

21H.101. AMERICAN HISTORY TO 1865. Fall 2010.

Prof. Pauline Maier

REQUIREMENTS:

- 1) Class attendance, completion of the readings by the class in which they will be discussed, and participation in discussions. Normally the class will discuss the assigned portion of the textbook and the issues it raises on Tuesday and the other readings assigned for the week on Thursday.
- 2) Completion of two papers, due September 30 and November 16. Suggested topics based on assigned readings are attached. Students can also write on other topics, particularly for the second paper, but must have the topics approved by the instructor *before the date they are due*. Papers should be about five to seven pages long. They must be typed, double-spaced, with adequate margins for comments and corrections. Any document-based research paper must include notes and bibliography, and *all papers must provide page citations for direct quotations*.
- 3) A midterm examination on October 21 and a final examination during finals week.

READINGS:

Pauline Maier et al., Inventing America: A History of the United States, Vol. I. Paperback. W.W. Norton and Company. Paperback; 2nd edition, New York and London, 2006.

Fred Anderson, A People's Army. Massachusetts Soldiers in the French and Indian War. Chapel Hill, 1984. University of North Carolina Press paperback. ISBN-13: 978-0807845769

Thomas Paine, Common Sense (orig. January 1776). Paperback. Dover Thrift editions. ISBN 048629624.

Thomas Dublin, Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts. Paperback; Columbia University Press. 2nd ed.; New York, 1981. ISBN-13: 978-0231041676

Harriet Beecher Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin. Orig. (in book form) 1852. Paperback. Penguin Classics. ISBN 0-14-039003-0.

"Readings for 21H101, American History to 1865," on electronic reserves via 21H.101 website.

SCHEDULE:September 9; Introduction.

John Dane's Family Tree (handout).

September 14-16: The Indians' America; the First European Settlements; the Chesapeake and New England.

Inventing America, Chapters. 1 and 2, pp. 3-72.

Gov. John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," and "John Dane's Narrative," in "Readings." Start Anderson, A People's Army.

September 21-23. The Extension of European Empires; British Colonies in the Eighteenth Century.

Inventing America, Chapters. 3 and 4, pp. 73-137.

Anderson, A People's Army.

First paper due September 30.

September 28-30. Independence.

Inventing America, Chapter 5, pp. 139-174.

Paine, Common Sense.

Mason draft of the Virginia Declaration of Rights (June 1776) and the draft Declaration of Independence with Congress's editings, in "Readings."

October 5-7. The Creation of the American Republic: the States.

Inventing America, Chapter 6 and the first part of Chapter. 7, pp. 175-213.

Congressional Resolution of May 10-15, 1776 in "Readings."

The first state constitutions of Virginia (1776), Pennsylvania (1776), and Massachusetts (1780), in "Readings." Also available at:

<http://www.mass.gov/legis/const.htm>

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/18th.asp

The Articles of Confederation, in Inventing America (appendices).

Also: the Virginia Act for Religious Freedom (1786) at

<http://religiousfreedom.lib.virginia.edu/sacred/vaact.html>

And Jefferson's "Query XIV" from Notes on the State of Virginia (1785), in "Readings" and also available at

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/JefBv021.html>

(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. Note: both the act on religious freedom and the proposal for freeing slaves and sending them back to Africa were revolutionary reforms that Jefferson supported.)

October 12-14. Creation of the American Republic: the Nation. The Federal Constitution.

Inventing America, the rest of Chapter 7, pp. 213-225.

Gov. Edmund Randolph's speech presenting the Virginia Plan from the Constitutional Convention, May 29, 1787, in "Readings" and also available at: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/debates_529.asp or <http://teachingamericanhistory.org/convention/summary.html>

(The second site has a daily summary of the convention and biographical information on the delegates.)

The Constitution of the United States, in Inventing America, Appendix.

(How does the Constitution differ from the Virginia Plan? Why do you think the Convention made the changes it made? Did the improve the plan of government Randolph proposed?)

Also, using James Madison's "Notes on the [convention] debates" at the above sites, see if you can find out why Randolph, George Mason, and Elbridge Gerry refused to sign the Constitution. Were other delegates totally delighted with it? (Look particularly at the "Notes" for September 10, 12-17.)

October 19. Ratification of the Constitution; Review.

Excerpt from the Virginia Ratifying Convention; the Virginia and New York instruments of ratification (1788), in "Readings."

October 21: Midterm.

October 26-28. The Politics of the Early Republic.

Inventing America, Chapters 8 and 9, pp. 226-287.

Washington's Farewell Address, 1796, at

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/washing.asp

Marc Lender, "'Equally Proper at All Times and at All Times Necessary': Civility, Bad Tendency, and the Sedition Act," Journal of the Early Republic, XXIV (2004), 419-44, available via JStor on the MIT Libraries' website.

The first ten amendments to the Constitution in Inventing America (appendices), especially the First Amendment.

November 2-4. Political and Economic Development.

Inventing America, Chapters 10 and 12, pp. 289-311, 340-366.

Thomas Dublin, Women at Work.

November 9. The "Age of Jackson"

Inventing America, Chapter 11, pp. 312-339.

"Andrew Jackson: Presidential Pronouncements": Jackson's Vetoes of the Maysville Road and Bank Rechartering Acts, and his proclamation on Nullification, in "Readings." (21 p.)

November 11: Veteran's Day; No Class.

November 16: Second Paper Due

November 16-18: An Age of Reform; Expansion.

Inventing America, Chapters 13 and 14, pp. 367-421, and Chapter 15, 431-32.
George Fitzhugh's defense of slavery in "Readings."
(Start Stowe)

November 23: Uncle Tom's Cabin.

Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin.

November 25: Thanksgiving Holiday.

November 30- December 2. The Tumultuous 1850s; Secession.

Inventing America, the rest of Chapter. 15, 423-30, 432-49, and Chapter 16, 452-54.

From "Readings":

Lincoln, "House Divided" speech, 1858; "Common Sense," an editorial of September 18, 1860, in the Charleston, S.C., Mercury; South Carolina's Secession Ordinance, December 21, 1860, and "Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Union," December 24, 1860; Jefferson Davis's farewell speech to the Senate, and Lincoln's first inaugural address, March 4, 1861

Also "Abraham Lincoln on Race and Slavery," a documentary selection.

December 7-9. The Civil War; Conclusion and Review.

Inventing America, the rest of Chapter 16, pp. 454-484, and the first two sections of Chapter 17, pp. 485-502.

The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution in Inventing America appendices (and while you're at it take a look at the 11th and 12th amendments, too).

SUGGESTED PAPER TOPICS.FIRST PAPER:

Write a review of Fred Anderson's A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers in the French and Indian War. The challenge here is to summarize the book carefully and accurately and then to evaluate the persuasiveness of the argument or arguments that the author makes. What point or points does Anderson make from the material he gathered? Were you convinced? Does the book add to your previous knowledge in a valuable way?

At the end, Anderson tries to connect the experiences of Massachusetts soldiers in the French and Indian war with the American Revolution, the development of which began soon after the war, when the colonists began opposing British efforts to levy taxes on them. Was he convincing there? How important was that argument to the rest of the book?

SECOND PAPER:

1) The first option is based on an assigned book, Thomas Dublin's Women at Work, on the early history of Lowell, Massachusetts, a center of the developing American textile industry.

"Time and again," Thomas Dublin says, "supporters of the Waltham-Lowell system argued that the noteworthy feature of the mills was the fact that they were not dependent on a permanent factory population as was the case in England. Indeed, the high level of turnover in the work force was often praised as a safeguard against the degradation of operatives thought to be a consequence of the English factory system."

--- Women at Work, 184.

From the perspective Dublin described, Lowell was a latter-day product of the American Revolution, a man-made industrial community designed to avoid the demeaning class divisions of England and manifest the equality of republican society. To what extent do you think the claim was justified? And, to the extent it was at one time justified, did Lowell cease to have that idealistic character by 1860? If so, how and why; if not, how did it remain true to the supposed original vision of its creators? And is the story of what happened to Lowell of any larger significance for American history?

OR

2) You can write on another topic of your choice. Before embarking on such a paper, check your topic with the instructor, who can also give suggestions for sources to consult. This option requires doing some reading not assigned for the course--- but not necessarily a lot of it. What follows are a few examples.

The controversy over slavery offers many possible paper topics. In previous years, when the term was a bit longer, students read a set of Abolitionist writings and resolutions, which would be an appropriate focus for a paper. You might read, for example, the American Anti-slavery Society's tract The Constitution, a Pro-Slavery Compact (1845), available at

<http://books.google.com/books?vid=HARVARD32044036473817&printsec=titlepage#PPA10,M1>

It is only 131 pages long, but it consists of an introduction and a series of historical documents designed to prove the assertion in its title. Take a look at it. The obvious question there is why the compiler (and a lot of other people, then and since) said the Constitution was a pro-slavery document, and whether you think the tract is persuasive. Some of the documents included, such as the final, quite striking speech of 1844 by John Quincy Adams, might get you going in a slightly different direction. You could also focus on the ex-slave Frederick Douglass. You could discuss his first autobiography (he wrote three!), published as Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (orig. 1845), which was an abolitionist tract, and/or some of his speeches, such as “What to a Slave is the Fourth of July?” An edition of the Narrative with some of Douglass’s major writings is available in a short book edited by the Yale historian David W. Blight. The same series---Bedford/St. Martins books--- has a book on William Lloyd Garrison that, again, collects some of his most important writings.

The syllabus includes a brief essay by a defender of slavery, George Fitzhugh. The assigned reading was drawn from an appendix (pp. 225-58) to Fitzhugh’s Sociology for the South, or the Failure of Free Society (Richmond, Virginia, 1854), which is available at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/fitzhughsoc/fitzhugh.html#fitzhugh221> To write on Fitzhugh, *you must read more than the handful of assigned pages* to understand and evaluate his argument.

There are many other possibilities. Do you want to know more about early industrial communities? The “Trail of Tears”? John C. Calhoun? The Marshall and Taney courts? Just be sure to check your topic with the instructor. Remember that good papers generally ask and answer some historical question, citing evidence, ideally from historical documents, to support their arguments. Note, too, that end- or footnotes are necessary except in the unlikely contingency that everything was drawn from one source, and that papers under option 2 require a bibliography of the sources, primary and secondary, that were used in preparing the papers.

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<http://ocw.mit.edu>

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