

History 112: The Era of the American Revolution
Professor Sara Gronim
Fall 2006

Contact Information

Office: Hoxie 312
Phone: 516-299-2731
Email: sara.gronim@liu.edu

Office Hours:
Mondays 2:30-4:30
Wednesdays 11:30-1:30
and by arrangement

Course Overview

History 112 is an upper-level course on the history of the American Revolution and the initial establishment of the United States as an independent nation. Through your study of this period you will deepen your understanding of the British Empire in North America in the mid-eighteenth century, the estrangement of many colonists from Britain, the course and nature of both armed and ideological conflict during the war itself, the effect of the Revolution on people who lived in eastern North America, and the debates over the nature of the new nation. You will also continue to develop your skills in interpreting primary documents, and in understanding historical causality.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course you should have

--increased your factual knowledge about the historical events and processes that were significant to the history of the United States between 1750 and 1790.

--strengthened your skills in reading primary documents accurately, explaining connections between documents and their historical context, and evaluating documents for their credibility and their value for understanding historical problems.

--further developed your skills in chronological thinking, particularly your understanding of the complexities of determining historical causality.

Required Texts

Richard D. Brown, Major Problems in the Era of the American Revolution, 1760-1791, 2nd edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2000)

Packet available in History Office, top floor, Hoxie Hall

Course Requirements

1. Participation in Discussion

25%

Many classes will have assigned reading, and we will devote most of our time in those classes to discussing the reading. I expect you to have read the assigned material and come to class prepared to describe the content of the primary documents accurately. During class I expect students to participate actively by offering observations about the documents, speculating on possible explanations for historical developments, and analyzing both primary textual documents and visual materials like maps or other graphic material for their credibility and their significance.

Discussion participation will be graded as follows:

A: misses no more than 2 of the 13 classes devoted to discussion; offers at least one accurate observation on the reading or perceptive speculation on a discussion question per class; consistently converses on topic with peers when in small groups.

B: misses no more than 3 of the 13 classes devoted to discussion; offers at least one accurate observation on the reading or perceptive speculation on a discussion question in at least half of the classes; listens attentively and occasionally contributes to conversations in small groups.

C: misses no more than 4 of the 13 classes devoted to discussion; occasionally offers an accurate observation of the reading or perceptive speculation on a discussion question; listens when in small groups but rarely contributes to peer discussion.

D: misses 5-6 discussions.

F: misses more than 6 discussions.

2. Exam on Part I

Oct. 9

25%

In the first third of the course we will study the period between 1750 and 1776. The first exam will test your knowledge and understanding of this material. The exam will have several types of questions:

- multiple-choice questions that test your factual knowledge
- a time line to test your understanding of historical chronology
- a map to test your knowledge of relevant geography
- short answer questions based on quotations from primary documents

You will prepare at home and bring with you to the exam a 4-5 page typed answer to the following question:

“In your judgment, why was there a colonial revolt in 1776?”

In your essay you should directly answer the question in the first paragraph. Each subsequent paragraph should offer a distinct logical reason that supports your answer. You should support each reason with specific evidence drawn from the assigned reading, the class discussions, and the lectures.

3. Exam on Part II Nov. 1 25%

In the second section of the course, we will concentrate on the war itself. The format of this exam will be identical to the first. For this exam you will bring a 4-5 page typed essay that answers the following question:

“In your judgment, why did the Patriots win and British lose the Revolutionary War?”

4. Final Exam TBA 25%

In the final third of the course, we will study the debates over what sort of nation the new United States should be. The final exam will primarily cover this material and will be in the same format as the previous two exams. However, there will be some questions that ask you to synthesize information from the entire course. For this exam, the essay question will be

“In your judgment, why, among competing visions for the new nation, did the one expressed in the Constitution prevail?”

Standards for Intellectual Honesty

Please note that I take intellectual honesty very seriously. Students found to have cheated on an examination, to have copied another person’s words or ideas into a paper without crediting them properly, or to have handed in work that is not their own may, at my discretion, receive an F for the assignment, an F for the course, and/or other administrative sanctions. If you are ever in doubt about whether something you are doing falls within the bounds of intellectual honesty, ask me.