

*Updated 2.7.17 (subject to change)*

**WHO ARE WE?**

**17<sup>TH</sup>/18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY U.S. ORIGIN STORIES**

Liberal Studies / Summer 2017

**NOTE: There is a reading assignment (and brief writing assignment) to do in preparation for our first class.**

Time: Tues. 6pm-9:30pm

Dates: 5/31/16 – 7/26/16

Location: tbd

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Location of Office hours: ICC 519E

**Course Description:**

“What then is the American, this new man?” asked J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur in his seminal portrait of America published in 1782. Over 220 years later the late Samuel Huntington asked a similar question: “Who Are We?” The enduring questions associated with American identity continue to vex generation after generation of American and non-American alike. Where and why do myths about our history emerge? When and how do certain American ideals become “sacred”? Are there contradictions and tensions inherent within these sacred ideals? Are these ideals fixed and static and/or are they continually evolving to adapt to new American frontiers? As scholars of Liberal Studies, how do we move from a simplistic analysis of American identity to a more informed and nuanced appreciation of American identities?

This course will focus on various aspects of the American mind and culture in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. This course is not a history course. Rather, it is an interdisciplinary course designed to introduce students to a variety of lenses through which to view the American experience. Through select primary accounts and secondary analyses from various moments in history, the class will seek to understand how the colonists’ identities, values, and choices shaped their relationships with the native people, with their labor force, with their land, and with their God. Out of these discussions, students have an opportunity to critically evaluate American origin stories, the role of Englishness, and the complexities of interpreting the dynamics and ideals leading up to the American Revolution.

**Objectives:**

1. To challenge you to think critically about how associated with American identity and culture emerge **stories** and change
2. To appreciate the variety of , drawn from various disciplines, that you can use to access and expose **sources** these stories
3. To follow your interests and trust that if you keep pulling on , they will lead you to new frontiers **strings**
4. To practice writing clear and compelling thesis in one sentence to frame your arguments **statements**
5. To form a learning community of among yourselves – helping one another identify areas of interest **scholar** that you may like to pursue in your remaining courses in the Liberal Studies program.

### **Major Assignments:**

#### Reading Questions (roughly 80%)

There are 14 Reading Qs listed on the syllabus. Generally, there are two listed for each class. You will answer 8 of these. Each will be worth 10 points, making up 80% of your grade.

Write a one paragraph answer to the Reading Q(uestion) on the syllabus. Post it to **BB no later than 10am** on the day of class. In the BB Assignment link, please attach a Word doc. that has 1) your name, 2) a that serves as an “argument” or answer to the reading question, and 3) a bolded thesis statement supporting paragraph that has reasons and evidence directly from the text(s) that support your argument or thesis statement. This is *not* like the first paragraph of an essay. This is an ongoing assignment that is intended to sharpen your writing and analytical skills, make for richer class discussions, and enable you to retain a record of your insights and interests.

#### Reflections and Insights Paper (roughly 20%)

This is a 10 page paper (double spaced, 12 point font, TNR, 1 inch margins) that will seek to articulate what you’ve learned this summer, drawing upon texts and discussions. You will be asked to think about ideas and concepts associated with how stories are constructed and the meaning and utility of those stories. Please use Chicago-Turabian Notes-Bibliography Style for formatting footnotes and your bibliography.

#### In-Class Participation

While there will be times where lecture is necessary, this is not a lecture course. Your participation and active engagement is crucial. The quality of your comments and insights is more important than how often you raise your hand. Please bring hard copies of reading materials so you are able to actively participate in group discussions.

### **Grading on Assignments:**

Doing a good job earns the grade of B. Doing the minimum requirements earns the grade of C. A’s are reserved for outstanding work that goes well beyond the requirements and is particularly distinctive in its quality. Please do not complain if you do very good work and get a B+ or outstanding work and get an A-. These are grades of which you should be proud.

#### Grading Scale:

[A] Outstanding - Model/Exemplary

[A-] Outstanding

[B+] Very Good

[B] Good

[B-] Good Start

[C+] Slightly Above Minimum

[C] Minimum

[C-] Below Minimum

[D] Weak

[F] Fail

Late assignments will be reduced by a grade-step (e.g., B to B-) for each day it is late.

### **Attendance/Tardiness and Effect on Overall Grade:**

Attendance: It is your responsibility to know and abide by this attendance policy. If at any point in the semester you have questions regarding this policy or your attendance record, it is your responsibility to follow up with your professor. Please make sure all correspondence regarding attendance is in writing so that there is a record in case we need to reference it later. In accordance with Georgetown’s Academic Regulations, you are expected to attend all classes. If you miss class, it will be recorded as an “unexcused” absence. **After two “unexcused” absences, 3**

**your final grade in the class will be significantly affected. You will drop a grade-step (e.g., B to B-) for every “unexcused” absence after two. You risk failing this class if you have more than 5 unexcused absences.** In order to have an absence marked as “excused,” you must do all of the following:

- 1) Email Prof. Seamon ahead of time to let her know that you will be out and the reason why. If you become ill and cannot let her know ahead of time, email when you can.
- 2) Provide documentation supporting your reason for being out. This may mean offering a doctor’s note, a letter from an employer inviting you for an interview, and/or some other documentation confirming your excuse. Note: If you are sick and do not go to the doctor’s, that’s okay, but it will still count as an unexcused absence.

If you are tardy, it is your responsibility to make sure your attendance has been recorded (i.e., don’t try to ‘sneak in’ late). Any time you miss class, it is your responsibility to get all of your assignments turned in on time, get handouts, and to find out what you missed in class.

Tardiness: It is your responsibility to know and abide by this tardiness policy. Tardiness, for the purposes of this policy, is defined as 1) coming to class late, 2) leaving early, or 3) leaving during class for a restroom break or other reason. Please come to class on time and stay for the duration. If you know you are going to be tardy and want to request that it be excused, follow the instructions above tied to attendance; make sure all correspondence is in writing. **If you are tardy frequently, this will result in the reduction of your final grade for the semester by a grade-step (e.g., B to B-).** “Frequently” is defined however your professor chooses to define it. It is your responsibility to make sure that if you are tardy, your attendance has been recorded. It is your responsibility to find out what you missed. It is your responsibility to find out if your tardiness is affecting your grade.

**Building Your Liberal Studies Bookshelf:**

Please get the following books to bring to class. Ebooks are not allowed. Please make sure to get the exact year/version/edition listed here so we are all working off of the same page numbers.

1. , Samuel P. *Who Are We? The Challenges to America’s National Identity*. New York: Simon & HuntingtonSchuster, 2004. ISBN: 0-684-87054
2. , Karen Ordahl. *The Jamestown Project*. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007. Kupperman ISBN-13: 978-0-674-02474-8 or ISBN-10: 0-674-02474-5
3. , William. *Changes in the Land*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. ISBN: 0-8090-1634 Cronon
4. , Kathleen. *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Brown Virginia*. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1996. ISBN: 978-0-8078-4623-0
5. , Gordon. *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*. Penguin Press, 2004. ISBN: 0-14-30.3528 Wood
6. , David, editor and introduction. *Notes on the State of Virginia by Thomas Jefferson with Related Waldstreicher Documents*. New York: Palgrave (Bedford/St. Martin’s), 2002. Part of the Bedford Series in History and Culture. ISBN: 978-0-312-29428-1

Many of the assigned readings are posted on Blackboard under Documents. You are expected to **PRINT HARD COPIES** of the documents from Blackboard and bring them to class. Think of these documents as mini-texts that will become part of your Liberal Studies Bookshelf. 4

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**Class Schedule:**

Constructing Identity

**T 5/23/17**

*Introductions and Framework for Course*

*Constructions and American Identity*

Reading Q #1: What is the significance of the “settlers” to Huntington’s argument? (see description for what to submit here under “Major Assignments” on p.2 of this syllabus)

☐ Huntington, Foreword (xv-xvii), Ch 1-4 (3-80). [~80 pages]

☐ Turabian, Ch 5.1 - 5.4.2 (50-54). *Tip:* As you read Huntington, see if you can map out his argument using the construct of claim, reasons, evidence described in Turabian.

Exploring Our Origin Stories

JAMESTOWN

**T 5/30/17**

*The Who and Why of Jamestown*

Reading Q #2: Pick one example of something that a traveler used to relay his experiences overseas. This could be a material object, book, letter or something else. What was the purpose or motivation behind sharing this? (Remember to make your claim (bold) and support it with reasons and evidence from the text.)

☐ Kupperman, Intro (1-11), Ch 1 (12-42), and Ch 4 (109-144). [~75 pages]

*Blurred Identities*

Reading Q #3: Why was the survival of Jamestown so precarious? Tailor your answer to your interests (e.g., gov’t, environment, business, foreign powers, religion, technology, family, theater, etc.). Pick one prominent reason/idea to emphasize.

☐ Kupperman, Ch 5 (focus on 163, 174-176), Ch 7 (210-240), Ch 8 (241-277) and Ch 9 (focus on 278-mid 288). [~75 pages]

*Work, Gender, Cannibalism*

Reading Q #4: Think about the impressions various writers were giving of Jamestown at the time. What ‘story’ about Jamestown is being conveyed to the English by John Smith and/or one of the other writers?

☐ John Lankford, ed., *Captain John Smith’s America: Selections from His Writings* (New York: Harpers Torchbooks, 1967), Introduction (vii-xxviii), Ch 1 (3-10 and 26-34), Ch 7 (164-171). [~25 pages]

☐ Rachel B. Herrmann, “The ‘tragicall historie’: Cannibalism and Abundance in Colonial Jamestown,” *The William & Mary Quarterly* 88, no. 1 (Jan. 2011), 47-74. [~25 pages]

**T 6/6/17 – NO IN PERSON CLASS**

☐ On your own, watch the documentaries on Jamestown and Plymouth (PBS)]

☐ Pay attention to stories told and sources of stories

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## PLYMOUTH

### T 6/13/17

#### *The Who and Why of Plymouth*

Reading Q #5: What is one important way that the dynamics in Plymouth (and Mass Bay) were similar to and/or different from Jamestown? OR What is something that you believe is significant about the transition from Pilgrims to Puritans in the region?

☒ Philbrick, Preface (xi-xv), Ch 1 (3-34), Ch 5 (78-92), Ch 6 (93-103), Ch 7 (only 116 “On Sept...” -118), Ch 10 (161-182), Ch 11 (183-197), and Epilogue (only 347-356). [~110 pages]

#### *Pure Identities? – Religion, Work, Gender*

Reading Q #6: In Massachusetts Bay, what determined who was an insider and who was an outsider? Consider religion, gender, and/or community dynamics.

☒ William Bradford, from *Of Plymouth Plantation*, Book II, Ch XIX, Anno. 1628 [Mr. Morton of Merrymount], in Norton Anthology, 144-147; and Thomas Morton, from *New English Canaan*, Third Book [The Incident at Merry Mount], in Norton Anthology, 157-158. [~5 pages]

☒ SKIM: John Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity” (1630), in Norton Anthology, 165-177. [~12 pages]

☒ SKIM: Richard Steele, *The Husbandman’s Calling* (1663) – look up in googlebooks (it’s free), 1-4. [~4 pages]

☒ Mary Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (1682), 5-7, 44-55, 68-77, 130-132. [~25 pages]

☒ Anne Hutchinson Trial. Watch: [www.pbs.org/godinamerica/view/](http://www.pbs.org/godinamerica/view/) ONE: “New Adam” scroll to 12 minutes in and watch until 29 minutes. [~20 min]

☒ “Jamestown and Plymouth,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (Apr., 1909), 305-311. [~6 pg]

#### Extending English “Nature”

#### ECOLOGY/ECONOMICS

### T 6/20/17

#### *Wilderness Revisited*

Reading Q #7: What is one prominent example of how the Indians and the English viewed the use and/or control of land differently?

☒ Cronon, Preface (xv-xviii) and Ch 1 (3-15). [~15 pages]

☒ Cronon, Ch 2-5 (19-107). [~90 pages]

#### *Changes in the Land*

Reading Q #8: Pick out one specific example of an item or practice that slowly and systematically shifted power to the English. Make an argument about why or how it changed power dynamics and offer reasons and evidence to support your claim. (draw upon Ch 5-8)

☒ Cronon, Ch 6-8 (108-170). [~60 pages]

GENDER/CLASS/RACE

**T 6/27/17**

*Trappan'd Maiden*

Reading Q #9: How did the ideal of a “goodwife” affect power dynamics in England and/or Virginia?

☑ Brown, Intro (1-9), Ch 1 (13-41), and as far as you can in Ch 3 (80-106). [~60 pages]

*Technologies of Power*

Reading Q #10: Pick out one specific example of an item, practice, or policy that slowly and systematically contributed to the emergence of “racial” slavery. Make an argument about why or how it contributed and offer reasons and evidence to support your claim.

☑ Brown, finish Ch 3 and read Ch 4 (107-136) and Afterword (367-373). [~35 pages]

**T 7/4/17 NO IN PERSON CLASS**

☑ Take notice of prominent and alternative narratives about the purpose and history of 4th of July in American culture today

☑ Do a bit of research to learn about: 1) how 4<sup>th</sup> of July narratives were told in a period of history of interest to you; and 2) whether there been groups of people in the USA who did/do not celebrate 4<sup>th</sup> of July

Becoming “American” – Ideals, Tensions, and Contradictions

PROMINENT VOICES

**T 7/11/17**

*Franklin*

Reading Q #11: Was Franklin a self-made man?

☑ Wood, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*, Intro/Ch 1 (1-60). [~60]

You are not required to read Ch 2-4 of the Wood book. Keep it for future reading though since it's very interesting. When you read it, think about *inherent contradictions* tied to Franklin's identity and how the *man differs from the myth*.

*Stories of Franklin*

Reading Q #12: How did stories about Benjamin Franklin *after his death* reflect important societal shifts occurring in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries?

☑ Wood, Ch 5 (201-246). [~45 pages]

**T 7/18/17**

*Crèvecoeur*

Reading Q #13: Pick one of these – 1) Crèvecoeur writes: “Men are like plants.” (p.608) What is he trying to argue or explain with this analogy? OR 2) Do the men of Charles Town (Ltr IX) fit Crèvecoeur's description of “the American, this new man?” discussed in Ltr III?

☑ J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur Ltr I, “Introduction,” from *Letters from an American Farmer*, Avalon Project at Yale Law School, 1-6. [~6 pages]

☑ (in separate file on Blackboard) Crèvecoeur -- Ltr III “What is an American,” Ltr IX “Descriptions of Charles-Town,” Ltr X “On Snakes,” and Ltr XII “Distresses of a Frontier Man,” from Norton Anthology, 604-625. [~20 pages]

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## *Jefferson*

Reading Q #14: How does Jefferson rationalize his views of the black "race"?

☐ Thomas Jefferson, Norton Anthology, p.663-667, From the *Autobiography of TJ*, A Declaration by the Representatives of the U.S. of A. (w/revisions), 1829. [~5 pages]

☐ David Waldstreicher, ed., *Notes on the State of Virginia by Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), Introduction (1-38), Query V Natural Bridge (94-97), VI Productions (120-129), XIV Laws (175-181), XVIII Manners (195-196), and Benjamin Banneker Letters (208-213). [~65 pages]

**T 7/25 Revisiting Stories and their Sources [DUE: Reflections and Insights Paper]**

## Honor Code

MALS and DLS students are responsible for upholding the Georgetown University Honor System and adhering to the academic standards included in the Honor Code Pledge stated below:

*In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor; and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.*

## Disabilities Statement

If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center ([arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu)) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.