

## REVOLUTIONARY AMERICA AND THE EARLY REPUBLIC

The Catholic University of America  
Fall 2016

Dr. Amanda Moniz

Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9-9:30 a.m.

**Revolutionary America and the Early Republic** examines the creation of an independent United States and a new republican society through the contested ideal of liberty. We will explore Americans' struggles over government power, religious liberty, and slavery in the Revolutionary era from the 1730s, when religious revivals unsettled traditional leaders, to the early 1800s, when the era's voluntary associations became flash points for conflicts over the exercise of authority by women, African Americans, and religious groups. Near the end of the semester, our class in conjunction with the French Revolution class will provide a briefing on the history of religious liberty in the early United States to a public audience.

Issues we will explore include:

- Americans' concepts of liberty;
- threats Americans perceived to their liberty;
- arenas in which Americans debated questions of liberty;
- religious liberty and the state;
- religious liberty in a pluralist society;
- the French experience with these issues during the Age of Revolution.

We will also explore the role of historical perspectives in public and policy conversations and we will participate in those conversations. This course is designed to enhance your:

- critical thinking skills
- information literacy
- understanding of historical and contemporary issues in context
- oral and written communications skills
- public speaking and presentation skills
- teamwork and collaboration on group projects
- confidence in civic engagement

## **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

The following texts are available at the CUA bookstore:

- Thomas Kidd, *The Great Awakening: A Brief History with Documents* (Macmillan, 2008)
- Richard Brown and Benjamin Carp, eds., *Major Problems in the Era of the American Revolution*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Wadsworth Publishing, 2013)

Additional readings will be posted through BlackBoard or are available by following the links in the syllabus.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

Assignments include a briefing paper (2 pages); an oral presentation; two response papers (1 page each); participation in crafting the class's public briefing; and a final take-home essay exam (8-10 pages). There are a number of incremental assignments designed to help you develop your knowledge of the American Revolution; your understanding of the history of religious liberty in the Revolutionary era and its connection to public conversations today; and your skills and habits of mind as a historian.

### *Assigned Reading:*

Assigned readings are short and most weeks, students have choices of what to read. Come prepared to brief students who have not read the same material.

For each secondary reading selection, you should come to class with 2-3 bullet points that help convey your knowledge of the piece to classmates.

For each primary source you read, be prepared to explain to your classmates:

- what the source is;
- who created it;
- when it was created;
- where it was created;
- what it says;
- why the document was created (what the purpose is).

*Briefing Paper:* Each student will write a 2-page briefing paper on a chosen topic. More detailed instructions will be distributed in class.

*Individual Assignments:* This class builds on the incremental assignments outlined in this syllabus. Students will submit a short description of briefing research. Each student will make a 5-minute oral presentation drawn from the student's briefing paper. Over the Thanksgiving

break, each student is expected talk with relatives or friends about an aspect of our briefing and is required to submit a three-sentence memo on the conversation. In addition, each student will write two 1-page response papers.

*Group Work:* Our course will depend heavily on collaborative work (largely done in class) and in this way, is similar to professional life where teamwork is essential to the accomplishment of projects. You will also be expected to brief your classmates on readings and on your research topic and to contribute to crafting the public briefing. Group work includes: classmate briefings on readings; research-based informational bulletins; briefing planning; and the final briefing. Your grade will be determined by my assessment of your contributions to these efforts.

*Final Exam:* There will be a take-home final exam due on our exam date. You will be bringing your knowledge of the American Revolutionary more generally to questions about religious liberty, and in the final exam, you can (and should) use your knowledge of religious liberty to answer the exam question.

## **EVALULATION**

Briefing paper: 15%

Individual work: 30%

Group work: 25%

Final examination: 30%

**\*Each student must complete each of the required assignments in order to pass the class. Late assignments will not be accepted without prior approval of the instructor.**

**Attendance:** Attendance will be taken at each class session, at the beginning of class. Please arrive promptly; if you arrive after attendance is taken, you will be counted as absent for the day. Attendance affects your grade in the following ways:

- **two unexcused absences carry no penalty;** however, any assignments missed as a result of an unexcused absence cannot be made up;
- **each additional unexcused absence will result in a penalty of five percentage points (per absence)** from your final grade;
- excused absences will be granted for the following reasons if accompanied with approved documentation: a university-sanctioned event, a documented medical condition, a legal proceeding, or the death of an immediate family member. All other absences are unexcused.

**\*Violations of the Academic Dishonesty Policy will be pursued according to the University's procedures. Please familiarize yourself with the University's Academic Dishonesty Policy at <http://policies.cua.edu/academicundergrad/integrityfull.cfm>.**

## **KEY DATES AT A GLANCE**

**Thursday, September 8:** Meet with French Revolution class

**Thursday, September 15:** Short description of briefing topic with sources due

**Thursday, October 6:** Preliminary informational bulletin due

**Weeks of October 11 and October 18:** Oral presentations

**Sunday, October 30:** Briefing paper due

**Tuesday, November 1:** Meet with French Revolution class

**Tuesday, November 8:** No class meetings; museum visits

**Thursday, November 10:** Response paper on museum visit due

**Tuesday, November 15:** Revised informational bulletin due

**Tuesday, November 22:** No class meeting; family/friends conversations over break; memo due after break

**Tuesday, November 29:** Briefing dress rehearsal

**Thursday, December 1:** The Briefing!

**Tuesday, December 5:** Reflection on briefing due

**Week of December 12:** Final exam due

## SCHEDULE

### **Week of August 29: Introduction**

#### **For Tuesday, August 30, read:**

- Robert Parkinson, “Did a Fear of Slave Revolts Drive American Independence?,” *The New York Times*, July 4, 2016  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/04/opinion/did-a-fear-of-slave-revolts-drive-american-independence.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/04/opinion/did-a-fear-of-slave-revolts-drive-american-independence.html?_r=0)
- James Grossman. “History isn’t a ‘useless’ major. It teaches critical thinking, something America needs plenty more of,” *LA Times*, May 30, 2016  
<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-grossman-history-major-in-decline-20160525-snap-story.html>

#### **For Thursday, September 1, read:**

- John Fea. “History for a Civil Society,” in *Why Study History?*, 109-122

#### **And read choice of either Brockman or Dolan & choice of Green or Manseau or Roberts:**

- David Brockman, “The Radical Theology that Could Make Religious Freedom a Thing of the Past,” *The Texas Observer*, June 2, 2016  
<https://www.texasobserver.org/dominion-theology/>
- Timothy Dolan, *Wall Street Journal* Op Ed on Religious Freedom, published on January 23, 2012  
<http://www.usccb.org/about/media-relations/resources/wall-street-journal-op-ed-on-religious-freedom.cfm>
- Andrew Green, “Charles Carroll of Carrollton: Maryland’s First Citizen,” *Baltimore Sun*, July 2, 2016  
<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/editorial/bs-ed-charles-carroll-20160701-story.html>
- Peter Manseau, “The Muslims of Early America,” *New York Times*, February 9, 2015  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/09/opinion/the-founding-muslims.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/09/opinion/the-founding-muslims.html?_r=0)
- Sam Roberts, “Alcohol, Gambling and Golf: The Long History of Blue Laws in New York,” *The New York Times*, June 15, 2016  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/16/nyregion/alcohol-guns-and-golf-the-long-history-of-blue-laws-in-new-york.html>

**Week of September 5: Americans and the Atlantic World**

**For Tuesday, September 6, read:**

- Thomas Kidd, “Introduction” to *The Great Awakening: A Brief History with Documents*

**Week of September 12: Colonial Transformations**

**Tuesday, September 13, meet at the American Catholic Archive at Aquinas 101. Listen to:**

- BackStory with the American History Guys: Wall of Separation: Church & State in America <http://backstoryradio.org/shows/wall-of-separation-2/>

**For Thursday, September 15, read one of the following pairs of documents from Kidd, *The Great Awakening***

- Jonathan Edwards, “A Faithful Narrative” and Timothy Cutler, “Critique of the Northampton Awakening”
- Josiah Smith, “The Character, Preaching, &c. of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield” and Benjamin Franklin, “Advertisement of Whitefield Engravings”
- Gilbert Tennent, “The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry” and Nathan Cole, “A Farmer Hears George Whitefield Preach”
- Samson Occom, “Conversion” and Hannah Heaton, “A Farm Women’s Conversion”
- *Boston News-Letter*, “James Davenport’s Arrest” & James Davenport, “Confession and Retractions”
- Samuel Davies, “On Virginia’s Christian Slaves” and Charles Woodmason, “Evangelicals in the Southern Backcountry”

**Assignment:**

- Submit a 150- to 200-word description of your briefing research topic. Explain what the issue is, why it is important, and how historical context will contribute to understanding the issue. Include an initial bibliography for your research. You must include at least two primary sources and two secondary sources (general works such as textbooks are not permitted.)

**Week of September 19: Mid-Century Political Developments**

**For Tuesday, September 20, read choice of:**

- Fred Anderson, “Britain’s Victory Exposes the Need for Greater Control,” in *Major Problems*, 54-65 **OR**
- P. J. Marshall, “The British Empire Tried to Reconcile Freedom and Authority,” in *Major Problems*, 66-76

**And read the following document in *Major Problems*, chapter two.**

- “Benjamin Franklin Touts the Importance of Imperial Ties between Britain and America,” 37-45

**For Thursday, September 22, watch:**

- choice of National History Center Congressional briefing (either political partisanship or mass incarceration briefing)

<http://nationalhistorycenter.org/about/program-descriptions/congressional-briefings/>

**Week of September 26: The Imperial Crisis**

**For Tuesday, September 27, read choice of:**

- Benjamin Carp, “Urban Taverns Shaped Mobilization against British Policies,” in *Major Problems*, 94-102 **OR**
- Wayne Lee, “North Carolina Regulators Used Violence for a Purpose,” in *Major Problems*, 102-115 **OR**

**And read two of the documents in *Major Problems*, chapter three.**

### **Week of October 3: Deciding for Independence**

**For Tuesday, October 4, read:**

- Brendan McConville, “Rejecting Monarchy Required a Shift in the American Worldview,” in *Major Problems*, 155-163 **AND**
- David Armitage, “The Declaration of Independence Was a Document of Global Importance,” *Major Problems*, 163-170 **AND**
- Ned Landsman, “The Episcopate, the British Union, and the Failure of Religious Settlement in Colonia British America,” in *The First Prejudice: Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Early America* (Philadelphia: Penn Press, 2011)

**Assignment: submit a page with question about each reading. We will use them as a basis for discussion in class.**

**Assignment DUE Thursday, October 6:**

- Preliminary briefing bulletin due Thursday, October 6.
  - The bulletin should make a tentative argument and highlight key details and information about your topic.

### **Week of October 10: Challenging Slavery**

**For Tuesday, October 11, read:**

- Christopher Brown, “The American Revolution Prompted New Debates about Slavery,” in *Major Problems*, 261-277 **AND**
- Manisha Sinha, “Black Abolitionists Developed Their Own Radical Tradition,” in *Major Problems*, 277-285

**For Thursday, October 13, read:**

- Andrea Mosterman, “‘I Thought They Were Worthy’: A Dutch Reformed Church Minister and His Congregants Debate African American Membership in the Church” *Early American Studies* 14:3 (Summer 2016): 610-616



## **Week of October 17: Religion and the American Revolution**

*Oral presentations this week*

### **For Tuesday, October 18, read:**

- Butler, Jon. “The Revolution Was a Secular Event,” 346-354, **AND**
- Noll, Mark. “Republicanism Fused with Evangelicalism during the Revolutionary Era,” 354-363

### **For Thursday, October 20, read:**

- “A Worcester Writer Defends Religious Establishment,” **AND**
- “Virginia Baptists Assert their Rights,” **AND**
- “Philadelphia Jews Seek Equality Before the Law”

## **Week of October 24: Rethinking the Polity**

*Oral presentations this week*

### **For Tuesday, October 25, read:**

- Rosemarie Zagari, “The Revolution Gave Women New Political Opportunities” in *Major Problems*, 303-315 **AND**
- Elaine Forman Crane, “The Revolution Was Hardly Radical for Women,” *Major Problems*, 315-325

### **And read the following document from *Major Problems*, chapter 8:**

- “Abigail and John Adams Debate Women’s Rights”

### **For Thursday, October 27, read**

- Robert Gross, “Upheaval in Massachusetts Reflected a Nationwide Conflict,” in *Major Problems*

### **And read the following document from *Major Problems*, chapter 10:**

- “The Regulations (or Shays’s Rebellion) Rocks Massachusetts” (chapter 10)

### **Assignment:**

- Briefing paper due Sunday, October 30

**Week of October 31: *The Constitution of 1787: Guarantor of Liberty?***

**On Tuesday, November 1, we will meet with the French Revolution class to critique each other.**

**For Thursday, November 3, read:**

- “Beeman, Richard. “Slavery and Sectionalism Influenced the Convention Debates,” in *Major Problems*, 464-473, **AND**
- Cornell, Saul. “Antifederalists Came in Many Different Guises,” in *Major Problems*, 473-487

**And read choice of the following documents from *Major Problems*, chapter 11:**

- “The *Federalist* Expounds the Advantages of the Constitution”
- “Antifederalists Attack the Constitution”

**Week of November 7: *Pursuits of Opportunity***

**Read both of the following documents from chapter 12:**

- “Thomas Jefferson Envisions an Agrarian Republic” **AND**
- “Alexander Hamilton Promotes American Industry”

Tuesday, November 8: no class meeting; museum visits

**Assignment:**

- One-page response paper on museum visit due November 10:

**Week of November 14:**

***Revolutions***

**For Tuesday, November 15, read:**

- Cleves, Rachel Hope. “On Writing the History of Violence.” *Journal of the Early Republic* 24:4 (2004): 641-665

**Assignment:**

- Submit revised briefing bulletin

**Week of November 21:**

**Tuesday:** No class meeting; family/friends conversations over break with memo due after break

**Thanksgiving Recess begins Wednesday**

**Week of November 28**

**Assignment:**

- Short memo on conversation over break due Monday by 10 p.m. on BlackBoard

**For Tuesday, November 29, read:**

- Gordon Wood, “The Consequences of Revolution.” In *Major Problems*, pp. 5-15 **AND**
- Alfred Young, “The Revolution Was Radical in Some Ways, Not in Others.” In *Major Problems*, 15-34.

**Tuesday:** Briefing Dress Rehearsal

**Thursday, December 1: THE BRIEFING**

**Week of December 5**

**Tuesday:** Reflection and review

Assignment:

- Response paper comparing and contrasting public conversations about religious liberty took place today and in the Age of Revolutions due in class

**Week of December 12**

Exam week: Final essay due on exam day