History 101, Section 81, CRN 16872
Indians and the Problem of Race in Early America

Professor Contact Information and Office Hours

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Class Time and Location

Tuesday and Thursday 2:20pm-3:35pm, 2020 K St., Room 11

Description

This first goal of this course is to introduce students to the kinds of writing conducted by professional historians, and to have them attempt such writing themselves. Such formats include synthetic literature reviews, book reviews, conference papers, and primary source research essays. Consistent with historians’ methodology, we begin the semester by reading through and synthesizing current historiography and raising questions about its content and approach. In the second half of the semester, students will take their insights and questions to the primary sources and write up their findings.

The second goal of this course is to explore the ways in which the various peoples of early America invented the idea that Indians were a distinct racial group; used that idea also to define whiteness and blackness; and, finally, organized and reorganized society according to their evolving notions of race. To that end, we will discuss initial European and Indian understandings of their peoples’ sameness and difference; the influences of inter-cultural violence, captivity, slavery, evangelization, sex, and marriage on early American ideas of race; the ways in which the law, government policy, and pan-Indian resistance movements reflected and generated racial divisions; and, finally, the manner in which “mixed-race” peoples challenged racial categories. By the end of the semester, students should be able to critique longstanding American notions that “race” is an actual biological fact rather than a cultural invention, and that the origins of our country’s long struggle with race is a story of just blacks and whites rather than a “triangulated” story of whites, blacks, and Indians.

Assignments and Grade Breakdown

All assignments will be edited by the instructor for grammar, structure, and content, and then handed back by the next class for revision. Students must hand in second drafts by the following class meeting. See appendices A and B for a guide to writing historical papers and for an explanation of grading standards. For every assignment, the average grade of the two drafts will stand.
**Synthetic literature reviews, 20 percent of course grade:** Each week for the first eight weeks of the semester, students are responsible to hand in a two-to-three page review of the assigned readings. These reviews should summarize the readings’ arguments, discuss the evidence they use, and explain what themes they have in common, where they diverge, and what questions they leave unanswered.

**Book reviews and joint presentations, 20 percent of course grade:** Each student is responsible to read one book from the following list by week eight and to write a four page review of the book that links its content to the course’s themes. These reviews will be circulated among the other students. Students then join one or more students who have read books from the same cluster to give a five to ten minute presentation providing an overview of their books’ common themes, disagreements, and approaches. **Due week nine.**

**Cluster 1:**

**Cluster 2:**

**Cluster 3:**

**Cluster 4:**

Cluster 5:

Cluster 6:

Cluster 7:

Cluster 8:

**Research Paper 1, 20 percent of course grade.** Answer one of the following questions in no more than eight pages using Rowlandson’s, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* and the accompanying supporting documents. Half of the students will read these papers aloud to the class. **Due week twelve.**

1) How did New England colonists use religion to define Indianness and, implicitly, whiteness?
2) How did cross-cultural violence contribute to race consciousness in seventeenth-century New England?

3) Do you see evidence that Indians and Englishmen in seventeenth-century New England subscribe to a belief of fundamental racial difference? Discuss.

Research Paper 2, 20 percent of course grade: Answer one of the following questions in eight pages using Perdue’s and Green’s, The Cherokee Removal. Half of the students (those who did not present research paper #1) will read their own paper aloud to the class. Due week fifteen.

1) What were the racial underpinnings of United States removal policy during the 1830s?
2) From a racial perspective, what were the tensions between, on the one hand, U.S. removal policy and U.S. insistence on Indian “civilized” reforms, and, on the other, Cherokee acculturative reforms and insistence on autonomy?
3) Do you see a basic consensus in the 1830s U.S. on the meanings of Indianness and whiteness, or were those definitions contested?

Participation, 20 percent of the course grade: See grading guideline in the appendix.

Statement on Cheating and Plagiarism

Students are encouraged to discuss their assignments with one another as part of the mutual learning process. However, each student must act alone in collecting evidence and structuring and writing his or her essays. Moreover, he or she must be diligent about citing the sources of quotes and borrowed interpretations. The instructor will immediately report students who have improperly collaborated together or plagiarized to G.W.’s Office of Academic Integrity. For your reference, that office defines cheating and plagiarism as follows:

Cheating: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise . . . representing material prepared by another author as one’s own work . . . .

Plagiarism: Intentionally representing the words, ideas, or sequence of ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise; failure to attribute any of the following quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed information.

Readings

The following books are available for purchase at the GW Book Store and on Gelman 2 hour reserve. All articles and individual chapters, besides those by Alden Vaughan, are available on electronic reserve through Blackboard.

♦ Theda Perdue and Michael D. Green, eds., The Cherokee Removal: A Brief History with Documents, 2d ed. (Boston, 2005).
Weekly Assignments

Week 1: Introduction
9/1: Syllabus review

Week 2: Overview and Current Approaches
9/6: Lecture: Indians and the Problem of Race
9/8: Discussion
Reading:

Week 3: Early Contact
9/13: Lecture: Impressions at Early Contact
9/15: Discussion
Reading:

Week 4: Captivity and Christianity
9/20: Lecture: Incorporation and its Limits
9/22: Discussion
Reading:

Week 5: Sex and Marriage
9/27: Lecture: Desire, Disgust, and Diplomacy in Indian-Colonial Relations
9/29: Discussion
Reading:

Week 6: Violence
10/4: War and Race Hatred in Early America
10/6: Discussion
Reading:
Note: In White’s Middle Ground, “pays d’en haut” and “middle ground” refer to the Great Lakes region, specifically the region north of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi River, bordering Lakes Michigan, Huron, and Erie. He uses “Algonquians” as a shorthand for the various tribes who inhabited this area.

Week 7: Indian Race Consciousness
10/11: Lecture: The Emergence of Indian Racial Idioms
10/13: Discussion
Reading:

Week 8: People of Color
10/18: Lecture: Hybridity’s Challenge to Race
10/20: Discussion
Reading:

Week 9: Book Reviews and Presentations
10/25 and 10/27: Presentations

Week 10: Race and War in Colonial New England
11/1: Lecture: Race Hatred in King Philip’s War
11/3: Discussion
Reading:
♦ Rowlandson, Sovereignty and Goodness of God, 1-112.

Week 11: Instituting Race
11/8: Lecture: The New Racial Order in Post-War New England
11/10: Discussion
Reading:
♦ Supporting documents in Rowlandson, Sovereignty and Goodness of God, 115-68.

Week 12: Research paper #1 due.
11/15 and 11/17: Presentations

Week 13: Indians, Civility, and the Problems of Race in the Early Republic
11/22: Discussion
Reading:
11/24: No class

Week 14: Primary Source Reading
11/29: Lecture: Northern Indian Removal
12:1: Discussion
Reading:

Week 15: Research paper #2 due
12/5 and 12/7: Presentations
Appendix A

Writing History
(courtesy of James Axtell and Andrew Isenberg)

I. Organization

There is no mystery about writing history. Writing is simply the transfer of thought to paper; both writing and thinking are done in words. To be able to write clearly is to be able to think clearly—and vice-versa.

The purpose of writing is to communicate information, ideas, opinions, or feelings to other people. Unless the other people “get the message” you intend to convey, you have failed to communicate effectively. Thus, as a writer you have two major tasks. The first and most difficult is to establish clearly in your own mind what you want to say. The second task is to find the most effective way to convey your message to the reader.

The first task—straight thinking—can be greatly aided by an outline. After you have completed your research, put your notes aside. On a separate set of small cards jot down—one point to a card—all the points you need to make. Divide the cards into piles—one pile for each group of points closely related to each other. Arrange your piles of points into a sequence: which points are most important or come chronologically first, which should be saved for last? Which must you present before others in order to make the others understandable? Now, within each pile, do the same thing—arrange the points in logical, understandable order. This simple procedure will give you an outline, needing only a title, introduction, conclusion, and transitions between sections.

A title should, if possible, be like a line of poetry—capable of saying a great deal with hardly any words. In should in some way express the whole work, its themes, and even something of its outcomes.

An introduction, like a title, should “hook” the reader and engage his or her attention and interest right away, in the opening sentence if possible. The introduction should contain a thesis statement that expresses the idea, the argument, you want to communicate in your paper. The thesis carries the paper from the introduction to the conclusion. If you read a paper with a clearly articulated thesis, the central argument of the paper sticks with you after you put the paper down. By contrast, a paper with a weak or unclear thesis wanders, leaving the reader without a clear sense of the author’s argument.

In the body of your text, each paragraph should represent a complete, coherent idea, such as the top card in the aforementioned piles. The first sentence of the paragraph, the topic sentence, makes a statement. The sentences following provide evidence to support that statement. The full paragraph should contain at least four sentences. The concluding statement
rephrases the argument of the paragraph and provides a transition to the next paragraph. Ideally, it also demonstrates to the reader how the paragraph relates to the main thesis.

Your conclusion should actually conclude your argument, not merely repeat earlier material. Although no new material should be introduced, a conclusion should present a new perspective on the points already covered or suggest future directions for thinking about the subject.

II. Principles of Writing History

Accuracy: “In the realm of History, the moment we have reason to think we are be given fiction instead of fact, be the fiction ever so brilliant, our interest collapses like a pricked balloon.” (G.M. Trevelyan).

Clarity: “The written word should be clean as bone, clear as light, firm as stone . . .” (Anon.)

Conciseness: “. . . two words are not as good as one.” (Ibid.)

Vigor: “Dull history is bad history to the extent to which it is dull.” (Jack Hexter)

III. Do’s and Don’ts

-- Find yourself a trusted proofreader, ideally someone who is reasonably intelligent and educated, but not an expert in your field. Have him or her read--or better yet, listen--to the final product. If he or she does not understand your argument or find your account compelling, you should go back to the writing block.

-- Do not assume that your reader knows anything about your topic. Introduce your characters, give dates and locations, and define terms that would be unknown to a college aged reading public (sachem, encomienda, New France, etc.).

-- Do not assume that your reader knows the meaning of the profession’s jargon and catchphrases, such as contextualize, racialize, discourse, gendered, subaltern, imagined community, invention of tradition, middle ground, etc.

-- Use the simple past tense and an active voice. Passive construction (e.g. The soldiers were ordered by their commander to attack the Cheyennes. Dozens of men, women, and children were killed. Later, it was admitted that mistakes were made.) obscures agency and causation. The above example should read: The soldiers’ commander ordered them to attack the Cheyennes. They killed dozens of men, women, and children. Later, the soldiers admitted that they made mistakes.
-- Be specific and direct rather than general or abstract. “The aborigines of New England could not contain their mirthful appreciation of the invaders,” really means “The Indians laughed at the Puritans.”

-- Refer to people, not books our sources. Not, “the Jesuit Relations tell us . . .” but “In 1642 Father Paul Le Jeune noted . . .”

-- Avoid unspecific referents (this, it, they). “The snow covered the cabin. It lasted all week.” (and then, presumably, collapsed . . .)

-- Avoid textual references to yourself. Use of “I” does not lend itself to objective distance, nor does use of “we” to refer to groups in the past (”our nation”; “we” instead of “Americans,” etc.). And as Mark Twain said, “only kings, editors, and people with tapeworm have the right to use the editorial ‘we.’”

-- Avoid the generic male. Use inclusive language.

-- No prepositions (for, to, with) at the end of a sentence.

-- Avoid over-reliance on block quotations and certainly never use more than one per paragraph (or per five pages for that matter). Avoid ending a paragraph with a block quotation.

-- Always make sure the source of the quotation is clear:
Not: Indians believed that powerful spirits inhabited nature. “The Indian’s world was filled with superhuman and magical powers which controlled man’s destiny and nature’s course of events” (Martin, 1974).
But rather: Indians believed that powerful spirits inhabited nature. As the historian Calvin Martin writes, “The Indian’s world . . . .”

-- Conceal your scaffolding. Avoid “this paper will prove . . .,” “as I argue below,” and similar references to your own writing act. Just prove and argue your points without fanfare.

-- Occasionally integrate quotations into your prose and vary your introductions. “George Washington said . . . ,” and “Martha Washington said . . . ,” over and over again is boring. More interesting is: “The nation,” George Washington exclaimed, “runs the risk of dissolution.” The first time your introduce a speaker, give her or his full name and a brief identification.

-- Minimize the use of “very,” which is unspecific.

-- Clergymen: Father Leclerc (Catholic), but the fathers. Protestant clergymen have honorific, not ecclesiastical, titles: thus, the Reverend Hugh Johnson, but not Rev. Mather.

-- Dates: In the text centuries must be written out in lower case letters: “the seventeenth century,” not “the 17th Century.” If the date is a modifier, it is hyphenated as if one word: “fifteenth-century chivalry.” Decades do not get apostrophes: e.g. 1650s.
-- Avoid contractions: can’t, don’t, wasn’t, they’re, etc.

-- Do not use “feel” when you mean “think.”

-- Avoid slang: “After all the head-banging at Vicksburg and Gettysburg, the Confederate Army was wickedly reamed.”

-- Avoid ethnic clichés and outdated euphemisms: When the braves could stand no more, they went on the warpath against the white man. The red man, unlike the Negro, had the resources to fight back.

-- Ellipses ( . . . ) are not needed in a quotation unless you omit something from the middle or end of a complete sentence that begins with a capitalized word. Ellipses warn the reader that something (perhaps vital) is missing. You may use any fragment of a quotation without ellipses at the front and back because the lack of a capitalized first word announces its incompleteness.

-- In anything shorter than a book, thesis, or dissertation, a bibliography is unnecessary. Footnotes are sufficient. Make sure citations are in accordance with the Chicago Manual of Style.

-- Proofreading is the essential last act of writing. Do it with a dictionary in hand and do not depend upon your computer’s word or grammar check.
Appendix B

Grading Guideline

I. Papers

An A or A- paper is one that is good enough to be read aloud in class. It is clearly written and well organized. It demonstrates that the writer has conducted a close and critical reading of the texts, grappled with the issues raised in the course, synthesized the readings, discussions, and lectures, and formulated a perceptive, compelling, independent argument. The argument shows intellectual originality and creativity, is sensitive to historical context, and is supported by a well-chosen variety of specific examples.

A B+ or B paper demonstrates many aspects of A- work but falls short of it in either the organization or clarity of its writing, the formulation and presentation of its argument, or the quality of research. Some papers or exams in this category show flashes of insight into many of the issues raised in the course. Others give evidence of independent thought, but the argument is not presented clearly or convincingly.

A B- paper demonstrates a command of course or research material and understanding of historical context but provides a less than thorough defense of the writer’s independent argument because of weakness in writing, argument, organization, or use of evidence.

A C+, C, or C- paper offers little more than a mere summary of ideas and information covered in the course, is insensitive to historical context, does not respond to the assignment adequately, suffers from frequent factual error, unclear writing, poor organization, or inadequate primary research, or presents some combination of these problems.

Whereas the grading standards for written work between A and C- are concerned with the presentation of argument and evidence, a paper or exam that belongs to the D or F categories demonstrates inadequate command of course material.

A D paper demonstrates serious deficiencies or severe flaws in the student’s command of course or research material.

An F paper demonstrates no competence in the course or research materials. It indicates a student’s neglect or lack of effort in the course.