

History J495
The Founding Fathers and the Atlantic World
Wednesdays, 8:30-11:15

Instructor Information

Dr. Christopher J. Young

Tamarack Hall 16

(219) 980-6661

Office Hours: TR 10:00-11:00 and by appointment

cjy@iun.edu; <http://www.iun.edu/~histcjy/cjy/index.html>

Course Description

This course will explore the world of the Founding Fathers. While we generally consider the Founders of the United States within the American context, this course seeks to study these individuals within a broader Atlantic world of which they were a part. This course is reading and writing intensive.

Course Objective

The object of this course is to analyze the life and times of America's Founding Fathers. Intellectually, politically, culturally, and economically, the Founding Fathers were part of an Atlantic World. This course will encourage students to explore the Founders in this broader context.

Required Texts

Bernard Bailyn, Atlantic History: Concept and Contours (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005)

Bernard Bailyn, To Begin the World Anew: The Genius and Ambiguities of the American Founders (New York: Vintage Books, 2003)

Joseph J. Ellis, His Excellency, George Washington (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004)

Walter Isaacson, Benjamin Franklin: An American Life (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003)

Frank Lambert, The Barbary Wars: American Independence in the Atlantic World (New York: Hill and Wang, 2005)

Merrill D. Peterson, Adams and Jefferson: A Revolutionary Dialogue (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978)

Darren Staloff, Hamilton, Adams, Jefferson: The Politics of Enlightenment and the American Founding (New York: Hill and Wang, 2005)

Gordon S. Wood, Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Different (New York: Penguin, 2006)

Useful Websites

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/jay/>

<http://www.earlyamerica.com/>

<http://www.americanrevolution.com/>

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/bibguide.html>

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/index.html>

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lawhome.html>

<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/>

Assignments

Students are required to turn in a topic statement, an annotated bibliography, and a thesis statement. These items will make up part of the general research paper grade.

Also, each student is required to lead a class. On these occasions the student must turn in to the instructor ahead of time an outline for the class or a list of discussion questions. For this last assignment, students are encouraged to bring material (e.g. images) to class that they think their fellow students will find interesting.

Additionally, each week students must turn in a reading response. This response consists of answering four questions: 1. What is the author's thesis? 2. What kinds of evidence does the author use to support his or her argument? 3. How does the reading relate to other readings discussed in class? 4. How does the reading relate to the course in general?

Finally, students are required to write a term paper that is 10 to 15 pages in length. The topic must be approved by the instructor.

Grading

Reading Responses 25%

Research Paper 25%

Participation 20%

Biographical Essay 10%

Historiography Essay 10%

Discussion Leader 10%

Calendar

January 9: Introduction to Course; Tour of Library

THE ATLANTIC WORLD OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS

January 16: Bernard Bailyn, Atlantic History: Concept and Contours

January 23: Bernard Bailyn, To Begin the World Anew: The Genius and Ambiguities of the American Founders, Chapter 1, "Politics and the Creative Imagination" and Chapter 5, "Atlantic Dimensions"; Darren Staloff, Hamilton, Adams, Jefferson: The Politics of Enlightenment and the American Founding, "Introduction."

January 30: Frank Lambert, The Barbary Wars: American Independence in the Atlantic World, Chapters 1-3. **Biographical essay due.**

February 6: Frank Lambert, The Barbary Wars: American Independence in the Atlantic World, Chapters 4-7. **Topic statement due.**

THE FOUNDING FATHERS

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

February 13: Gordon Wood, “The Invention of Benjamin Franklin”; Edmund Morgan, “The Secrets of Benjamin Franklin,” The Genuine Article; Bernard Bailyn, To Begin the World Anew: The Genius and Ambiguities of the American Founders, Chapter 3, “Realism and Idealism in American Diplomacy: Franklin in Paris, *Couronné par la Liberté.*”

February 20: Walter Isaacson, Benjamin Franklin, An American Life, Chapters 10-15.

February 27: Individual Conference. **Historiography essay due.**

THOMAS JEFFERSON

March 5: Darren Staloff, Hamilton, Adams, Jefferson: The Politics of Enlightenment and the American Founding, Chapter 3, “Thomas Jefferson: Romantic America.”

March 12: Spring Break

March 19: Bernard Bailyn, To Begin the World Anew: The Genius and Ambiguities of the American Founders, Chapter 2, “Jefferson and the Ambiguities of Freedom”; Merrill D. Peterson, Adams and Jefferson: A Revolutionary Dialogue, Chapters 2-4. **Thesis statement due.**

JOHN ADAMS

March 26: Darren Staloff, Hamilton, Adams, Jefferson: The Politics of Enlightenment and the American Founding, Chapter 2, “John Adams: The Enlightenment Transcended.” **Annotated bibliography due.**

GEORGE WASHINGTON

April 2: Joseph J. Ellis, His Excellency, George Washington, Chapters 6 and 7.

April 9: Gordon S. Wood, “The Greatness of George Washington” in Revolutionary Characters.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON

April 16: Darren Staloff, Hamilton, Adams, Jefferson: The Politics of Enlightenment and the American Founding, Chapter 1, “Alexander Hamilton: The Enlightenment Fulfilled.”

April 23: Individual Conference.

April 30: Paper due at 8:30 a.m.

The instructor reserves the right to alter this syllabus. Students will be informed of any changes.