

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

History 4304, Section 05642
THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, 1763-1800
Professor James Kirby Martin
Spring Semester, 2007

Required Reading:

James Kirby Martin, IN THE COURSE OF HUMAN EVENTS: AN INTERPRETIVE EXPLORATION OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. (Copy Center, Packet Number 10)
Douglass Adair and John A. Schutz, eds., PETER OLIVER'S ORIGIN & PROGRESS OF THE AMERICAN REBELLION: A TORY VIEW.
J. K. Martin and M. E. Lender, A RESPECTABLE ARMY: THE MILITARY ORIGINS OF THE REPUBLIC, 1763-1789. Second Edition.
Carol Berkin, REVOLUTIONARY MOTHERS: WOMEN IN THE STRUGGLE FOR AMERICA'S INDEPENDENCE.
James Thomas Flexner, WASHINGTON: THE INDISPENSABLE MAN.

Exams and Other Course Requirements:

There will be a midterm, in-class exam, approximately halfway through the semester. In addition, there will be a final exam at the end of the semester that will touch upon all major aspects of the course. Each exam will be designed to assess your conceptualization of course materials as well as your ability to analyze and interpret those materials. The exams will cover assigned readings as well as lecture materials and issues examined during scheduled discussion classes and video presentations.

The midterm exam will count for approximately 40 percent of your course grade; the final examination will count for approximately 50 percent. Each student will also prepare a comparative book review, which will be due about two weeks before the end of regularly scheduled classes. The instructor will explain the details of this assignment in class. To complete this writing requirement, students will need to select a book (not including any of the required books listed above) from among those listed in the handout READING LIST accompanying this syllabus. Your written commentary should not exceed five double-spaced typed pages and will count--along with attendance and class participation--for approximately 10 percent of your final grade. In other words, class attendance and participation in discussion classes will be taken into consideration in the determination of your semester grade.

Course Warning Label: The instructor recognizes that virtually no learning takes place when students do not attend class regularly. Nor does learning occur when students do not keep up with readings and related course assignments. If you are not interested in attending regularly and if you are not interested in completing assignments, both of which are strong indicators that you are not committed to your own education or to learning more generally, then I would encourage you to drop this course immediately.

Course Outline:

The outline that follows indicates daily class topics as well as subjects for discussion classes. It would be very advisable to keep well ahead in reading assignments and to have these assignments completed by the time of the appropriate discussion class.

I. THE BEGINNINGS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION: PRECONDITIONS AND PRECIPITANTS, 1750-1776.

A. Introduction to the Course.

- Anglo-American Society at Mid-Century: An Overview.

C. Strange and Strained Relationships in Britain: George III, George Grenville, and the "New" Imperial Policy.

- The Stamp Act Crisis: The Beginnings of Colonial Defiance and Resistance.
- Slide Presentation: Getting to Know Revolutionary America.

F. The Townshend Duties: Heightened Levels of Confrontation through Nonimportation.

G. DISCUSSION CLASS: What Was the Nature of American Resistance? What Factors Explain the Resistance Movement? Was American Resistance Justified? If So, Why? If Not, Why Not?

Reading Assignment: Martin, Human Events, pp. 3-70.
Flexner, Washington, pp. 1-61.
Berkin, Revolutionary Mothers, ix-xviii, 3-25.
Adair and Schutz, eds., Peter Oliver, pp. vii-xxi, 27-41.

H. The Lull Before the Storm: The Issueless Years, 1770-1773 (Boston Massacre, Gaspee Affair, and Other Confrontations).

I. Insurgency Boils to an Exploding Point: The Boston Tea Party and Parliament's Coercive Acts.

J. The First Continental Congress: Victory for the Extremists.

K. The Beginnings of Warfare: Bloodshed at Lexington, Concord, and Other Points in New England and Beyond.

L. The Second Continental Congress, Spreading Warfare, and the Declaration of Independence.

M. Video Presentation: Meet Loyalist Peter Oliver

- DISCUSSION CLASS: What Were the Conflicting Ideologies that Helped Precipitate an Organized Rebellion? What Role Did Conspiratorial Thinking Play? Why Did Communications Break Down?

Reading Assignment: Martin, Human Events, pp. 71-104.
Martin and Lender, Respectable Army, 1-64.
Adair and Schutz, eds., Peter Oliver, pp. 41-168.

MIDTERM EXAMINATION

II. THE CONFEDERATED STATES OF AMERICA, 1776-1787: THE SEARCH FOR STABILITY AMID WAR, INTERNAL CHAOS, AND PERCEPTIONS OF POPULAR ANARCHY.

- A. The War for American Independence: Human Cannon Fodder and Republican Ideals. (two lectures)
- The Diplomacy of the Revolution: Manipulating and Being Manipulated by the Great Powers of Europe. (two lectures)
- C. Video Presentation: Meet Continental Soldier Joseph Plumb Martin
- D. DISCUSSION CLASS: Did the Americans Deserve to Win Their War for Independence? Why American Success? Why British Failure?

Reading Assignment: Martin, Human Events, pp. 107-146.
Flexner, Washington, pp. 62-164.
Martin and Lender, Respectable Army, 65-172.
Berkin, Revolutionary Mothers, 26-119.

- The Problem of National Government: Nationalists (Federalists) versus Localists (Anti-Federalists) in Early Constitution Making.
- F. The Problem of Citizen Virtue and Republican Behavior: The Newburgh Conspiracy.
- G. The Problem of Democratic Licentiousness and Social and Economic Stability: The Nationalist Movement and Daniel Shays's Rebellion.
- DISCUSSION CLASS: What Were the Major Problems of the Confederation Years? Was This Truly a "Critical Period" for the New Nation? Why? Why Not?

Reading Assignment: Martin, Human Events, pp. 147-207.
Martin and Lender, Respectable Army, 173-211.
Flexner, Washington, pp. 165-203, 250-257.

III. SECURING THE REVOLUTION: THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE FINAL SOCIAL/POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, 1787-1800.

- A. The Grand Constitutional Convention of 1787. (two lectures)
- George Washington's Presidency: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition and the Emergence of the First Party System.
- C. Conclusion: Success or Failure: How Revolutionary was the American Revolution?
- DISCUSSION CLASS: What Motivated the Founding Fathers? Why Did They Produce the Constitution of 1787? What Were the Realities of the Revolution's Second Constitutional Settlement? For Some or All of the People? Did the Demos and Democracy Emerge Victorious?

Reading Assignment: Martin, Human Events, 208-241.
Flexner, Washington, pp. 204-249, 385-402.
Berkin, Revolutionary Mothers, 120-134, 148-161.

REVIEW SESSION AND FINAL EXAMINATION