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21H.112 The American Revolution  
Spring 2006

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21H.112. THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. Spring 2007. 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 substantial 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 10. The final papers must include footnotes or endnotes and a bibliography composed in a correct and comprehensible form, and are due on Thursday, May 17, the final day of classes.

(4) Two in-class examinations, on March 22 and May 10.

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

Madison, James, Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787...., with an introduction by Adrienne Koch. Norton paperback (1987). ISBN 0-393-30405-1

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 on electronic reserves through the course 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 6-8. 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 13-15. 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 20: Monday Schedule.

February 22: Overview of the Independence Movement

Wood, American Revolution, 27-44.

Maier, From Resistance to Revolution, 51-157.

Start the readings for next Tuesday.

February 27-March 1: Arguments and Actions, 1764-1770.

*For Feb. 27:* 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 and 43-25, which includes the Virginia Resolutions of 1765, Soam Jenyns, "The Objections to the Taxation of our American Colonies by the Legislature of Great Britain, briefly consider'd" (London, 1765), and Dickinson's Letter III (which Jensen strangely skipped).

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 1:* Accounts of the Stamp Act uprisings, the Sons of Liberty, and the Virginia Association of 1770 in "Readings."

March 6-8. 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 13-15. Declarations of Independence; Loyalism.

*Especially for March 13:* The English Declaration of Rights (1689); 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 15:* Mary Beth Norton, "The Loyalist Critique of the Revolution," The Development of a Revolutionary Mentality... (Washington, D.C., 1972), pp. 127-48; Joseph Galloway, "A Candid Examination of the Mutual Claims of Great Britain, And the Colonies" (1775), and James Chalmers, "Plain Truth" (1776), in Jensen, Tracts, 350-99, 447-88, all in "Readings."

March 20. 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. Exam.

March 27-29: Spring Vacation.

April 3-5. 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).

*(Paper topics due by April 10!)*

April 10-12. 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 17. Patriots' Day, recalling the Battles at Lexington and Concord; Holiday*

April 19. Benjamin Franklin and the Diplomacy of the American Revolution.

Film: third program of PBS special on Franklin.  
No special reading for this week. Start the reading for next week or begin working on your papers.

April 24-26. The Confederation and the 1780s; the Constitution.

Wood, American Revolution, 70-74, 91-150.  
Morison, Sources and Documents, 178-86, 203-33.  
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.)  
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).  
James Madison's "Vices of the System," in "Readings."  
Start Madison's Notes.

May 1-3. The Philadelphia Convention of 1787 and the Constitution; Ratification.

Wood, American Revolution, 151-58.  
Madison, Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention.... Start with the Introduction, Madison's preface, and pp. 21- 166. This includes the convention's opening; presentation of the Virginia plan and the convention's discussion of its provisions *as a committee of the whole*; the presentation and rejection of the alternative New Jersey plan; the resolutions the committee of the whole reported on *June 19* (see them on pp. 148-51: they are key to the debates thereafter) and the delegates' discussion of them *as a convention*. Skim the make-or-break debates on resolutions 7 and 8 that runs from pp. 220-98, with the little additional flare-up on 299-302. Thereafter, debates proceeded with less fireworks, and you can pick and choose which issues to follow. Discussion over whether Congress should veto state laws, as Madison insisted, is on 304-05; debates over the presidency, which many said was the hardest issue the convention faced, are on pp. 306-14, 322-35, 356-72. As a result of these discussions, the convention produced a revised set of resolutions (pp. 379-85), which a *Committee of Detail* made into a draft constitution while the convention adjourned from July 26-August 6 (see pp. 385-96). When the delegates returned, they debated the draft, revisiting issues it had discussed before in the light of other decisions. Note the predictions of the future that emerged during a discussion of suffrage, pp. 402-04; and discussions of slavery and the slave trade on pp. 409-13, 502-08. In late August the convention set up a Committee of Eleven to propose solutions to several problems it hadn't solved. The committee's recommendations opened another round of debates, especially on the executive (see 573-79, 582-97, and 605-66 on impeachment). Finally, on *September 12*, a *Committee of Style* charged with incorporating agreed-upon changes into the draft constitution and refining its wording presented its report (616-27). That led to still more debates, in the

course of which George Mason raised the issue of a bill of rights (630). Read also the record of the convention's closing days, 650-59.

May 8. Ratification, continued.

Wood, American Revolution, 158-66.

Morison, Sources and Documents, 305-62.

Federalist Paper No. 10, available at:

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

Amendments to the constitution proposed by the Massachusetts Ratifying convention (February 6, 1788), South Carolina (May 23, 1788), Virginia (June 27, 1788), and New York's "Instrument of Ratification" (July 26, 1788), in Helen Veit, ed., Creating the Bill of Rights (Baltimore, 1991), 14-28, and in "Readings." *Are these impossibly different? Are there any notable common elements?*

May 10: Exam.

May 15-17. Conclusion: The Revolutionary Transformation.

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"?)

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.