Instructor: Jack Rakove

This course covers the opening segment of the traditional American history survey. Its major themes are the character of colonial society; the origins and consequences of the American Revolution, from the Stamp Act controversy to the adoption of the Federal Constitution; the impact of the Revolution on the general population and culture; and (implicitly) the long-term significance of the social and political history of this era for our conceptions of American nationhood, society, and citizenship.

Format: The class meets four times a week, with lectures MWF and sections to be scheduled. Regular attendance is expected for lectures and required for sections; participation in the latter will affect your grade, which, however, largely rests on four written assignments:

1. a short essay based on the primary sources relating to Puritans assigned for the week of October 13, and due in class October 22;
2. a paper analyzing a set of documents relating to the topic of independence to be discussed during the weeks of November 3, due in class Nov. 12;
3. a paper analyzing a primary source (or set of sources) of your own choosing, relating to the history of the Revolution, due December 3; and
4. the final exam, Friday Dec. 12, which will strongly emphasize the course reading.

Thanks to the generosity of John and Marjorie Hines of Chicago, a prize of $200 will be given for the best essay submitted for assignment (3).

Grading is better described as an art than a science. Still, you have a reasonable expectation to know how you will be evaluated. The formula for weighing the different assignments is roughly 20% for the first two assignments, and 30% each for the third paper and the final. The teaching assistants have some discretion to improve your grade on the basis of effective participation in discussion, and also to ask you to do modest additional assignments, such as submitting discussion questions in advance of sections.

Required Texts (available in bookstore):

Syllabus of Classes and Readings

Some Paradigms of American History
Sept. 22 Atlantic History: The Dominant Model
Sept. 24 The Transplanted Origins of American Exceptionalism
Sept. 26 Republican Constitutionalism in the Age of the Democratic Revolution

Discussion: Bailyn, Peopling of British North America

The Makings of Settler Societies
Sept. 29 The Godly Commonwealths of New England
Oct. 1 No Class
Oct. 3 The Hobbesean World of the Chesapeake

Discussion: Butler, Becoming America, 1-184; Benjamin Franklin, Observations concerning the Increase of Mankind (1751); Hector St. Jean de Crevecoeur, Letters from an American Farmer, chap. III (excerpt) (1782)

Hierarchies of Race
Oct. 6 Slavery and the Plantation Complex
Oct. 10 Origins of American Racial Slavery
Oct. 12 African Americans and the Beginnings of Slave Culture

Discussion: Shoemaker, A Strange Likeness

America as a Post-Reformation Society
Oct. 13 America as a Post-Reformation Society
Oct. 15 Puritans and the Dilemmas of Conversion
Oct. 17 What Possessed Salem? (Julia Mansfield)

Discussion: Butler, Becoming America, 185-224; John Dane, “A Declaration of Remarkable Providences in My Life”; Thomas Shepard, Autobiography; Examination of Anne Hutchinson

The Sinews of Empire
Oct. 20 The Political Heritage
Oct. 22 Commerce and Culture
Oct. 24 The World Beyond America

Discussion: Butler, Becoming America, 225-248; Wood, Radicalism of the American Revolution, 3-92
Explaining the Revolution
Oct. 27  Constitutional Impasse
Oct. 29  The View from London
Oct. 31  The Flashpoint of Massachusetts

Discussion: Rakove, *Declaring Rights*, 1-68

Independence
Nov. 3  The Crisis
Nov. 5  How Revolutionary Was the War for Independence?
Nov. 7  Patriots, Loyalists, and Disaffection

Discussion: Maier, *American Scripture*; Edmund Burke, Speech on Conciliation with America, March 1775

A New Birth of Constitutionalism
Nov. 10  Leaving the State of Nature
Nov. 12  The Mirror of Representation
Nov. 14  Republican Reforms


What Did the Constitution Originally Mean?
Nov. 17  Two Roads to Philadelphia
Nov. 19  James Madison, Thinking
Nov. 21  Three Myths about the Constitution

Discussion: Rakove, *Declaring Rights*, 97-198; Madison, Vices of the Political System of the United States [April 1787]

Some Legacies
Dec. 1  Hamilton’s State Building Project
Dec. 3  Jefferson’s Empire of Liberty
Dec. 5  The Protestant Republic


Dec. 12  Final Exam