HISTORY 132
The American Revolution and the Early Republic
MWF 10:20-11:20, Dante 115

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Course Description:

Beginning in 1763, when Britain, France, and Spain reorganized their empires and triggered revolts, this course examines the period from the American Revolution to construction of the new nation in the first third of the nineteenth century (to 1833). We will address questions like these: What were the long-term and short-term causes of the American Revolution? How did it relate or compare to other revolutions of its day, such as the French and Latin American Revolutions? How did the Revolution impact women, slaves, and Native Americans? Did the Constitution of 1787 embody the revolutionaries’ ideals or contradict them? What was the relationship between religion and government in the early United States? How did the weak new nation manage to survive threats from France, England, and other European great powers? Why did the ordered world of the Founding Fathers evolve within a generation into the kind of raucous democracy they had feared? What problems and resources have we inherited from America’s founding decades? Given the centrality of Social, Historical, and Cultural Understanding to our project, the course concentrates on the historical skills of analysis and interpretation involved in sorting out the arguments and evidence that address these key questions. Also, given the importance of understanding American Diversity to our course objectives, we will devote a great deal of attention throughout to the experiences of a wide range of social groups in the Revolutionary era and the early Republic.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Place key events of American history in the era of the American Revolution and Early Republic (1763-1833) in an accurate and coherent chronological sequence. (Social, Historical, Cultural Understanding, #1)
2. Identify major political, economic, social, and cultural trends and issues of this period, including British colonial resistance, the American Revolution, the federal constitution, the development of political parties, early U.S. foreign policy, debates and compromises over slavery, and the emergence of democratic society and politics. (Social, Historical, Cultural Understanding, #1, American Diversity)
3. Understand the complexity of historical explanation, including concepts of causation, contingency, convergence, and individual agency, using key events and movements of the era of the Revolution and Early Republic as case studies. (Social, Historical, Cultural Understanding, #2; American Diversity)
4. Analyze aspects of diversity in American society during the Revolution and Early Republic, including such categories as race, class, gender, religion, cultural/ethnic identity, age, political identity, and sexual orientation; and assess similarities and differences in these categories between the past and present. (American Diversity)
5. Analyze how the aspects of social diversity described in #4 influenced the history of slavery, the American Revolution, white-Indian relations, the rise of protest movements, and early national politics. (American Diversity Social, Historical, Cultural Understanding, #2)

6. Explain how social categories and structures of power affected individuals through in-depth case studies of the experience of diverse Americans living through the era of the Revolution and Early Republic. (American Diversity)

7. Examine important historical issues and problems within their period-appropriate context, and from multiple points of view. Those viewpoints include different perspectives by individuals and groups of the time period as well as different approaches by historians. (Social, Historical, Cultural Understanding, #2 and 3b; American Diversity)

8. Understand the historical antecedents of today’s controversies over Native American rights, women’s role in politics, the Founders’ position on government powers, relations between church and state, definitions of citizenship, and other constitutional questions. (Social, Historical, Cultural Understanding, #2 and 3b; American Diversity)

9. Choose and evaluate the intent and credibility of primary sources (historical documents) and apply those sources to address an historical issue, problem, or interpretation. Documents should reflect a broad sampling of social groups beyond elites, including Native Americans, women, racial and ethnic minorities, and lower-class whites. (Social, Historical, Cultural Understanding, #3a and 3b; American Diversity)

10. Identify and evaluate an historical thesis or interpretation embedded in an historical essay or book. (Social, Historical, Cultural Understanding, #2 and 3b)

11. Compare and contrast conflicting historical interpretations of important actions and events, and weigh their arguments and evidence. (Social, Historical, Cultural Understanding, #2 and 3b)

12. Write persuasive and accurately documented historical essays. (Social, Historical, Cultural Understanding, #3a and 3b)

Exams and Paper Assignments:

Exams

All exams, including the final exam, will be composed of identification questions and interpretive essays. They will not be cumulative. Study questions from which the exam material will be drawn will be distributed in class one week prior to the test dates. These exams are designed to assess students’ mastery of Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, including both SHCU and American Diversity learning goals.

Paper #1: Thomas Paine’s Common Sense

This four-page paper requires students to interpret Thomas Paine’s pamphlet Common Sense, which was published in January 1776, nine months after fighting erupted between
the colonists and England. Common Sense played a huge role in convincing Americans to declare their independence from Britain later that year. Students must describe Paine’s most powerful arguments against monarchy and empire and his most powerful arguments for independence, and explain why they are so strong. Analyzing, with examples, Paine’s presentation, students must also infer how the pamphlet’s style and rhetoric enabled his points to hit home especially well with common people of the colonies.

This paper is designed to assess students’ mastery of Learning Outcomes # 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, including both SHCU and American Diversity learning goals.

Paper #2: Ordinary Courage: The Revolutionary War Memoir of a Common Soldier

This four-page paper is based on chapter assignments from the Revolutionary War memoir of Joseph Plumb Martin, a private in the Continental Army. All students read Ordinary Courage, 3rd edition, pp. vii-xviii and Chapter I, pp. 1-10, then each signs up to examine a chapter from the memoir that deals with a key event or time period during the war.

Students are asked to address the following questions:
--What are the key events that Martin describes during the time covered by your chapter(s)? How do they fit into the larger history of the war?
--Which especially interesting or unusual episodes did he witness or was part of?
--How does Martin describe events from the point of view of a foot soldier, and what lessons or generalizations does he draw from them?
--How did service in the Continental Army during the Revolution affect Martin?
--What valuable historical information—whether Martin intended it or not—emerges from his memoir concerning the history of the Revolutionary War and the common soldier’s experience in it?

This paper is designed to assess students’ mastery of Learning Outcomes # 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, including both SHCU and American Diversity learning goals.

Paper #3: Inside the Cherokee Removal

This four-page paper requires students to choose and interpret a cluster of documents from the collection by Perdue and Green, The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents. Students sign up to cover one of five topics: Cherokee society and its response to white settlers, the history of Georgia’s policy toward the tribe, federal relations with the Cherokees, the debate in Congress and among the Cherokees over removal west of the Mississippi, and the Trail of Tears. The assignment asks students to examine the documents for key ideas and themes, to assess responsibility for outcomes among the various parties, and to consider multiple perspectives, including individual with conflicting opinions within Congress and within the Cherokee Nation.

This paper is designed to assess students’ mastery of Learning Outcomes # 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, including both SHCU and American Diversity learning goals.
Supreme Court Decision Document and Report:

This assignment requires students to use approved internet sites to find and examine an important Supreme Court decision issued during the early years of the Republic (students are given a list of thirty such cases). In this 3-page essay students explain the facts and issues, describe the Court’s decision, its legal basis and reasoning, and its importance for the topic treated, such as naturalization and citizenship, voting rights, the powers of Congress, presidential prerogatives, the status of Native Americans, and the rights granted in corporate charters.

This report is designed to assess students’ mastery of Learning Outcomes #3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, including SHCU learning goals and, for some documents, American Diversity learning goals.

Document Presentation and Report (See a detailed assignment sheet at the end of this syllabus):

This three-page paper and oral report requires students to select a documentary source from the collection, Major Problems in the Early Republic, 2nd edition, edited by Sean Wilentz and Jonathan Earle, and to use it to illuminate a specific historical question or issue from this period. Most of these documents embody the perspectives of individuals who take a position on important issues and provide testimony about the effects of social categories and structures of power on their lives. This report is designed to assess students’ mastery of Learning Outcomes # 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, including SHCU learning goals and American Diversity learning goals.

Required Texts:

Eric Nellis, The Long Road to Change: America’s Revolution, 1750-1820
Thomas Paine, Common Sense (1776)
Gary B. Nash, The Forgotten Fifth: African Americans in the Age of Revolution
Joseph J. Ellis, Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation
Theda Perdue and Michael Green, eds., The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents
Louis P. Masur, 1831: Year of Eclipse
Plus selected reprints to be distributed.

Class and Assignment Schedule:
# I  Background to Revolution

M Feb. 6  **Introduction: The Significance of the Revolution and Early Republic**

W Feb. 8  **British America in the Atlantic World**  
Nellis, *Long Road*, pp. 8-10, 33-35  
Bergquist, “The Paradox of Development in the Americas”—reprint

F Feb. 10  **The Thirteen Colonies: Diversity, Unity, and Change**  
Nellis, *Long Road*, pp. 11-33

M Feb. 13  **The Colonies and the British Empire**  
Nellis, *Long Road*, pp. 35-47

W Feb. 15  **Imperial Reorganization and Colonial Resistance, 1763-1774**  
Nellis, *Long Road*, Chapter 2

F Feb. 17  **Social Sources of Colonial Resistance**  
Holton, “Elite Concerns about the American Revolution”—reprint

# II  The American Revolution

M Feb. 20  **Rebellion and Independence, 1774-76**  
Nellis, *Long Road*, Chapter 3  
The Declaration of Independence—Nellis, *Long Road*, pp. 283-286

W Feb. 22  **Ideology and Revolution**  
Paine, *Common Sense*

F Feb. 24  **The War for Independence**  
Nellis, *Long Road*, Chapter 4

M Feb. 27  **How the Patriots Won**  
Video and discussion: “Liberty!”

W Feb 29  **The Ordinary Soldier’s War in Myth and Reality**  
Martin, *Ordinary Courage*, pp. vii-xviii and chapters to be assigned  
Waldstreicher, “Public Celebrations, Print Culture, and American Nationalism,” *Major Problems*, pp. 77-85

F Mar. 2  **Forgotten Runaways and Revolutionaries: African Americans**  
Nash, *Forgotten Fifth*, Ch. 1
M Mar. 5 **The Revolution and Native Americans**
   Nellis, *Long Road*, pp. 167-171
   Perdue and Green, *Cherokee Removal*, pp. 5-19--reprint
   Wallace and Nash, “The Iroquois and the Revolution”--reprint

W Mar. 7 **The Revolution and Women: A Debate**
   Norton, “Revolutionary Advances for Women”—reprint
   Wilson, “The Illusion of Change”—reprint

F Mar. 9 **What Kind of Revolution? Interpretive Issues**
   Nellis, *Long Road*, pp. 1-6
   Greene, “The American Revolution”—reprint
   Wood, “The Radicalism of the American Revolution”—reprint

M Mar. 12 **The Revolution in Comparative Perspective**
   Palmer, “The American Revolution in Comparative Perspective”—reprint

W Mar. 14 **FIRST EXAM**

**III Making a Nation**

F Mar. 16 **The States, the National Government, and Social Changes after Independence**
   Nellis, *Long Road*, pp. 147-167

M Mar. 19 **Problems of Independence in the “Critical Period,” 1781-87**
   Nellis, *Long Road*, pp. 150-153 (review), 175-187

W Mar. 21 **The Federal Constitution of 1787**
   Nellis, *Long Road*, pp. 185-204

F Mar. 23 **Assessing the Constitution and Its Legacies**
   Ellis, *Founding Brothers*, Preface
   Supreme Court document and discussion

M Mar. 26 **The Founders and Slavery: Realism or Betrayal?**
   Ellis, *Founding Brothers*, Ch. 3
   Nash, *Forgotten Fifth*, Ch. 2

W Mar. 28 **The Founders and the Emergence of Political Parties**
   Nellis, *Long Road*, pp. 204-208, 213-220
Ellis, *Founding Brothers*, Ch. 2

F Mar. 30  **The Turbulent 1790s and the “Revolution of 1800”**

- Ellis, *Founding Brothers*, Ch. 5

**EASTER RECESS**

W Apr. 11  **Assessing Thomas Jefferson and the Jeffersonian Republic**

- Gordon-Reed, “Blacks and Jefferson,” *Major Problems*, pp. 120-123

F Apr. 13  **The World Outside: Neutrality, the Louisiana Purchase, and Embargo**

- Ellis, *Founding Brothers*, Ch. 4
- Kukla, “Napoleon Bonaparte and the Louisiana Purchase”--reprint

M Apr. 16  **Independence Secured: The War of 1812 and the Monroe Doctrine**

- Nellis, *Long Road*, Chapter 9
- Dowd, “The Indian Resistance Crushed,” *Major Problems*, pp. 140-143

W Apr. 18  **SECOND EXAM**

**IV Expansion, Democracy, and Conflict**

F Apr. 20  **Westward Expansion**

- Masur, *1831*, pp.182-193
- Cunliffe, “The West”--reprint

M Apr. 23  **The Transportation, Market, and Industrial Revolutions**

- Masur, *1831*, pp. 169-182

W Apr. 25  **Expansion, Development, and the Sections**

- Wilentz, “‘The Market Revolution,” *Major Problems*, pp. 3-8
F Apr. 27  Andrew Jackson and the Rise of Mass Political Parties  
Masur, 1831, pp. 77-114

M Apr. 30  Jacksonian Democrats vs. Whigs  
Masur, 1831, pp. 135-144  

W May 2  Democracy and Racial Ideology in the Early Republic  
Nash, Forgotten Fifth, Ch. 3  
Wilentz, “Jeffersonian Anti-Slavery and the Missouri Crisis,” Major Problems, pp. 304-312

F May 4  Jackson, Indian Removal, and the Nullification Crisis  
Masur, 1831, pp. 115-135, 144-168  
Documents in Major Problems, pp. 243-249

M May 7  Democratic Religion and Its Impact: The Second Great Awakening  
Masur, 1831, pp. 63-77  
Clark, “Religion, Cruelty, and Sympathy in Antebellum America,” Major Problems, pp. 159-164  

W May 9  Slavery and Abolitionism  
Masur, 1831, pp. 9-62

F May 11  A House United or Divided? Nationalism and Sectionalism  
Cunliffe, “Nationalism and Sectionalism”--reprint  
Rossiter, “Nationalism and American Identity in the Early Republic,” Major Problems, pp. 8-16

FINAL EXAM: Monday, May 14, 11:30-1:30

Grade distribution:

First exam  15%  
Second exam  20%  
Papers  25%  
Class participation (including document reports)  20%  
Final Exam  20%
Attendance policy: Students will be allowed three absences during the semester. Absences beyond that, no matter what the reason, may require make-up assignments: you must consult with me individually on this. More than five absences will result in grade penalties.

Course Moodle site: The course Moodle site will archive copies of the syllabus, assignment sheets, and exam study guides. As the semester proceeds I will also add readings, images, and PowerPoint slides seen in class. To access the site, go to the My Saint Mary’s login page via the SMC website, then type your SMC email username (the part before @) as the username) and type your 7-digit SMC ID# as your password. Click on the Moodle icon and then open up the HIST-132-01 course site.

Email: Unless I am replying to an email you sent me from another address, I will always use your Saint Mary’s email address to contact you or to send an email to the class. If you prefer to receive my emails and other official SMC emails at your g-mail, yahoo, or other address, you can arrange to have them automatically forwarded. Contact the Saint Mary’s CaTS help desk for assistance at 631-4266 or helpdesk@stmarys-ca.edu

Academic Honesty: This course operates under the premises of the Saint Mary’s academic honor code, by which students pledge to do their own work in their own words, without seeking inappropriate aid in preparing for exams or assignments. See your Student Handbook for details about definitions, policies, and procedures. I am available to discuss issues of academic integrity in general as well as specific information about plagiarism, appropriate citation, and collaboration for this course.

Student Disability Policy: Reasonable and appropriate accommodations, that take into account the context of the course and its essential elements, for individuals with qualifying disabilities, are extended through the office of Student Disability Services. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Student Disability Services Coordinator at (925) 631-4164 to set up a confidential appointment to discuss accommodation guidelines and available services. Additional information regarding the services available may be found at the following address on the Saint Mary’s website: http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/academics/academic-advising-and-achievement/student-disability-services.html

History 132 Document Essay and Class Presentation

After signing up to work on a specific document from Wilentz and Earle, eds., Major Problems in the Early Republic, 1787-1848, 2nd ed., read the document carefully. Check out how the editors introduce the document in the section labeled “DOCUMENTS” at the beginning of the document section of the relevant chapter. Be sure also to consult the other assigned readings that are due the same day as your document will be discussed. These may help provide background information and give you clues as to how to interpret your document in light of other events. To help identify the author of the
document, you can do a simple Google search. If this search turns up no information, that probably means that the document comes from an “average” person, which is important information in itself. After you have taken notes and thought about your document, write a 3-page, double-spaced essay on what it can tell us about the topic under discussion. (Notice the topic next to your due date.)

Here are some questions to consider as you analyze your document. Your essay should cover these, although not necessarily in the exact same order.

Who is the author? Does the author’s gender, occupation, location, religion, political stand, or social situation matter?
When was the source composed? What is the historical context in which the source was written and read?
Who is the intended audience? Is the document public or private, official or informal?
What was the purpose of the document? Was it intended to provide information? To persuade others? To gain sympathy? To get the listener or reader to do something?
What assumptions, emotions, or arguments are embedded in the source? What can you see or learn from the document that the author was perhaps unaware of?

And finally, the most important: What useful information and/or interpretations does the document give us about the author and the issue or event it relates to? How can it help us to interpret this episode in American history and to understand its impact on individuals?

**Due date:** Your essay is due on the day we discuss the document—see the sign-up sheet for this.

**Documentation:** no footnotes are necessary. Simply provide the page number in parenthesis whenever you use a quotation.

**Oral presentation:** On the due date you will be asked to tell the class briefly and informally what you learned from the document. Do not read your paper to us, but try to summarize your main points and point out key passages in the document for the class to notice or discuss.

History 132 Document Presentations  (Page references are to Wilentz and Earle,

\textit{Major Problems, 2^{nd} ed.})

Fri. March 23: The Constitution and Its Legacy

1. Madison defends the new constitution (pp. 30-33)  _____________________

Wed. March 28: The Founders and the Emergence of Political Parties
2. Jefferson and Hamilton debate the National Bank (pp. 62-64) 
3. Meetings of the Democratic-Republican Societies (pp. 64-67) 

Fri. March 30: The Turbulent 1790s
4. An editor is convicted under the Sedition Act (pp. 71-75) 

Wed. April 11: Assessing Thomas Jefferson
5. Jefferson describes Blacks and Slaves (pp. 105-08) 
6. Jefferson on policy toward Native Americans (pp. 108-09) 

Fri. April 13: The World Outside
7. Jeffersonian newspaper explains the rationale for Embargo (pp. 110-111) 

Mon. April 16: The War of 1812
8. Two arguments in favor of war (pp. 126-127) 
9. Daniel Webster criticizes the war (pp. 128-130) 

Fri. April 20: Westward Expansion
10. A Mexican general worries about white settlers, 1830 (pp. 251-52) 

Mon. April 23: The Market Revolution in the North
11. A self-made man explains his success (pp. 177-78) 
12. A British cabinetmaker describes his life in NYC (pp. 184-87) 
13. Opposing views of wage labor (pp. 190-94) 

Mon. Apr. 30 Jacksonian Democrats vs. Whigs

11
15. Jackson’s Bank Veto (pp. 324-28)

16. Webster’s reply (pp. 328-330)

Wed. May 2: Democracy and Race in the Early Republic

17. Congress debates the Missouri Crisis, 1819-20 (pp. 285-87)

Fri. May 4: Jackson and Indian Removal

18. The Cherokee Nation Constitution, 1827 (pp. 243-45)

19. Jackson endorses removal (pp. 247-48)

20. Congressman Freylinghuysen attacks the Removal Bill (pp. 248-49)

Mon. May 7: Democratic Religion and Its Impact

21. Charles Finney sermonizes on sin and redemption (pp. 150-52)

22. Joseph Smith recounts his first “visitation” (pp. 156-58)

Wed. May 9: Slavery and Abolitionism

23. Slave rebel Nat Turner confesses (pp. 223-24)

24. The Virginia Legislature debates ending slavery (pp. 225-26)

25. Virginia Professor Thomas R. Dew defends slavery (pp. 226-29)