

21H.101. AMERICAN HISTORY TO 1865. Fall 2009.

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 October 1 and November 12. Suggested topics are attached. The papers are based on assigned readings, though one suggested topic (2, B) will demand looking at more documents than those assigned or at more than the assigned pages of critical documents. Students can also write on other topics of their own devising, 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 22 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.

Oscar Handlin, Boston's Immigrants. Harvard UP; Cambridge, Mass., orig. 1941. Paperback. ISBN 0674079868.

Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (orig. 1845); Paperback. Dover Thrift Editions. ISBN 0486284999.

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 the course website.

SCHEDULE:September 10; Introduction.

John Dane's Family Tree (handout).

September 15-17: 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 22-24. 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 October 1.

September 29-October 1. 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 6-8. 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/statech.asp

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

Tuesday, October 13: Monday Schedule.

October 15. Creation of the American Republic: the Nation. The Federal Constitution.

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

The Constitution in Inventing America (appendices).

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>

Using James Madison's "Notes on the [convention] debates" at those sites (the second also has a daily summary of the convention and biographical information on delegates), 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? (September 10, 12-17.)

October 20. Ratification of the Constitution; Race and Revolution; Review.

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

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 22: Midterm.

October 27-29. The Politics of the Early Republic.

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

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

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

The first ten amendments to the Constitution in Inventing America (appendices).

November 3-5. Political and Economic Development.

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

Handlin, Boston's Immigrants.

Second paper due on November 12.

November 10-12. The "Age of Jackson"; An Age of Reform.

Inventing America, Chapters 11 and 13, pp. 312-339, 367-393.

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

George Fitzhugh's defense of slavery in "Readings.",

November 17-19: Expansion and Its Consequences

Inventing America, Chapter 14, pp. 395-421, and Chapter 15 to p. 432.

Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin.

November 24. The 1850s.

Inventing America, the rest of Chapter. 15, pp. 432-50.

November 26: Thanksgiving Holiday.

December 1-3. Secession; Abraham Lincoln.

Inventing America, Chapter 16, pp. 452-56.

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. (Note: The various Southern ordinances of secession are available at http://www.constitution.org/csa/ordinances_secession.htm)

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

December 8-10. The Civil War; Conclusion and Review.

Inventing America, the rest of Chapter 16, pp. 456-483, 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 it. What point or points does Anderson make from the material he gathered? Were you convinced? Were you enlightened? That is, does it help you understand something you never knew much about before---or 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, which began, in a sense, 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) Write a paper focusing on Oscar Handlin's [Boston's Immigrants](#), on 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 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, and their contributions to the communities 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 of Boston's Irish immigrants. Could he have stressed their strength in adversity, their creative adaptation to the strange circumstances in which they found themselves, and their contributions to Boston's politics, economy, and culture? 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 some other book be assigned in its place next year?

OR

B) The readings for this course, thanks to the abbreviated length of the term, left out a series of writings by Abolitionists:

---William Lloyd Garrison, [Editorial from The Liberator](#), January 1, 1831.

--- "[Declaration of the National Anti-Slavery Convention](#)," 1833.

--- Speech at the Fourth National Women's Rights Convention, 1853.

--- "[No Compromise with Slavery](#)" speech, 1854.

Philips, Wendell. "The Constitution, a Pro-Slavery Compact" (1845), Introduction, pp. v-x, available at

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

The syllabus does, however, include a brief essay by a defender of slavery, George Fitzhugh. The assigned reading was drawn from pp. 225-58 at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/fitzhughsoc/fitzhugh.html#fitzhugh221>

Both those who attacked and those who defended slavery provide rich material for papers. Here, however, students will need to ask their own questions and draw on the documents---and perhaps others, from the Internet or the library ---to answer them.

They might, for example, describe and evaluate the Abolitionist attack on the Constitution, which Wendell Phillips justified at length in his 1845 pamphlet, cited above. How did they justify their condemnations of the Constitution? Did they think the actions they proposed as a consequence of that position would further the abolition of slavery in the United States? What effect did it in fact have?

Alternatively, students could take a closer look at Fitzhugh's Sociology for the South. At first Fitzhugh seems downright "un-American," rejecting the idea of equality, for example. Or did he actually have a lot in common with others of his time, insofar as you can judge that on the basis of what you have learned about early 19th-century America? Did he, for example, have traits in common with the reformers he condemned?

These questions are meant to be suggestive. Students can devise their own themes based on their readings of the documents. They can also examine documents not assigned for the course but relevant to the period covered, though they should check their topics with the instructor beforehand. In any case, however, the papers must *ask an important historical question and use documents to answer it*.

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