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21H.112 The American Revolution
Spring 2006

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21H112. THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. Spring 2006. TR 11-12:30.

Instructor: Prof. Pauline Maier

REQUIREMENTS:

(1) Class attendance and participation in discussions, which will focus upon the readings assigned for the week.

(2) A research paper of about 15 pages in length. Papers should answer a carefully posed historical question and be based to a considerable extent upon primary sources, that is, documents that for most topics will be from the eighteenth century. The papers can focus upon any aspect of the Revolution, but must go beyond work done in class. All topics must be approved on or before Tuesday, April 11. The final papers must include footnotes or endnotes and a bibliography composed in a correct and comprehensible form. They are due on Thursday, May 11.

(4) A midterm in-class examination on March 22 and a scheduled final examination.

ASSIGNED BOOKS:

Anderson, Fred. A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers in the Seven Years War. UNC reprint paperback of 1996. ISBN 0807845760

Jensen, Merrill, ed. Tracts of the American Revolution, 1763-1776. Hackett Publishing, ISBN 0872206939.

Locke, John. Second Treatise of Government. *Any unabridged edition.*
Recommended edition: Peter Laslett, ed., John Locke. Two Treatises of Government. Cambridge University Press paperback. ISBN 0521357306

Maier, Pauline. From Resistance to Revolution: Colonial Radicals and the Development of American Resistance to Britain, 1765-1776. Norton paperback. ISBN 0393308251

Morison, Samuel Eliot, ed. Sources and Documents Illustrating the American Revolution. Oxford University Press paperback. ISBN 0195002628

Readings for 21H112, The American Revolution. Available either for private Xeroxing at the Humanities Library or on electronic reserves via the subject's website.

Shy, John. A People Numerous and Armed. Revised edition, University of Michigan Press paperback. ISBN 0472064312

Wood, Gordon S., The American Revolution: A History. Modern Library Chronicles; New York, 2002. ISBN 0679640576

READING SCHEDULE:

February 7-9. Introduction and Historiography. Background: Society, Economy, Politics and Government, America and Britain.

Wood, American Revolution, xxiii-xv, 3-24.

Maier, From Resistance to Revolution, to p. 26.

Anderson, A People's Army, vii-xi, 3-164, 185-210, 222-23.

February 14-16. Background, continued, and Ideology.

Locke, Second Treatise of Government, chs. 1-4, 8-13, 17-19.
(Note that Locke's treatise is available at <http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtreat.htm>)
Maier, From Resistance to Revolution, 27- 48.

February 21: Monday Schedule.

February 23: Overview of the Independence Movement

Wood, American Revolution, 27-44.
Maier, From Resistance to Revolution, 51-157.
Start the readings for next Tuesday.

February 28-March 2: Arguments and Actions, 1764-1770.

For Feb. 28: Stephen Hopkins, "Essay on Trade" (1764); Hopkins, "The Rights of Colonies Examined" (later 1764); Daniel Dulany, "Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes in the British Colonies..." (1765); Richard Bland, "An Inquiry into the Rights of the British Colonies" (1766) (note the quotations from a British writer--- Thomas Whately---that Bland includes), and John Dickinson, "Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania..." (1768) in Merrill Jensen, ed., Tracts of the American Revolution, pp. 3-18, 41-62, 94-163. Also Morison, Sources and Documents, 14-24, which includes the Virginia Resolutions of 1765 and Soam Jenyns, "The Objections to the Taxation of our American Colonies by the Legislature of Great Britain, briefly consider'd" (London, 1765).

NOTE: It's a good idea read the pamphlets in chronological order. How did the American argument shift between the two Hopkins pamphlets, and between Dulany and Dickinson? If you can identify where an author is saying what everyone is saying and focus instead on what's new, and on how the American position is developing (the British didn't change much), you'll be reading efficiently and intelligently. It might take some practice to get the hang of that. Be sure to take notes on each pamphlet immediately after finishing it or all of them will quickly melt together in your mind.

For March 2: Accounts of the Stamp Act uprisings, the Sons of Liberty, and the Virginia Association of 1770 in "Readings."

March 7-9. From Resistance to Revolution, 1770-1776.

Wood, American Revolution, 47-62.
Maier, From Resistance to Revolution, 161-296.
Jefferson, "Summary View" (1774), and Paine's "Common Sense," in
Jensen, Tracts, 256-76, 400-446.
Morison, Sources and Documents, 100-115 (Wilson, 1774), 116-25, 137-48.

(The discussion will focus on the primary sources, particularly the three pamphlets in the assigned readings. What distinguishes Wilson and Jefferson from Dickinson's "Farmer's Letters"? Is Paine's Common Sense a logical outgrowth of the line of argument American pamphlets had taken, or something else altogether? How exactly did Paine justify Independence? Was he convincing? Was he moving? More so than others? Why?)

March 14-16. Declarations of Independence; Loyalism.

Especially for March 14: The English Declaration of Rights (1789); American local resolutions on independence; an early draft of the Virginia Declaration of Rights (by George Mason) that appeared in the Pennsylvania Gazette, June 12, 1776; Jefferson's draft preamble for the Virginia constitution of 1776 (May-June 1776); the Jefferson/committee draft of the Declaration of Independence with Congress's editings, all in "Readings." The main focus of attention will be the draft Declaration with Congress's editings. What did Congress do, and why? (You might also take a look at Morison's version of the preamble to the Virginia constitution on p. 151 of Sources and Documents and see if you notice anything odd.)

Especially for March 16: Joseph Galloway, "A Candid Examination of the Mutual Claims of Great Britain, And the Colonies" (1775); James Chalmers, "Plain Truth" (1776), in Jensen, Tracts, 350-99, 447-88. Also Mary Beth Norton, "The Loyalist Critique of the Revolution," The Development of a Revolutionary Mentality... (Washington, D.C., 1972), pp. 127-48, in "Readings."

March 21. The British View; Review.

Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, "If Others Will Not Be Active, I Must Drive": George III and the American Revolution," Early American Studies, Vol. II (Spring 2004), 1-46, in "Readings."

March 22. Midterm Examination.

March 27-31: Spring Vacation.

April 4-6. The Revolutionary War and the Peace of Paris.

Wood, American Revolution, 74-88.

Shy, A People Numerous and Armed, chapters 4, 6-8, 10, (roughly pages 81-115, 133-92, 213-44).

April 11-12. The First State Constitutions.

Wood, American Revolution, 65-70.

Morison, Sources and Documents, 148-56, 162-77, 206-08 (includes the first state constitutions of Virginia and Pennsylvania, both 1776, and the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom of October 1785).

The New York constitution of 1777 and the Massachusetts constitution of 1780, available at:

<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/states/ny01.htm>

and

<http://www.nhinet.org/ccs/docs/ma-1780.htm>

John Adams, "Thoughts on Government" (1776), available at:

<http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch4s5.html>

April 18. Patriots' Day, recalling the Battles at Lexington and Concord; Holiday

April 20. "Liberty!": A sample of PBS's series on the American Revolution.

Reading holiday; go work on your papers. (But don't skip class.)

April 25-27. The Confederation and the 1780s.

Wood, American Revolution, 70-74, 91-150.

Morison, Sources and Documents, 178-86, 203-08, 208-33.

Thomas Jefferson, "Query XIV," from his Notes on the State of Virginia (written in 1781 and published in 1785), 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.)

James Madison's "Vices of the System," in "Readings."

Pauline Maier, "The Revolutionary Origins of the American Corporation,"

William and Mary Quarterly, 3d Series, L (January 1993), 51-84, available through "JStor" on the MIT libraries' website (VERA).

Bruce W. Bugbee, Genesis of American Patent and Copyright Law (Washington, D.C., 1967), pp. 84-131, in "Readings." (NOTE: There's no reason for you to master the details of American copyright law in the 1780s, but this material is, I believe, very helpful in "getting a handle" on what was going on in the United States in the aftermath of Independence. Most U.S. history textbooks mention at most the federal copyright law of 1790, but clearly that statute emerged from a flurry of earlier activity within the states. Why, all of a sudden in the late 1780s, were American legislators so open to granting copyrights and patents to authors and inventors? What kinds of devices were being patented? What do you suppose drove people to become so inventive? Most of the proposed devices came to nothing, but notice the name of Oliver Evans, a particularly prolific inventor who designed and built a grist mill that is generally considered the first fully automated American manufacturing operation. Finally, how does the view of the state legislatures here and in the article on corporations square with Madison's view in "Vices"?)

April May 2-4. The Philadelphia Convention of 1787 and the Constitution.

Wood, American Revolution, 151-58.

Morison, Sources and Documents, 233-304.

Virginia and New Jersey Plans, available at:

<http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/const/vatexta.htm>

<http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch8s9.html>

May 9-12. Ratification.

Wood, American Revolution, 158-66.

Morison, Sources and Documents, 305-62.

Federalist Paper No. 10, available at:

<http://www.constitution.org/fed/federa10.htm>

George Mason's "Objections to the Constitution," October 1787; amendments to the constitution proposed by Massachusetts, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Virginia, and New York, from Helen Veit, ed., Creating the Bill of Rights (Baltimore, 1991), 14-28. *Are these lists impossibly different? Are there any notable common elements?*

AND, to jump ahead a bit and consider whether the Antifederalists got what they wanted, read James Madison's proposal for a federal Bill of Rights as presented to the House of Representatives on June 8, 1789, and the set of amendments Congress finally sent to the states for ratification in September 1789, in "Readings." (The states failed to approve the first two of Congress's proposed amendments by 1791. Did the rest really constitute a "bill of rights"?)

May 16-18. Conclusion: The Revolutionary Transformation.

Irving Brant, "Madison: On the Separation of Church and State," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d Ser., III (1951), 3-24, available through JStor on the MIT libraries' website.

Selections from the Adams correspondence and the writings of Judith Sargent Murray, in "Readings."

Max M. Edling, "Conclusion: The Constitution, The Federalists, and The American State," from A Revolution in Favor of Government: Origins of the U.S. Constitution and the Making of the American State (Oxford University Press; Oxford and New York, 2003), pp. 219-29, 313-14.