THE ERA OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

History 344
Jean B. Lee
T, Th, 9:30-10:45 a.m.
Spring Semester 1992

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In ways great and small, the American Revolution touched the life of every person who lived through it and strongly influenced the subsequent history of the United States. This course traces conditions in eighteenth-century America that culminated in revolution, examines the remarkable amount of political experimentation that led to creation of the Republic, considers how ordinary men and women responded to and shaped events, and assesses the impact of the Revolutionary era upon subsequent American development.

REQUIRED READINGS: (Note: All readings have been placed on reserve at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.)

Available at the University Book Store:
Kenneth Silverman (ed.) The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin
I.R. Christie, Crisis of Empire: Great Britain and the American Colonies, 1754-1783
Mary Beth Norton, Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800
Bernard Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution
Thomas Paine, Common Sense
Marcus Cunliffe, George Washington: Man and Monument
Michael Kammen (ed.), The Origins of the Constitution: A Documentary History

Available at Kinko's as a packet:
Richard B. Morris, "Meet Dr. Franklin"
Anne Firor Scott, "Self-Portraits"
Winthrop Jordan, "First Impressions"
G.I. Jones and O. Equiano, "Olaudah Equiano of the Niger Ibo"
Ira Berlin, "Time, Space, and the Evolution of Afro-American Society on British Mainland America"
John Shy, "The Military Conflict Considered as a Revolutionary War"
John C. Dann (ed.), selections from The Revolution Remembered
Alfred F. Young, "George Robert Twelves Hewes (1742-1840): A Boston Shoemaker and the Memory of the American Revolution"
Merrill D. Peterson, "Jefferson's Severest Contests"
William Freehling, "The Founding Fathers and Slavery"
Gary B. Nash, "Forging Freedom: The Emancipation Experience in the Northern Seaport Cities, 1775-1820"
CLASS SCHEDULE:

Jan. 21  Introductory Session
Jan. 23  The American Revolution in Historical Perspective
Jan. 28  The World in 1776
Jan. 30  The British Empire in the Eighteenth Century
Feb. 4   A Land of Diversity: Americans in the Revolutionary Era
Feb. 6   Film: The Gunsmith of Williamsburg
Feb. 11  Degrees of Freedom
Feb. 13  The Enslaved
Feb. 18  Slide Lecture: Visual Images of Revolutionary America
Feb. 20  The Enlightenment
Feb. 25  Evangelicalism
Feb. 27  The Nature of American Politics
Mar. 3   The Seven Years' War
Mar. 5   MID-TERM EXAM
Mar. 10  SPRING VACATION
Mar. 12  SPRING VACATION
Mar. 17  The Stamp Act Crisis
Mar. 19  From Resistance to Revolution
Mar. 24  Independence
Mar. 26  The War Years, 1775-78
Mar. 31  The War Years, 1778-81
Apr. 2   Civilians and War
Apr. 7   Musical Reflections of the American Revolution
Apr. 9   The Confederation
Apr. 14  Experiments in Republicanism: The Sovereign States
Apr. 16  Years of Disillusionment: The Crisis of the 1780s
Apr. 21  Creation of the Constitution
Apr. 23  Preparation for the ratification debate
Apr. 28  Debate: Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists
Apr. 30  Launching the Experiment in Republicanism
May 5   Legacies of the Revolutionary Era, Part 1
May 7   Legacies of the Revolutionary Era, Part 2
READINGS ASSIGNMENTS FOR DISCUSSION SECTIONS:

Jan. 29  Franklin, Autobiography
         Morris, "Meet Dr. Franklin"
Feb. 5   Christie, Crisis of Empire, introduction & chap. 1
Feb. 12  Scott, "Self-Portraits"
         Norton, Liberty's Daughters, pp. xiii-xvi and chaps. 1-5
         PAPER DUE (4 pgs.)
Feb. 19  Winthrop Jordan, "First Impressions"
         Jones and Equiano, "Olaudah Equiano of the Niger Ibo"
         Berlin, "Time, Space, and the Evolution of Afro-American Society
         on British Mainland North America"
Feb. 26  Bailyn, Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, chaps. 1-4
Mar. 4   Christie, Crisis of Empire, chap. 2-5
Mar. 18  Bailyn, Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, chaps. 5-6
Mar. 25  Paine, Common Sense
Apr. 1   Shy, "The Military Conflict Considered as a Revolutionary War"
         Christie, Crisis of Empire, chap. 6 and conclusion
         Selections from Dann (ed.), The Revolution Remembered
Apr. 8   Cunliffe, Washington: Man and Monument
Apr. 15  Young, "George Robert Twelves Hewes (1742-1840): A Boston
         Shoemaker and the Memory of the American Revolution"
         Norton, Liberty's Daughters, chaps. 6-7
         PAPER DUE (4 pgs.)
         125-26, and Documents No. 1-2, 10-12, 15-17, 19, 22, 24-25,
         29, 31-34, 37, 43, 49-50, 52, 54-57, 60, 62-65, 70-71, 74,
         78, 80-83, 85
Apr. 29  Freehling, "The Founding Fathers and Slavery"
         Kammen, Origins of the American Constitution, pp. 363-84
May 6    Peterson, "Jefferson's Severest Contest"
         Norton, Liberty's Daughters, chaps. 8-conclusion
         Nash, "Forging Freedom: The Emancipation Experience in the
         Northern Seaport Cities"

GRADING: 15% for each paper, 20% discussion (including the ratification
         debate), 20% mid-term exam, 30% final exam
The American Revolution took place during the last half of the 18th century, ending in 1783 when the 13 colonies gained independence from the British Empire to become the United States of America. The era began in 1763, when, as a result of the Seven Years’ War in Europe, the British Treasury had to be replenished. The Treasury initially tried to raise funds at home and, when that caused an uprising, imposed a series of taxes on the American colonies for items such as molasses and sugar. In addition, Britain imposed the Currency Act, which prevented the colonies from using their own currency. Revolutionary-era songwriters wrote to inspire their listeners. Songs about the events of the day were especially popular because everyone—even those who could not read or write—could join in. (At the time of the American Revolution, almost half the male population was illiterate.) Colonial newspapers provided different information than modern papers do. A typical colonial paper, sometimes called a broadsheet or broadside, was four pages long (a large sheet folded in half and printed as four pages). The Second American Revolution was a joint civil and military coup that occurred in Washington, DC. It was the product of years of Government excesses. It was the first time in American history that the military used force to remove a President. January 2024: Amid internal and external pressure, due to the disastrous war in Texas, President Chris Christie resigns from his post. His VP, Marco Rubio, is sworn in the following day.