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### HSTA 501.01: Readings in Early American History

Kyle G. Volk

*University of Montana - Missoula*, [kyle.volk@umontana.edu](mailto:kyle.volk@umontana.edu)

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# *HSTA 501: Readings in Early American History*

## Fall 2014 / W 4:10-7pm / LA 250

**Instructor: Kyle G. Volk**

Office: LA 260    Phone: (406) 243-2989

Office Hours: F 11:10-12:30 and by appointment

Email: [kyle.volk@umontana.edu](mailto:kyle.volk@umontana.edu)

### **Course Description, Goals, & Outcomes:**

This graduate colloquium explores classic and recent scholarship in early American history. Key topics and themes this semester will include capitalism and labor; race, class, and gender; law, politics, and empire; and the meaning of freedom. The chief goals of the course are to expose students to 1.) major historiographical problems that have dominated the study of early America; 2.) a variety of methodological approaches; and 3.) new scholarly trends both topical and methodological. Students successfully completing this course will gain a solid foundation for further historical and historiographical investigation of early America. They will also cultivate fundamental professional skills, including the construction of professional book reviews; the formation of effective discussion questions; leading class discussions; independent presentation of secondary scholarship; and the creation of a historiographical essay.

Students serving as teaching assistants in the early American survey (HSTA101: American History I) should take this course. Doctoral students wishing to take a comprehensive field examination in Early American History (or another field) with Professor Volk must take this course. Doctoral or Masters students wishing to have Professor Volk on their dissertation or thesis committee also must take this course.

### **Course Requirements:**

Completion of assigned readings, faithful attendance, and consistent, constructive, and courteous participation are absolutely essential to the success of our course. Failure to meet these most basic requirements will be detrimental to the quality of our discussions and to your grade in this course. More formally, students are required to do the following:

1. **Craft 1000-word professional book reviews of the course's main texts.** Students will write 5 out of a possible 11 reviews. Everyone must write a review for Weeks 3, 8, and 15. You will have a choice of the other two books you review. At least one student will write a review each week.

- A book review should summarize and critically analyze the author's main historical arguments, use of evidence, methodological approach, historiographical contribution, and conclusions. Readers of your review should be able to grasp the structure and content of the book as well as its significance and most important insights. The review should also raise new questions and suggest new avenues for historical inquiry and research based on your engagement with the text. Useful models can be found in the *William & Mary Quarterly*, the *Journal of the Early Republic*, and *Reviews in American History*.

2. **Post Discussion Questions.** Each week students are required to post **five questions** worthy of our discussion in class. These questions should raise a variety of debatable issues—analytical, interpretive, historiographical, methodological, pedagogical, etc.—that force us to wrestle with each week's readings and deepen our comprehension of the historical and historiographical issues presented to us. These questions must do more than ask us to repeat or summarize the content or approach of a particular text. Ideally, at least three of your questions should tackle what in your assessment matters most in each set of readings (the

big questions; the largest stakes). Some of your questions might ask us to compare works between weeks. At least one question should engage with each week's articles/essays. In preparation for our discussions, students are expected to consider their classmates' questions thoroughly. Discussion questions should be posted to the course's MOODLE site each Tuesday by noon.

3. **Twice leading weekly discussion.** This might be done in pairs. Discussion leaders are required to read their classmates' discussion questions ahead of time and use them to structure class discussion. The goal of the discussion leader is *not* to act as the expert or authority in a given week but rather to facilitate a lively and wide-ranging discussion that touches on the manifold issues raised in the texts and by your classmates. Our discussion should be rigorous, stimulating, and above all, enjoyable.

4. **Twice reading, presenting, and reviewing a "Recommended Text."** Twice during the semester you will read an additional book, present it in class, and craft a professional book review of it. Your presentation should cogently summarize and assess the text's themes, argument(s), sources, methodology, significance, and contribution to the field(s). Please relate this outside book to our weekly readings and other course readings. **Provide your classmates with a printed 1000-word review of the work.** Consult with the instructor and the weekly discussion leaders to determine the best time during the class for your presentation.

5. A **final essay** (10-12 pages) tackling a particular historiographical issue is required. The topic of your paper will be determined in consultation with the instructor. Ideally, students will choose a topic that will inform the research project they undertake in the spring graduate research seminar.

**Books Available for Purchase (at the UM Bookstore):**

William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (Hill & Wang, 1983) [ISBN: 978-0809001583]

Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (Norton, 1975) [ISBN: 978-0393324945]

Paul W. Mapp, *The Elusive West and the Contest for Empire, 1713-1763* (UNC, 2011) [ISBN: 978-1469600864]

T.H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (Oxford, 2004) [ISBN: 978-0195181319]

Eliga H. Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth: The American Revolution and the Making of a New World Empire* (Harvard, 2012) [ISBN: 978-0674416949]

Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Johns Hopkins, 2008) [ISBN: 978-0801890079]

Patricia Cline Cohen, *The Murder of Helen Jewett* (Vintage, 1999) [ISBN: 978-0679740759]

Kyle G. Volk, *Moral Minorities and the Making of American Democracy* (Oxford, 2014) [ISBN: 978-0199371914]

Walter Johnson, *Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Harvard, 1999) [ISBN: 978-0674005396]

Edward Rugemer, *The Problem of Emancipation: The Caribbean Roots of the American Civil War* (LSU, 2008) [ISBN: 978-0807135594]

Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Harvard, 2010) [ISBN: 978-0674064218]

Stacey Smith, *Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (UNC, 2013) [ISBN: 978-1469607689]

Jonathan Levy, *Freaks of Fortune: The Emerging World of Capitalism and Risk in America* (Harvard, 2012) [ISBN: 978-0674047488]

**DSS:** If you have a documented learning disability, contact me so we can arrange accommodation.

**Plagiarism & Academic Honesty:**

It should go without saying that all the work you do in this course should be your own. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other instances of academic misconduct will result in a failing grade in this course. The academic dean will also be notified and offenses could result in expulsion. A full explanation of UM's policies on academic honesty can be found at: <http://libguides.lib.umt.edu/plagiarism>. You are responsible for reading and understanding these policies. A failure to have done so will not be an acceptable excuse for any violation. If you have questions, please ask the instructor BEFORE turning in an assignment.

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**Course Schedule:****(8/27) Week I – Introductions; Contact, Conflict, & Environment in the “New World”**

William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (Hill & Wang, 1983)

Virginia DeJohn Anderson, “King Philip’s Herds: Indians, Colonists, and the Problem of Livestock in Early New England,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 51 (Oct. 1994), 601-624.

William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” *Environmental History* 1 (Jan. 1996), 7-28.

**Recommended:**

Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Harvard, 2001)

Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origins of American Identity* (Vintage, 1999) [Chelsea]

**ASSIGNMENT: Post 5 Discussion Questions to MOODLE by Tuesday at noon****(9/3) Week II – Colonial Virginia, Race, & the American Paradox**

Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (Norton, 1975)

Barbara Fields, “Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the United States in America,” *New Left Review* 181 (May/June 1990).

Ira Berlin, “From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African-American Society in Mainland North America,” *William & Mary Quarterly* 53 (Apr. 1996), 251-288.

**Recommended:**

Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (UNC, 1996)

Rebecca Anne Goetz, *The Baptism of Early Virginia: How Christianity Created Race* (Johns Hopkins, 2012)

**ASSIGNMENT: Complete Reading Guide for Morgan, *American Slavery* (Due in Class)  
Post 5 Discussion Questions to MOODLE by Tuesday at noon**

**(9/10) Week III – New World Empires: Atlantic, Continental, and Beyond**

Philip D. Morgan and Jack P. Greene, "Introduction: The Present State of Atlantic History," in *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (2009)

Paul W. Mapp, *The Elusive West and the Contest for Empire, 1713-1763* (UNC, 2011)

Recommended:

Carla Gardina Pestana, *Protestant Empire: Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World* (UPenn, 2010)

Michael Jarvis, *In the Eye of all Trade: Bermuda, Bermudians, and the Maritime Atlantic World, 1680-1783* (UNC, 2012)

**Post 5 Discussion Questions to MOODLE by Tuesday at noon**

**BOOK REVIEWS: ALL REVIEW (Due in Class)**

**\*Thursday Class: (9/18) Week IV – Goods, Ideas, & the Politics of the American Revolution**

T.H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (Oxford, 2004)

Maya Jasanoff, "The Other Side of Revolution: Loyalists in the British Empire," *William & Mary Quarterly* 65 (Apr. 2008), 205-232.

Michael D. Hattem, "The Historiography of the American Revolution," *Journal of the American Revolution*, Aug. 27, 2013. <http://allthingsliberty.com/2013/08/historiography-of-american-revolution/>

Recommended:

Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Harvard, 1967)

Gary Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America* (Penguin, 2005)

**Post 5 Discussion Questions to MOODLE by Tuesday at noon**

**BOOK REVIEWS: (Due in Class)**

**(9/24) Week V – American Revolution, American Empire**

Eliga H. Gould, *Among the Powers of the Earth: The American Revolution and the Making of a New World Empire* (Harvard, 2012)

William Appleman Williams, "Empire as a Way of Life," *Radical History Review* 50 (1991), 71-102.

William J. Novak, "The Myth of the Weak American State," *AHR* 113 (Jun. 2008), 752-772.

Recommended:

Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (Vintage, 1992)

Kariann Yokota, *Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America Became a Postcolonial Nation* (Oxford, 2011)

**Post 5 Discussion Questions to MOODLE by Tuesday at noon**

**BOOK REVIEWS: (Due in Class)**

**(10/1) Week VI – Labor, Market Capitalism, and Law in the Early American Republic**

Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Johns Hopkins, 2008)

Hendrik Hartog, "Pigs and Positivism," *Wisconsin Law Review* (1985), 899-935.

Daniel Feller, "The Market Revolution Ate My Homework," *Reviews in American History* 25 (Sep. 1997), 408-415.

Recommended:

Morton J. Horwitz, *The Transformation of American Law, 1780-1860* (Harvard, 1977)

Anne F. Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families: A New History of the North American West, 1800-1860* (Nebraska, 2011)

**Post 5 Discussion Questions to MOODLE by Tuesday at noon**

**BOOK REVIEWS: (Due in Class)**

**\*(10/8) Week VII – Mid-Semester Break – Attend Swanberg Lecture, Thursday, Oct. 8th****(10/15) Week VIII – Lives and Minds of the Early Republic**

Patricia Cline Cohen, *The Murder of Helen Jewett* (Vintage, 1999)

Jill Lepore, "Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography," *Journal of American History*, 88 (Jun. 2001), 129-144.

William Cronon, "Storytelling," *AHR* 118 (Feb. 2013), 1-19.

Recommended:

Tiya Miles, *Ties That Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom* (California, 2006)

Ann Fabian, *The Skull Collectors: Race, Science, and America's Unburied Dead* (Chicago, 2010)

**Post 5 Discussion Questions to MOODLE by Tuesday at noon**

**BOOK REVIEWS: ALL REVIEW (Due in Class)**

**(10/22) Week IX – Politics and Public Life in the Golden Age of American Democracy**

Kyle G. Volk, *Moral Minorities and the Making of American Democracy* (Oxford, 2014)

Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," *AHR* 89 (Jun. 1984), 620-647.

Mary Ryan, "Civil Society as Democratic Practice: North American Cities during the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 29 (Spring, 1999), 559-584.

Recommended:

Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (Oxford, 2005)

Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic* (UNC, 2006)

**Post 5 Discussion Questions to MOODLE by Tuesday at noon**

**BOOK REVIEWS: (Due in Class)**

**(10/29) Week X – Antebellum Slavery & Southern Market Revolutions**

Walter Johnson, *Soul By Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Harvard, 1999)

Stephanie M.H. Camp, “The Pleasures of Resistance: Enslaved Women and Body Politics in the Plantation South, 1830-1861,” *Journal of Southern History* 68 (Aug. 2002), 533-572.

Daniel Rood, “Bogs of Death: Slavery, the Brazilian Flour Trade, and the Mystery of the Vanishing Millpond in Antebellum Virginia,” *Journal of American History* (June 2014), 19-43.

Recommended:

Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (Vintage, 1976)

Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (Basic, 2014)

**Post 5 Discussion Questions to MOODLE by Tuesday at noon**

**BOOK REVIEWS: (Due in Class)**

**(11/5) Week XI – Abolitionists, the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Atlantic, and the Coming of the Civil War**

Edward Rugemer, *The Problem of Emancipation: The Caribbean Roots of the American Civil War* (LSU, 2008)

Carol Lasser, “Voyeuristic Abolitionism: Sex, Gender, and the Transformation of Antislavery Rhetoric,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 28 (Spring 2008), 83-114.

Frank Towers, “Partisans, New History, and Modernization: The Historiography of the Civil War’s Causes, 1861-2011,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 1 (June 2011), 237-264.

Recommended:

Thomas Bender, *The Antislavery Debate: Capitalism and Abolitionism as a Problem in Historical Interpretation* (California, 1992)

Andre M. Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861: The American Civil War in the Age of Nationalist Conflict* (UNC, 2012)

**Post 5 Discussion Questions to MOODLE by Tuesday at noon**

**BOOK REVIEWS: (Due in Class)**

**(11/12) Week XII – The Civil War, Gender, & Memory**

Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Harvard, 2010)

Joan Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *AHR* 91 (Dec. 1986), 1053-1075.

David W. Blight, “‘What Will Peace among the Whites Bring?’: Reunion and Race in the Struggle over the Memory of the Civil War in American Culture,” *Massachusetts Review* 34 (Autumn, 1993), 393-410.

Recommended:

Edward Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies: The Civil War in the Heart of America, 1859-1863* (Norton, 2003)

Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (Knopf, 2007)

**Post 5 Discussion Questions to MOODLE by Tuesday at noon**

**BOOK REVIEWS: (Due in Class)**

**(11/19) Week XIV – Western History & the Age of Emancipation**

Stacey Smith, *Freedom's Frontier: California and the Struggle over Unfree Labor, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (UNC, 2013)

Eric Foner, "The Meaning of Freedom in the Age of Emancipation," *JAH* (Sep. 1994), 435-460.

Steven Hahn, "Slave Emancipation, Indian Peoples, and the Projects of a New American Nation-State," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 3 (Sept. 2013), 307-330.

Recommended:

Hannah Rosen, *Terror in the Heart of Freedom: Citizenship, Sexual Violence, and the Meaning of Race in the Postemancipation South* (UNC, 2009)

Kate Masur, *An Example for All the Land: Emancipation and the Struggle over Equality in Washington, D.C.* (UNC, 2011)

**Post 5 Discussion Questions to MOODLE by Tuesday at noon**

**BOOK REVIEWS: (Due in Class)**

**(11/26) Week XIII – NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Holiday****(12/3) Week XV – Cultures of Capitalism in Nineteenth-Century America**

Jonathan Levy, *Freaks of Fortune: The Emerging World of Capitalism and Risk in America* (Harvard, 2012)

Sean Patrick Adams, "Soulless Monsters and Iron Horses: The Civil War, Institutional Change, and American Capitalism," in *Capitalism Takes Command*, ed. Michael Zakim and Gary J. Kornblith (Chicago, 2012)

Seth Rockman, "What Makes the History of Capitalism Newsworthy?," *Journal of the Early Republic* 34 (Fall 2014), 439-466.

Recommended:

Amy Dru Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation* (Cambridge, 1998)

Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-1896* (Cambridge, 2003)

**Post 5 Discussion Questions to MOODLE by Tuesday at noon**

**BOOK REVIEWS: ALL REVIEW (Due in Class)**

**(12/10) Finals Week – No Class**

***Final Paper Due Saturday, 12/13 by 4PM – Submit by email: [kyle.volk@umontana.edu](mailto:kyle.volk@umontana.edu)***