

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
George Mason University

Fall 2013, Sept. 17 – Nov. 5
Tuesdays, 2:15 – 3:40 PM

Nick Timreck
ntimreck@gmu.edu

1776 and the Revolution Within
History F307

In 1776, the Continental Congress declared independence from Great Britain. Our British fathers rejected the colonists' desire for freedom, the war was fought and Americans were finally on their own by 1783. But was the revolution complete? Or, was this only the beginning? Were the American colonists speaking with one voice? And, who was speaking for the colonies? This course will examine the uncertainty of the revolution between 1776 and 1789 as American colonists attempted to put aside their differences, fashion a new identity, and establish the sovereignty of a new republic.

Course Structure

Class meetings will include a blend of lecture and discussion of weekly topics. Active and informed participation by course participants is an important element of this course. Discussion will focus on weekly readings, so it is important to prepare for each class by reading and reflecting on what you have read prior to each class. The aim of in-class discussion is to explore central themes by providing course participants the opportunity to express their views and understanding of the topics we will explore. The benefit then is to widen our understanding of this period in American history through the participation of many voices – yours!

Your Thoughts, Please?

Class participants will prepare one written response to a reading of their choice from weeks two through seven. The response should be typewritten, double-spaced, and page length. It should summarize the central theme(s) of the reading followed by your critical response. For example, do you agree with the author's views/interpretations? Does the reading raise important questions about the Revolution or the character of its participants? Is the author convincing, and does the reading provide an alternate view or interpretation of 1776 and America's struggle to forge a new nation? Your critical response is important to expanding our perspectives about our nation's history because we gain a more complete and complex understanding than a single point of view can provide. Hopefully your class experience will be more enjoyable and intellectually stimulating as a result. Please submit your written response to me either in an email or as an email attachment no later than the Sunday before your reading of choice will be discussed in class.

Removing the Rust: Some Optional Reading to Consider

Is your knowledge of this period a little rusty? If so, you might want to consider reading one of the following optional texts prior to the beginning of the course on September 17:

Foner, Eric. *Give Me Liberty! An American History* (Vol. 1). New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006. (Chapters 5, 6, and 7.)

Taylor, Alan. *American Colonies: The Settling of North America*. New York: Penguin Books, 2002. (Chapter 18.)

Course Schedule and Readings

Week 1 Introduction: The Eve of Revolution

September 17 Read the following two journal articles beginning with Bernard Bailyn:

Bailyn, Bernard. "1776 A Year of Challenge – A World Transformed." *Journal of Law and Economics* 19, no. 3 (October 1976): 437-466.

Breen, T. H. "Ideology and Nationalism on the Eve of the American Revolution: Revisions Once More in Need of Revising." *The Journal of American History* 84, no. 1 (June 1997): 13-39.

During this first class, course participants will identify the class topic/reading that they will offer a written response.

Week 2 Uncertainty and Discontent: Disunity in Revolution – Part I

September 24 Read *The Articles of Association* (Handout), and the following article:

Gould, Christopher. "The South Carolina and Continental Associations." *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 87, no. 1 (January 1986): 30-48.

Also, read one of the following two articles (your choice!):

Humphrey, Thomas J. "Conflicting Independence: Land Tenancy and the American Revolution." *Journal of the Early Republic* 28, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 159-182.

Knouff, Gregory T. "'An Arduous Service': The Pennsylvania Backcountry Soldiers' Revolution." *Pennsylvania History* 61, no. 1 (January 1994): 45-74.

Week 3
October 1 More Uncertainty and Discontent: Quarrelsome Neighbors – Part II
Read one of the following two articles on contested leadership (your choice!):

Irvin, Benjamin H. "The Streets of Philadelphia: Crowds, Congress, and the Political Culture of Revolution, 1774-1783." *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 129, no. 1 (January 2005): 7-44.

Smith, W. Calvin. "Mermaids Riding Alligators: Divided Command on the Southern Frontier, 1776-1778." *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (April 1976): 443-464.

Also, read one of the following two articles on Loyalists' experience during the Revolution (your choice!):

Jasanoff, Maya. "The Other Side of Revolution: Loyalists in the British Empire." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 65, no. 2 (April 2008): 205-232.

Mason, Keith. "A Loyalist's Journey: James Parker's Response to the Revolutionary Crisis." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 102, no. 2 (April 1994): 139-166.

Week 4
October 8 The Struggle for Solidarity: Fashioning a New Identity
Read the following article:

Reckner, Paul E. "Negotiating Patriotism at the Five Points: Clay Tobacco Pipes and Patriotic Imagery among Trade Unionists and Nativists in a Nineteenth-Century New York Neighborhood." *Historical Archaeology* 35, no. 3 (2001): 103-114.

Also, read one of the following two articles on women during the Revolution (your choice!):

Erhard, Katharina. "Rape, Republicanism, and Representation: Founding the Nation in Early American Women's Drama and Selected Visual Representations." *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 50, no. 3 (2005): 507-534.

Zagarri, Rosemarie. "The Rights of Man and Woman in Post-Revolutionary America." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 55, no. 2 (April 1998): 203-230.

Week 5
October 15 Navigating Choppy Economic Waters
Read the following article:

Baack, Ben. "Forging a Nation State: The Continental Congress and the Financing of the War of American Independence." *The Economic History Review* 54, no. 4 (November 2001): 639-656.

Also, read one of the following two articles (your choice!):

Gross, Robert A. "A Yankee Rebellion? The Regulators, New England, and the New Nation." *The New England Quarterly* 82, no. 1 (March 2009): 112-135.

Smith, Barbara Clark. "Food Rioters and the American Revolution." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (January 1994): 3-38.

Week 6
October 22 An Infant Nation Among Kings and Queens
Read one of the following two articles (your choice!):

Armitage, David. "The Declaration of Independence and International Law." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (January 2002): 39-64.

Hutson, James H. "Early American Diplomacy A Reappraisal." *The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress* 33, no. 3 (July 1976): 183-198.

Week 7
October 29 Toward an Imperfect Constitution and a Contested Government
Familiarize yourself with the *Constitution* (Handout), and read one of the following (your choice!):

Rakove, Jack N. "The Madisonian Moment." *The University of Chicago Law Review* 55, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 473-505.

Or, read all three articles from a bicentennial series in 1987 in the order listed:

Onuf, Peter. "It Is Not a Union'." *The Wilson Quarterly* (1976-) 11, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 96-104.

Rakove, Jack N. "Philadelphia Story." *The Wilson Quarterly* (1976-) 11, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 105-121.

Howard, A. E. Dick. "Making It Work." *The Wilson Quarterly* (1976-) 11, no. 2 (Spring 1987): 122-133.

Week 8
November 5 Beyond 1789
Read one of the following two articles (your choice!):

Countryman, Edward. "Indians, the Colonial Order, and the Social Significance of the American Revolution." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (April 1996): 342-362.

Greene, Jack P. "Colonial History and National History: Reflections on a Continuing Problem." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (April 2007): 235-250.