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21H.101 American History to 1865  
Fall 2005

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21H.101. AMERICAN HISTORY TO 1865. Fall 2005.

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 27 and November 8. Suggested topics are attached. The papers are based on assigned readings and require no outside research. Students may, however, write on topics of their own devising, and may do a research paper based on materials other than those assigned so long as they receive the instructor's permission *before the due date of the paper*. Papers should be about five to seven pages long. They must be typed, double-spaced, with adequate margins for comments and corrections. Any research paper must include footnotes and bibliography, and *all papers must provide page citations for direct quotations*.
- 3) A midterm examination on October 20 and a final examination during finals week.

READINGS:

- Maier, Pauline, Merritt Roe Smith, Alexander Keyssar, and Daniel Kevles. *Inventing America: A History of the United States*, vol. I. New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2002. ISBN: 0393974359.
- Richter, Daniel K. *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001. ISBN: 0674011171.
- Paine, Thomas. *Common Sense* (orig. January 1776). New York, NY: Dover. ISBN: 048629624.
- Oscar Handlin. *Boston's Immigrants* (orig. 1941). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. ISBN: 0674079868.
- Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (orig. 1845). New York, NY: Dover. ISBN: 0486284999.
- Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (orig. (in book form) 1852). New York, NY: Penguin. ISBN: 0140390030.
- "Readings for 21H101, American History to 1865."

SCHEDULE:September 8: **Introduction.**September 13-15: **The Indians' America; the First European Settlements; the Chesapeake and New England.**

Maier, chs. 1 and 2, pp. 3-79.

Gov. John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," some New England town covenants, and "John Dane's Narrative," in "Readings." (For this week's discussion.)

Richter, pp. 1-109 (to be discussed next week).

September 20-22. **The Extension of European Settlement; Empires; British Colonies in the Eighteenth Century.**

Maier et. al., Inventing America, chs. 3 and 4, pp. 81-154.  
Richter, 110-254.

*First paper due September 27.*

September 27-29. **Independence.**

Maier, ch. 5, pp. 157-92.

Paine, Common Sense.

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

October 4-6. **The Creation of the American Republic: the States.**

Maier, ch. 6 and the first parts of ch. 7, pp. 195-243.

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

The Articles of Confederation, in Maier (appendices).

*October 11: Columbus Day, Holiday.*

October 13: **Creation of the American Republic: the Nation.**

Maier, ch. 7, 195-247.

Gov. Edmund Randolph's speech presenting the Virginia Plan from the Constitutional Convention, May 29, 1787, in "Readings" and also available at:

<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/debates/529.htm>

The Constitution in Maier (appendices).

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

October 18. **The Nation, Continued; Race and Revolution; Review.**

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.)

October 20: Midterm.

October 25-27. **The Politics of the Early Republic**

Maier, chs. 8 and 9, pp. 249-314.

Madison's speech in the First Federal Congress, June 8, 1789, proposing amendments to the Constitution and the amendments as they emerged from Congress, in "Readings" and also available at

[http://www.constitution.org/jm/17890608\\_removal.htm](http://www.constitution.org/jm/17890608_removal.htm)

(You need to go down a bit to get the relevant part of his speech.)

The first ten amendments to the Constitution (the bill of rights), in Maier (appendices).

Start Handlin.

November 1-3. **Politics and Economic Development.**

Maier chs. 9 and 12, 283-314, 373-405.

Finish Handlin.

*November 8. Second Paper Due.*

November 8-9. **The "Age of Jackson"; An Age of Reform.**

Maier chs. 11 and 13, pp. 343-371, 407-432.

Documents on Abolitionism in "Readings."

Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave. (96pp)

*November 11: Veteran's Day, a Holiday.*

November 15-17. **Expansion and Its Consequences.**

Maier ch. 14, pp. 435-462, and 474-76 of chapter 15.

George Fitzhugh's Defense of Slavery, in "Readings."

Start Stowe.

November 22. **"The Little Lady Who Caused This Big War"**

Maier, pp. 474-76 of ch. 15.

Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin.

*November 24: Thanksgiving, a Holiday.*

November 29-Dec. 1. **The Crisis of the 1850's; Secession.**

Maier, the rest of chapter 15, pp. 465-474, 476-494, and pp.497-502 of chapter 16.

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, in "Readings." (Note: The South Carolina documents and other secession ordinances are available at <http://web.archive.org/web/20061204164042/http://members.aol.com/jfepperson/ordnecs.html>)

[http://members.aol.com/jfepperson/ordnecs.html](http://web.archive.org/web/20061204164042/http://members.aol.com/jfepperson/ordnecs.html))

December 6-8. **The Civil War.**

Maier, the rest of chapter 16, pp. 502-33.

"Abraham Lincoln on Race and Slavery," in "Readings."

December 13. **Results of the Civil War; Review.**

Maier, ch. 17, first two sections, pp. 535-553,

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

### SUGGESTED PAPER TOPICS.

1) Write a review of Daniel Richter's Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America. The challenge here is to summarize the book carefully and accurately, and then to evaluate it. The historians who wrote "blurbs" on the back of the paperback edition praise the book to the hilt. They say it "frees us from the blinders of a European perspective on the early American experience" (James Merrill), "radically shifting our perspective on the past," and also that the book "is essential to understanding our place in time on this continent" (Alan Taylor). Of course, the purpose of a "blurb" is sell books. Does Facing East from Indian Country measure up to that praise? Why or why not?

Quote critical passages that demonstrate the author's purpose (always providing page citations) and also to support your evaluation of the book. In any case, make sure that you understand what the author was attempting to do and describe what he says with scrupulous accuracy. You don't need to agree with everything a book says, but you do need to be exact in describing what it says before evaluating it.

2) The second paper should focus on Oscar Handlin's Boston's Immigrants, which is on immigrants, particularly Irish immigrants, to 19th-century Boston. When first published in 1941, the book was recognized as a pioneering work and it remains the fullest study of its subject. Still, its interpretation---which, in short, sees the Irish as victims of circumstances beyond their control and as a people whose miserable poverty changed Boston for the worse--- is out of step with more recent interpretations of immigrants, which, like interpretations of the enslaved, are much more upbeat. They stress, for example, immigrants' strength in adversity, their creative adaptation to the New-World circumstances in which they found themselves, and their critical contributions to the community that became their home.

Start your paper with a succinct summary of Handlin's argument, citing critical passages to demonstrate his point of view. Then ask if the book includes evidence that might have sustained a more positive interpretation such as that summarized above. Or do you think Handlin's view of the Irish is justifiably different from other, more positive interpretations, as described above? If there seems to be adequate evidence in the book for a more positive view of 19th-century Boston's Irish, why might Handlin have taken the position he took? You cannot, of course, be expected to give a definitive answer to that question, but you might speculate a bit. Finally, is the book still worth reading, or should I assign something else next year?