia rebel? Have you changed the way you thought about the Revolution and American society because of Holton’s book?

Nov. 8 – **No Class – The Instructor Is Away**

## **Week 12**

Nov. 13 – Natives, Slaves, and Women in the Revolution

Sylvia R. Frey, “Between Slavery and Freedom: Virginia Blacks in the American Revolution,” *Journal of Southern History* (1983): 375-398. Reserve/JSTOR

Colin G. Calloway, “Corn Wars and Civil Wars: The American Revolution Comes to Indian Country,” *The American Revolution in Indian Country* (1995), 26-64. Reserve



Elaine F. Crane, "Dependence in the Era of Independence: The Role of Women in a Republican Society," *The American Revolution: Its Character and Limits* (1987), 253-272. Reserve

As these articles demonstrate, slaves, Anglo-American women, and Native Americans participated in the Revolution. For what did they struggle? And how does their struggle force us to revise an interpretation that the war was about freedom and the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuits of happiness?

Nov. 15 – The Other Americans

Jane Errington, "Upper Canada – an American Community?" in *The Lion, the Eagle, and Upper Canada: A Developing Ideology* (Kingston & Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), 35-54. Reserve

G.A. Rawlyk, "The Canada Fire: Methodist Radical Evangelicalism in Upper Canada, 1784-1812," 102-123.

Were the Loyalists British or American?

### **Week 13**

Nov. 20 – **Paper Due**

Nov. 22 – **No Class – Thanksgiving Recess**

### **Week 14**

Nov. 27 – *The Life and Times of Captain N*

How does Glover characterize the interactions between Native Americans and Euro-Americans? Do you agree with his characterization? According to Glover, what is the meaning of the Revolution?

Nov. 29 – Consolidating the Revolution

Alan Taylor, "The Divided Ground: Upper Canada, New York, and the Iroquois Six Nations, 1783-1815," *Journal of the Early Republic* (2002): 55-75.  
Reserve/JSTOR

Birte Pfleger, "'Miserable Germans': and Fries's Rebellion: Language, Ethnicity, and Citizenship in the Early Republic," *Early American Studies* 2 (Fall 2004): 341-361. Reserve

David Waldstreicher, "Rites of Rebellion, Rites of Assent: Celebrations, Print Culture, and the Origins of American Nationalism," *Journal of American History* (June 1995): 37-61. JSTOR

How is an American identity and nationality constructed in the years after the Revolution?

### **Week 15**

Dec. 4 – American Identity

Edmund S. Morgan, "Conflict and Consensus in the American Revolution," *Essays on the American Revolution* (1973), 289-309. Reserve

John M. Murrin, "Beneficiaries of Catastrophe: The English Colonists in America,"  
*Diversity and Unity in Early North America*, 259-282. Reserve

James Axtell, "The Indian Impact on English Colonial Culture," in *Natives and  
Newcomers: The Cultural Origins of North America* (New York: Oxford  
University Press, 2001), 15-45.

How should we assess colonial America? What factor, event, or trend defines the  
essential American character?

Dec. 6 – Conclusion and Review

The instructor reserves the right to change the syllabus with appropriate notification.