**21H.112. THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, Spring 2009. TR 11-12:30.**

**Instructor:** Prof. Pauline Maier

**REQUIREMENTS:**

(1) Class attendance and participation in discussions, which will focus upon the readings assigned for the week.

(2) A research paper of about 15 pages in length. Papers should answer a carefully posed historical question and be based to a substantial extent upon primary sources, that is, documents that for most topics will be from the eighteenth century. The papers can focus upon any aspect of the Revolution, but must go beyond work done in class. All topics must be approved on or before Tuesday, April 7. The final papers must include footnotes or endnotes and a bibliography composed in a correct and comprehensible form, and are due on Thursday, May 14, the final day of classes.

(4) Two in-class examinations, on March 19 and May 7.

**ASSIGNED BOOKS:**


**READING SCHEDULE:**

*February 3-5. Introduction and Historiography. Background: Society, Economy, Politics and Government, America and Britain.*

February 10-12. Background, continued, and Ideology.


(Note that Locke’s treatise is available at [http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtreat.htm](http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtreat.htm))


February 17: Monday Schedule.

February 19: Overview of the Independence Movement
   Start the readings for next Tuesday.

February 24-26: Arguments and Actions, 1764-1770.


   NOTE: It's a good idea read the pamphlets in chronological order. How did the American argument shift between the two Hopkins pamphlets, and between Dulany and Dickinson? If you can identify where an author is saying what everyone is saying and focus instead on what's new, and on how the American position is developing (the British didn't change much), you'll be reading efficiently and intelligently. It might take some practice to get the hang of that. Be sure to take notes on each pamphlet immediately after finishing it or all of them will quickly melt together in your mind.

   For Feb. 26: Accounts of the Stamp Act uprisings, the Sons of Liberty, and the Virginia Association of 1770 in "Readings."

March 3-5. From Resistance to Revolution, 1770-1776.

   Jefferson, "Summary View" (1774), and Paine’s “Common Sense,” in *Jensen, Tracts*, 256-76, 400-446.


   (The discussion will focus on the primary sources, particularly the three pamphlets in the assigned readings. What distinguishes Wilson and Jefferson from Dickinson’s “Farmer’s Letters”? Is Paine’s Common Sense a logical outgrowth of the line of argument American pamphlets had taken, or something else altogether? How exactly did Paine justify Independence? Was he convincing? Was he moving? More so than others? Why?)
March 10-12. Declarations of Independence; Loyalism.

Especially for March 10: The English Declaration of Rights (1689); American local resolutions on independence; an early draft of the Virginia Declaration of Rights (by George Mason) that appeared in the Pennsylvania Gazette, June 12, 1776; Jefferson's draft preamble for the Virginia constitution of 1776 (May-June 1776); the Jefferson/committee draft of the Declaration of Independence with Congress’s editings, all in “Readings." The main focus of attention will be the draft Declaration with Congress’s editings. What did Congress do, and why? (You might also take a look at Morison’s version of the preamble to the Virginia constitution on p. 151 of Sources and Documents and see if you notice anything odd.)


March 17. The British View; Review.

Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy, “‘If Others Will Not Be Active, I Must Drive’: George III and the American Revolution,” Early American Studies, Vol. II (Spring 2004), 1-46, in “Readings.”


March 24-26: Spring Vacation.

March 31- April 2. The Revolutionary War and the Peace of Paris.

Wood, American Revolution, 74-88.

Shy, A People Numerous and Armed, chapters 4, 6-8, 10, (roughly pages 81-115, 133-92, 213-44).

(Paper topics due by April 7!)

April 7-9. The First State Constitutions.


April 14-16. The Confederation and the 1780s; the Constitution.

Wood, American Revolution, 70-74, 91-150.
Morison, Sources and Documents, 178-86, 203-33.

(Scroll down to the part where Jefferson discusses what he proposes to do with Virginia’s slave population, and why it couldn’t just stay in Virginia.)


James Madison's "Vices of the System," in "Readings."
Start Madison’s Notes.

April 21. Patriots’ Day, recalling the Battles at Lexington and Concord; Holiday

April 23, 28, and 30. The Philadelphia Convention of 1787 and the Constitution; Ratification.


Madison, Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention…. Start with the Introduction, Madison's preface, and pp. 21-166. This includes the convention's opening; presentation of the Virginia plan and the convention’s discussion of its provisions as a committee of the whole; the presentation and rejection of the alternative New Jersey plan; the resolutions the committee of the whole reported on June 19 (see them on pp. 148-51: they are key to the debates thereafter) and the delegates’ discussion of them as a convention. Skim the make-or-break debates on resolutions 7 and 8 that runs from pp. 220-98, with the little additional flare-up on 299-302. Thereafter, debates proceeded with less fireworks, and you can pick and choose which issues to follow. Discussion over whether Congress should veto state laws, as Madison insisted, is on 304-05; debates over the presidency, which many said was the hardest issue the convention faced, are on pp. 306-14, 322-35, 356-72. As a result of these discussions, the convention produced a revised set of resolutions (pp. 379-85), which a Committee of Detail made into a draft constitution while the convention adjourned from July 26-August 6 (see pp. 385-96). When the delegates returned, they debated the draft, revisiting issues it had discussed before in the light of other decisions. Note the predictions of the future that emerged during a discussion of suffrage, pp. 402-04; and discussions of slavery and the slave trade on pp. 409-13, 502-08. In late August the convention set up a Committee of Eleven to propose solutions to several problems it hadn't solved. The committee's recommendations opened another round of debates, especially on the executive (see 573-79, 582-97, and 605-66 on impeachment). Finally, on September 12, a Committee of Style charged with incorporating agreed-upon changes into the draft constitution and refining its wording presented its report (616-27). That led to still more debates, in the course of which George Mason raised the issue of a bill of rights (630). Read also the record of the convention's closing days, 650-59.

May 5. Ratification, continued; Review.


Morison, Sources and Documents, 305-62.
Amendments to the constitution proposed by the Massachusetts Ratifying convention (February 6, 1788), South Carolina (May 23, 1788), Virginia (June 27, 1788), and New York’s “Instrument of Ratification” (July 26, 1788), in Helen Veit, ed., Creating the Bill of Rights (Baltimore, 1991), 14-28, and in "Readings." Are these sets of demands impossibly different? Are there any notable common elements?

May 7: Exam.


James Madison’s proposal for a federal Bill of Rights as presented to the House of Representatives on June 8, 1789, and the set of amendments Congress finally sent to the states for ratification in September 1789, in “Readings.” (The states failed to approve the first two of Congress’s proposed amendments by 1791. Did the rest really constitute a “bill of rights”? Did they satisfy demands of several state conventions for amendments to the Constitution?)


Selections from the Adams correspondence and the writings of Judith Sargent Murray, in “Readings.”