Instructor: Meagan Wierda (she/her/hers)
Email: mwierda@history.rutgers.edu (please expect 24 hours for a response)
Zoom Office Hours: Tuesday—10:30am-12:00pm (or by appointment)

Course Meetings: Tuesday, Friday—1:00-2:20pm
Course Location: ENG-215

Course Description:

Spanning the pre-Columbian Atlantic world through to the Civil War, this course will introduce you to the broad contours of early American history. Over the course of the semester, we will pay particular attention to politics, especially differing understandings of citizenship and sovereignty; economic transformations, including competing free and unfree labor regimes; westward expansion and US imperialism; religion, chiefly religious revivals and nonconformism; reform movements, especially abolitionism and feminism; the arts, including Transcendentalism and Romanticism; science and technology, including the development of racial science, and; war. To better understand these shifts and upheavals, we will rely not only on a narrative textbook and secondary sources, but on a wide variety of primary sources produced by a diverse array of people, including political speeches, newspapers, diaries, drawings and photographs, poems, slave narratives, and legal cases.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

You should emerge from this survey with a solid understanding of the narrative arc of early American history, as well as some the key social, political, cultural, ideological, and economic forces animating this period. Likewise, you should emerge from this course with improved analytical skills with respect to both primary and secondary sources. In practice, this means you should be able to situate sources within their respective historical moments; synthesize their arguments, and; identify as well as evaluate the strength of their claims. Finally, this course is designed to help you formulate compelling arguments, supported by evidence, within the context of class discussions, written work, and beyond.

Required Texts:


Various primary and secondary sources (available online, frequently via *The American Yawp Reader*, or on Canvas)

Learning Management Site: Canvas

Assignments:

Citizenship and Participation (15%)
Each of you is a valuable member of our intellectual community this semester and active participation is not only key to your success but to that of your classmates, as well. This classroom is meant to be a space for thoughtful, sustained, and respectful engagement with the course material as well as with each other. In order to achieve this goal, we will need to give each other and the material our undivided attention, which means that texting and unrelated online activity are not permitted. Please arrive to class on time, complete assigned readings, participate in regular class discussions, and refrain from behavior that might distract me or your classmates. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your ability to participate in class, please raise them with me during office hours.

Classroom discussion guidelines:

- listen actively and respectfully, without interruption
- commit to learning and understanding, not debating
- criticize ideas rather than individuals
- avoid language that is inflammatory or disrespectful
- ask questions (!!!)

N.B. Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the beginning of each class. Any student who misses eight or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F. Recognized grounds for absence are illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions. If you are going to be absent (or are unsure about whether or not your absence will be excused), please speak with me beforehand.

Primary Source Analyses (2 x 15% = 30%)

You will complete **two** short written primary source analyses (4-5 pages, double spaced) over the course of the semester. Though the exact due dates are flexible, your first source analysis must be submitted in hard copy **before** the mid-term exam. Likewise, your second source analysis must be submitted in hard copy **before** the final exam. Your second source analysis should incorporate feedback received on the first.

These short assignments will ask you to select a primary source (i.e., sermon, speech, poem, painting, recipe, advertisement, work of fiction, song, object of consumer culture, etc.), offer a short description of it, and analyze its significance and meanings, coming up with an argument about what it reveals about the historical moment within which it was created. You are free to select any one of the numerous primary sources drawn from the lectures or the assigned reading sections of the syllabus. You may stray also from the syllabus (get creative!), but please consult me first if you do so.

As you approach the primary source in question, please consider the following questions:

- what does the source look, sound, feel, or maybe even taste or smell, like? what is it made of?
- who produced this source? what do you know about its author or maker?
- what broader political/cultural/economic/ideological concerns have shaped its production?
- who was the designated, probable, or perhaps unlikely, audience?
- what are the intended or covert meanings of the source?
- does this source illuminate any particular currents of thoughts, political or cultural trends, etc. during its time period?

Mid-Term Exam (25%)

There will be an in-class mid-term exam on **March 11**. The exam will consist of a combination of identifications, short answer questions, and primary source analyses.
Final Exam (30%)

There will be a final exam held during the exam period (May 5-11). This exam will feature material covered over the course of the whole semester. More details and extensive exam review to come.

Assignment Breakdown:

- Citizenship and Participation—15%
- Primary Source Analysis #1—15%
- Midterm Exam—25%
- Primary Source Analysis #2—15%
- Final Exam—30%

Grading Scale:

- A: 90-100%
- B+: 87-89%
- B: 80-86%
- C+: 77-79%
- C: 70-76%
- F: 59 or less

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:

Academic integrity is essential to your success within this classroom as well as within the university community more broadly. Plagiarism, i.e., the use of another person’s words or ideas without proper attribution, is unacceptable. Likewise, it is a violation of the university's policy on academic integrity to engage in cheating, fabrication, or other acts of academic dishonesty. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in sanctions or penalties.

In order to promote academic integrity, Rutgers has adopted the following honor pledge to be written and signed on examinations and major course assignments submitted for grading: “On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).”

Rutgers’ academic integrity policy may be reviewed in its entirety here: https://studentaffairs.newark.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/2020-08/Academic%20Integrity%20Policy.pdf

If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, please consult with me or the Writing Center (see below).

Citing Sources:

The Chicago Manuel of Style is a style and usage guide for citing primary and secondary sources within the humanities. When submitting written assignments for this course, your footnotes and bibliography must follow Chicago Style conventions.

For a helpful guide on how to cite books, academic journal articles, lectures, and more, please consult the following website from Trinity College: https://courseguides.trincoll.edu/c.php?g=448378&p=3099741

COVID-19:

In order to protect the health and wellbeing of all members of the Rutgers—Newark community, masks must be worn by all persons inside campus buildings when in the presence of others, and in buildings in non-private enclosed settings (e.g., common workspaces, workstations, meeting rooms, classrooms, etc.). Masks should conform to CDC guidelines and should securely cover the nose and mouth. Masks must be
worn during class meetings. Each day before you arrive on campus or leave your residence hall, you must complete the brief survey on the My Campus Pass symptom checker self-screening app found at myRutgers Portal.

**Inclusivity, Accommodation, and Support:**

As your instructor, I am committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all members of our intellectual community. Below you will find various policies, recommendations, and resources to help you succeed this semester.

**Chosen Names and Personal Pronouns:** Everyone has the right to be addressed by the name and pronouns that correspond to and affirm their gender identity. For this reason, chosen names and pronouns are to be respected at all times within this classroom. In the event that the name listed on the class roster does not align with your chosen name, please let me know. Chosen names and pronouns may evolve over time, as well, so if at any point during the semester you would prefer to be addressed differently, do not hesitate to inform me. Mistakes in addressing one another may occur, in which case I encourage everyone to be open to correction and view it as one more learning opportunity. Willful misgendering, misnaming, and/or disrespect for a person’s gender identity or expression will not be tolerated.

For information on submitting a legal or chosen name change at Rutgers, see: [https://scarlethub.rutgers.edu/registrar/personal-information-updates/name-change/](https://scarlethub.rutgers.edu/registrar/personal-information-updates/name-change/)

**Diversity and Inclusion:** All class members are entitled to learn freely and productively within this classroom, regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, origin, citizenship status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, economic status, veteran status, age, or ability. Discrimination of any kind, including in the form of microaggressions, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

**For Individuals with Disabilities:** The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS at (973)353-5375 or via email at ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

**For Individuals who are Pregnant:** The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-1906 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

**For Absence Verification:** The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (e.g., illness, personal or family emergency, etc.) Students should refer to University Policy 10.2.7 for information about expectations and responsibilities. The Office of the Dean of Students can be contacted by calling (973) 353-5063 or emailing deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

**For Individuals with Temporary Conditions/Injuries:** The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (e.g., broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link: [https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu](https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu).
For English as a Second Language (ESL): The Program in American Language Studies (PALS) can support students experiencing difficulty in courses due to English as a Second Language (ESL) and can be reached by emailing PALS@newark.rutgers.edu to discuss potential supports.

For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-1906 or emailing TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University’s Student Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Related Misconduct located at http://compliance.rutgers.edu/titleix/about-title-ix/title-ix-policies/.

For Support Related to Interpersonal Violence: The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance can provide any student with confidential support. The office is a confidential resource and does not have an obligation to report information to the University’s Title IX Coordinator. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based line available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support.

For Crisis and Concerns: The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a support plan to address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Students, faculty and staff may contact the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

For Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-being: The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. Students should reach out to the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment: counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or (973) 353-5805. If you are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out TAO at Rutgers-Newark for a web-based approach to self-care and support: https://tinyurl.com/RUN-TAO.

The Writing Center: Located in Conklin Hall (Room 126), the Writing Center offers writing tutoring and writing workshops to all undergraduate students currently enrolled in classes on the Rutgers—Newark campus. Their tutors work to help students become more independent readers and writers capable of responding well to the demands of writing within the university. The Writing Center is available to them free of charge and encourage them to take advantage of their services to strengthen their reading, writing, and research skills. For more information, see: http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter.

Lecture Schedule:

NB. Class days marked with asterisks (*** will feature in-class discussions.

Week 1

January 18: Course Overview and Introduction ***

Readings:


January 21: Indigenous America

Readings:

“1. Introduction” and “II. The First Americans,” in “Indigenous America,” AY, Vol. I.

Primary Sources:


Week 2

January 25: European Expansion and the Germs of Empire

Readings:

“III. European Expansion” and “IV. Spanish Exploration and Conquest” and “V. Conclusion” in “Indigenous America,” AY, Vol. I.


Primary Sources:


January 28: English Colonization and the Rise of British North America

Readings:


Primary Sources:


Week 3

February 1: Society and Culture in British North America ***

Readings:


Primary Sources:

“Slave Ship in 3D Video,” Slave Voyages.


February 4: Disquiet and Imperial Wars

Readings:


“V. Seven Years’ War” and “VI. Pontiac’s War” in “Colonial Society,” AY, Vol. I.

Primary Sources:


Week 4

February 8: The Origins and Causes of the American Revolution

Readings:


Primary Sources:

Paul Revere, “The Bloody Massacre Perpetrated in King Street Boston on March 5th 1770 by a Party of the 29th Regt.” (Boston: Engrav’d Printed & Sold by Paul Revere, 1770)


“Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress” (1774)

February 11: The American Revolution

Readings:


Primary Sources:


Week 5
February 15: The Constitution and Forging a New Nation ***

Readings:


Primary Sources:

“Wooden Leg of Gouverneur Morris, ca. 1780”

February 18: The Early Republic

Readings:


Primary Sources:

“Letter from Benjamin Banneker to Thomas Jefferson (1791)”

Week 6

February 22: The Age of Jefferson

Readings:


Primary Sources:


February 25: The Market Revolution

Readings:

Primary Sources:

“An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery… Passed at Trenton (1804)”

Week 7
March 1: Jacksonian Era, Pt. I ***

Readings:


“II. Antebellum Western Migration and Indian Removal” in “Manifest Destiny,” AY, Vol. I.

Claudio Saunt, Unworthy Republic: The Dispossession of Native Americans and the Road to Indian Territory (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2020), xi-xix, 115-143.

Primary Sources: Andrew Jackson, “First Annual Message to Congress (1829)” (from “The condition and ulterior destiny of the Indian tribes…” to “… they will ere long become merged in the mass of our population.”)

March 4: Jacksonian Era, Pt. II

Readings:


Primary Sources:

“Letter from Sarah Mapps Douglass to William Bassett” (1837)

J.C. Wild, “Destruction by Fire of Pennsylvania Hall, On the Night of the 17th of May, 1838” (1838)

Week 8
March 8: Midterm Exam Review

Readings: N/A

March 11: IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM

Week 9

*** SPRING RECESS—NO CLASSES ***
Week 10

March 22: Antebellum Thought, Culture, Society, and Economy, Pt. I

Readings: N/A

Primary Sources:
Amy Matilda Cassey’s "Friendship Album" (1833-1856)
Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar" (1837)

March 25: Antebellum Thought, Culture, Society, and Economy, Pt. II

Readings: N/A

Primary Sources:
"America's First Look into the Camera: Daguerreotype Portraits and Views, 1839-1864"
Herman Melville, Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall-Street (1856)

Week 11

March 29: Antebellum Slavery, Pt. I ***

Readings:


Primary Sources:

"Ashley's Sack"

April 1: Antebellum Slavery, Pt. II

Readings:


Primary Sources:

**Week 12**

**April 5: The Reform Impulse in Antebellum Society**

Readings:

“**I. Introduction,** “**II. Revival and Religious Change,**” “**III. Atlantic Origins of Reform,**” “**IV. The Benevolent Empire,**” “**VI. Women’s Rights in Antebellum America**” in “**Religion and Reform,**” *AYR, Vol. I.*

Meredith Minister, “**Female, Black, and Able: Representations of Sojourner Truth and Embodiment,**” *Disability Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (2012).

Primary Sources:

Sojourner Truth’s “**Ain’t I a Woman**” Speech (1851) (performed by Kerry Washington)

**April 8: Abolitionism and Anti-Abolitionism**

Readings:

“**V. Antislavery and Abolitionism**” in “**Religion and Reform,**” *AY, Vol. I.*

Primary Sources:


Maria W. Stewart, “**An Address at the African Masonic Hall**” (1833)

Frederick Douglass, “**What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?**” (1852) (read by descendants of Frederick Douglass)


**Week 13**

**April 12: The Impending Crisis, Pt. I**

Readings:


Primary Sources:
April 15: The Impending Crisis, Pt. II

Readings:


Primary Sources:

*Dred Scott v. John F.A. Sandford* (1857)


Week 14

April 19: Civil War, Pt. I

Readings:


Primary Sources:

“Constitution of the Confederate States” (March 11, 1861).


April 22: Civil War, Pt. II

Readings:

“IV. A War for Emancipation 1863-1865” and “V. Conclusion” in “The Civil War,” AY, Vol. I.

Primary Sources:

The Emancipation Proclamation (January 1, 1863)


Week 15

April 26: The Civil War and Its Legacies ***

Readings:


April 29: Concluding Thoughts and Final Exam Review

Readings: N/A

*** I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time with reasonable notice to you. Changes will be announced in class and via Canvas. It is your responsibility to be aware of any changes in assignments, readings, due dates, etc. ***