

HONR 201A
Sophomore Honors Seminar
Section 43, Dr. Snyder
Fall, 2004

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Themes and Objectives

Honors 201A is an introduction to American institutions and values from Colonization through Reconstruction. The course explores selected cultural, social, and political developments in America with special emphasis on the construction of American identities and the intersections of identity, law, and politics with issues of race, class, region, and gender. This class should help you gain a critical understanding of the historical development of American institutions and values and their impact on the individual and collective lives of Americans. Moreover, you should gain a basic knowledge of the important events and ideas that shaped the American nation. We will pay particular attention, for instance, to the evolution of the law and experience of slavery, the emergence of ideologies and debates that buttressed the American Revolution and the writing of the Constitution, and the development of concepts regarding citizenship, legal rights, and legal harms in American history. The class proceeds chronologically but makes no claim to comprehensively address all of the key events in early America. Rather, in order to make sense of this broad, rich subject, we focus on the nature and centrality of the law in shaping Americans' lives as well as the changing concepts of the legal rights of Americans as recurrent themes of study.

Assessment and Requirements

Students are expected to read the assigned materials before class and actively participate in class discussions, individual reports, and group projects. Once in class, please turn off your pagers and cell phones and attend to the work of the seminar, as most discussions will be led by students, either individually or in groups. Your final grade will be based on the following: seminar participation 30% (participation includes the quality of your contribution to class discussions and group projects, individual reports, and attendance); midterm examination and essay, 35%; final examination and essay, 35%. Please note that both examinations (the midterm and the final) will include significant essay components that will be written out of class. Late essays and/or make-up examinations are not permitted without my consent prior to the scheduled due. There will be no extra-credit work assigned for this class. Because this is a seminar and participation is a critical component of your grade, absences, including early departures from or late arrivals to class, will impact your grade significantly: students who miss three or more classes will be ineligible for A grades; those missing four or more classes will be ineligible for B grades; and those who miss six or more classes will fail the course.

All work done in and for this class is expected to be your own. Please remember that when you use the words or ideas of others, you must so indicate through an acceptable citation system. Any act of intentional plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the class. If you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism, please consult University guidelines.

Required Texts

Available at the Titan Bookstore

1. Bernard Bailyn. *To Begin the World Anew: The Genius and Ambiguities of the American Founders*. New York, 2003.
2. Ira Berlin. *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in America*. Cambridge, 1998.
3. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., ed. *The Classic Slave Narratives*. New York, 2002. (SN)
4. Linda K. Kerber and Jane DeHart. *Women's America: Refocusing the Past*. Sixth Edition. New York, 2004. (WA)
5. Daniel K. Richter. *Facing East From Indian Country: A Native History of Early America*. Cambridge, 2001.
6. Ronald Takaki. *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*. Boston, 1993.
7. Alfred F. Young. *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party: Memory and the American Revolution*. Boston, 1999.

WEEKLECTURES AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

LEGALITIES AND IDENTITIES IN EARLY AMERICA

8/24-26 Introduction to Course: Diversity and the Law in Historical Perspective
Reading: Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 1-7
Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 1-14
Introduction (WA), 5-14

Part One: Native and European Cultures in Early America

8/31-9/2 Early America From a Native Point of View
Reading: Richter, *Facing East*, 11-40; 69-109
Plane (WA), 29-38

9/7-9 Colonization, Conflict, and Conquest
Reading: Richter, *Facing East*, 110-150
Film: *Black Robe*

- 9/14-16 Religion, Law, and Gender
Reading: Documents (WA), 55-58; 79-82
 Karlsen, (WA), 83-96
 Dayton, (WA), 97-113
- 9/21-23 Slavery, Servitude, and the Law
Reading: Vassa, *The Life of Olaudah Equiano* (SN), 29-150
 Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 28-46, 109-41
- 9/28-30 Gender and Slavery
Reading: Berkin, (WA), 59-66
 Prince, *The History of Mary Prince* (SN), 249-321

Part Two: Toward the Revolution

- 10/5-7 Ordinary Lives in the Revolutionary Period
Reading: Documents, (WA), 114-19
Film: *Martha Ballard*
- 10/12-14 Rights and Revolution
Reading: Young, *The Shoemaker and the Tea Party*, 3-84
 Documents (WA), 114-16
 Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 219-55
 The Declaration of Independence [Find a copy]
- 10/19-21 The Constitution
Reading: Bailyn, *To Begin the World Anew*, 1-55
 Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, 256-89
 Kerber, (WA), 119-28
- 10/26 Becoming a Nation
Film: *Are We to Be a Nation?*

10/28 Midterm Examination

EMPOWERMENT AND THE LAW IN THE NEW REPUBLIC

- 11/2-4 Indian Policy in the New Republic
Reading: Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 83-105
 Richter, *Facing East*, 188-236

11/9-11 Abolitionism and The Testimony of Slave Narratives
Reading: Brent, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, (SN), 437-557
Douglass, *Narrative of Frederick Douglass*, (SN), 323-436
Film: *Africans in America*

11/23-25 No Class, Thanksgiving Break

REDEFINING RIGHTS AND WRONGS AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

11/30-12/2 The Woman's Rights Movement
Reading: Documents, (WA), 193-200; 200-217; 247-52
Painter, (WA), 218-220

12/7-9 Industrialization, Frontiers, and Immigration
Reading: Takaki, *A Different Mirror*, 277- 310; read
either chapter 6, 7, 8, 9 as assigned

12/14 Final Examination, 12-1:50